

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: JESUS FOR CERTAIN

Kootingal Moonbi Anglican Church

February - March 2024

**Part 10: 1 Corinthians 15
& Luke 20:1-20:40**

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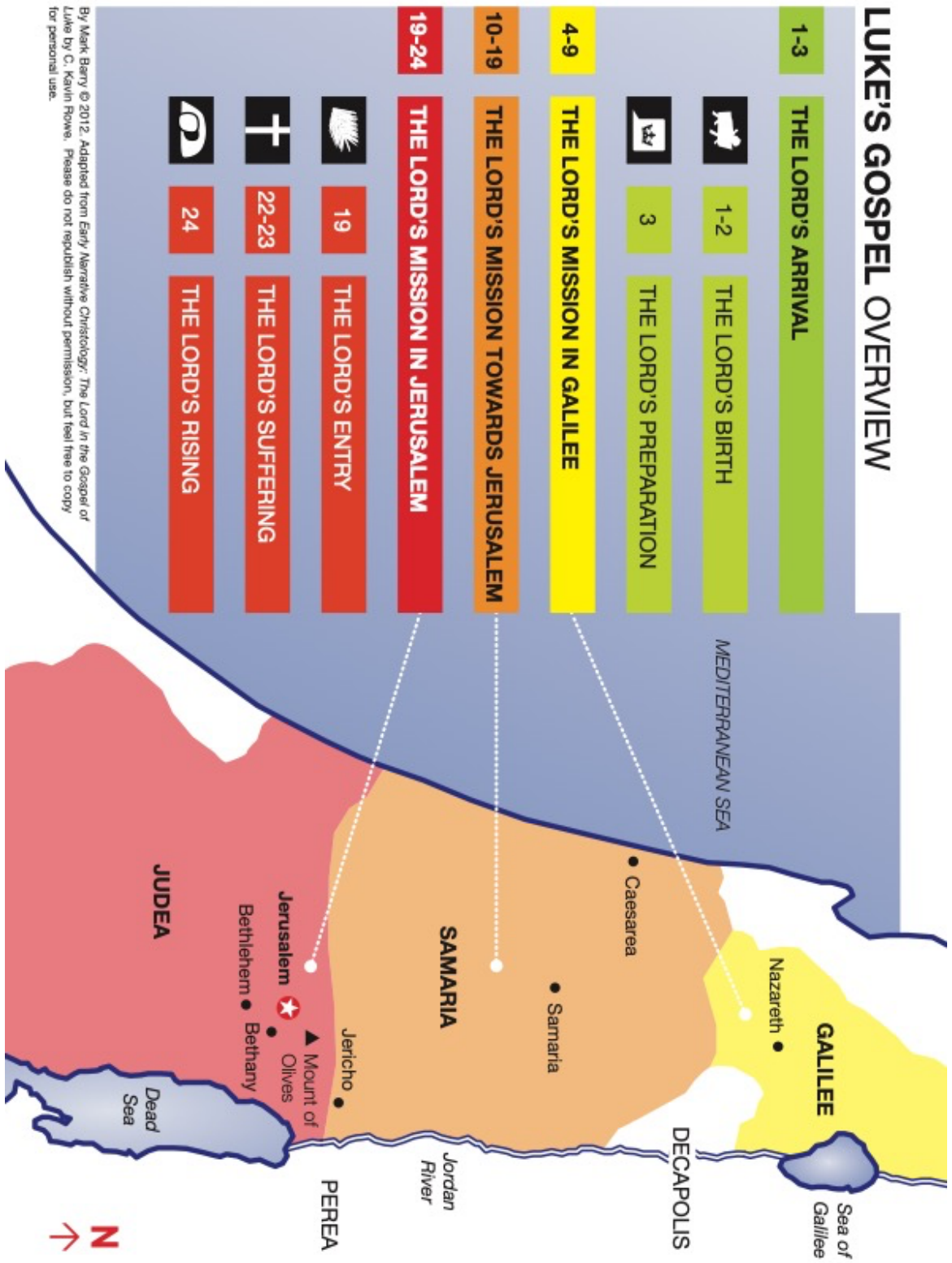
Introduction: Why Luke?

Luke writes his Gospel so that we can be certain about Jesus (Luke 1:4). We need this certainty about who Jesus is and what his mission is because we are now into the travel narrative of Luke's Gospel (9:51–19:47). This follows the journey of Jesus as he gets closer to Jerusalem where he will die on a cross for the sins of the world. As Jesus gets closer to Jerusalem, it gets harder for his disciples. If we follow Jesus, we follow the road of suffering that leads to glory. We must be certain if we are to take this costly and less-travelled road.

Let's encourage one another to follow Jesus, whatever the cost, remembering that the road to Glory leads through the cross. It is worth it!

Overview of Luke's Gospel

This is a simple overview of Luke's Gospel, connecting geography with structure as Jesus' approaches Jerusalem.



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Study 1 1 Corinthians 15 The resurrection of the dead

As we come to Easter, let's read 1 Corinthians 15 to consider the importance of the resurrection.

Pray for one another as you open the Bible together.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.

1. According to verse 1, how important is holding firm to the gospel?

2. What did Paul pass on to the Corinthians as of first importance?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.

3. Why do you think Paul wanted them to know of Christ's appearances to these people?

4. According to verses 8 to 10, why do you think Paul considers himself the least of the apostles?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–34

5. According to verses 12 and 13, what false teaching has crept into the Corinthian church?

6. According to verses 14 to 19, what would it mean if this false teaching were true?

7. What do you think Paul means when he says Christ is ‘the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep’ (v.20)?

8. What will happen when Christ returns (verses 22 to 26)? If it's easier, draw your answer!

Paul asks four rhetorical questions to show how absurd it would be to think the resurrection is not at the heart of the Christian message. Those 'baptised for the dead' (v.29) is the most difficult saying in the whole letter but most likely refers to people being baptised because they want to join the dead who will be raised to glory at the resurrection.

9. According to verses 30–33, how does the truth of the resurrection shape Paul's life and ministry?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–56

Paul is addressing the question of what our bodies will be like after resurrection, to counter objections to the resurrection of the body.

10. According to verse 36 to 37, what must happen to a seed before it comes to life?

11. Verses 38 to 41 addresses the different kinds of bodies and beings God makes. What can we say about the differences God has made things with?

12. Verses 42 to 44 addresses the relationship between a natural and spiritual body. What is the relationship?

13. Paul then describes the differences between Adam ('the first man') and Jesus Christ ('the last Adam'). List the differences between Adam and Jesus from verses 45 to 49:

Adam	Jesus

14. According to verses 49 to 56, what will happen to our bodies when Christ returns?

Let's close in **prayer**:

Thank God for the certain hope we have because Christ died and rose again.

Pray for one another in your group to hold firmly to the word preached (v.2) and to stand firm (v.58).

Ask God to give you the love, boldness, and courage to persevere in praying for your 3 people.

If your Growth Group is the Host Group this month, pray for new people you met at church on Sunday to be welcomed and connected well into our church family. Pray God would bring more new people to church this Easter weekend, especially non-Christians from Moonbi and Kootingal.

Other prayer points...?

Study 2 Luke 20:1–19

By what authority?

Pray for one another as you open the Bible together that you will listen to Jesus and put his words into practice.

Let's read Luke 20:1–19

1. What question do the religious leaders ask Jesus in verse 2?
2. Jesus initially answered their question with a question back at them concerning the authority of John the Baptist's ministry. According to verse 4, what are the two options for where John's authority came from?

Jesus didn't directly answer the question of the chief priests and the teachers of the law but instead told a parable in verses 9 to 16. Let's think about who the various characters in the parable represent.

3. Who do you think the *man* who planted a vineyard (v.9) represents? Why?
4. Who do you think the *vineyard* represents? Why?
5. Who do you think the *farmer tenants* represent? Why?

6. Who do you think the *servants* sent to the tenants represent? Why?

7. Who do you think the *son* sent to the vineyard represents? Why?

8. After hearing the parable, the people listening say ‘God forbid!’ (v.16b) Why do you think they give this response?

9. Things get very personal in v. 17 when Jesus looks directly at the people and quotes Psalm 118:22. This psalm praises God as the Saviour who has used a cornerstone that the builders rejected (a cornerstone was the first stone laid in which all other stones in the building were guided and based on).
 - i. How is the son in the parable like a cornerstone the builders have rejected?

 - ii. How is Jesus like a cornerstone the builders have rejected?

10. If Jesus is the cornerstone, what do you think it means ‘everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone of whom it falls will be crushed’ (v.18)?
11. According to verse 19, the teachers of the law and chief priests realised Jesus had spoken this parable against them.
- i. How do you think the parable is against them?
 - iii. Does this parable answer their original question concerning by what authority Jesus is teaching and proclaiming the good news (verses 1–2)? Why or why not?
 - iv. It is strange (perhaps even frustrating!) that Jesus didn’t directly answer the religious leaders’ question in verse 2. After hearing the parable, why do you think Jesus didn’t directly answer their question?

12. Luke wrote his Gospel so that Theophilus ‘may know the certainty of the things you have been taught’ about Jesus (Luke 1:4).
- i. What would Luke want Theophilus, and us today, to have certainty about from Luke 20:1–19?

 - ii. Can you give examples of what this certainty would look like applied to your life?

Let’s close in **prayer**:

Give thanks that God sent Jesus into our world with his authority to forgive sins and save.

Ask that God to open the eyes of the people you are praying for to see Jesus as the one with God’s authority.

If your Growth Group is the Host Group this month, pray for new people you met at church on Sunday to be welcomed and connected well into our church family. Pray God would bring more new people to church.

Other prayer points...?

Study 3 Luke 20:20–26 Give to God what is God's

Pray for one another as you open the Bible together that you will listen to Jesus and put his words into practice.

Read Luke 20:20–26

1. Verse 20 continues from the previous passage. Who is the 'they' who sent spies to Jesus (see Luke 20:1)?
2. What did the chief priests and teachers of the law hope to do with Jesus (v.20)?
3. What question do the spies ask Jesus (v.22)?
4. How might the question in v.22 be a trap so the religious leaders can hand Jesus over to the Roman governor?

The question was designed to trick Jesus. If he said ‘yes,’ then the Jewish leaders would have accused him of disloyalty to the Jewish nation. If he said ‘no,’ then they would have charged with him with treason against the Rome Empire.

5. According to verses 23 to 25, how did Jesus answer their question?

6. What do you think it means to ‘give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s’?

7. What do you think it means to give ‘to God what is God’s’?

A denarius was used as the tax money at the time. It was made of silver with an image of the emperor inscribed. While Christians live in this world we must submit to our governing authorities. But we also live in the kingdom of God and so submit to Jesus as King.

8. In what aspects of life might a Christian struggle being part of both kingdoms (under Caesar and under Christ)?

9. What principles could help in these struggles?

(If you want to think more about Christians submitting to our worldly authorities: Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:11–25.)

Let's close in **prayer**:

Give thanks that Jesus came to bring us into his kingdom.

Pray for the 3 non-Christian contacts you are praying for.

Pray for one another to persevere in prayer.

Pray for the guest speaker dinner event (11 April)

If your Growth Group is the Host Group this month, pray for new people you met at church on Sunday. Pray God would bring more new people to church, pray for 3 local families to join us.

Other prayer points...?

Study 4 Luke 20:27–40 Resurrection and Marriage

Pray for one another as you open the Bible together that you will listen to Jesus and put his words into practice.

Read Luke 20:27–40

1. Who comes to Jesus with a question and what are we told about their beliefs (v.27)?

2. According to verse 33, what is their question?

This question comes from the Levirate custom of marriage that if a married Israelite man died childless, his brother was required to marry his wife and have children who would legally belong to the deceased (Deuteronomy 25:5–10). In their cynicism about the resurrection, the Sadducees challenge Jesus as to which brother the woman would be married to in the new age.

Jesus' answer raises a lot of questions for us! Let's hold back those questions for now, and simply look at what Jesus does say.

3. What does Jesus say about marriage in this age (verse 34)?

4. What does Jesus say about marriage in the age to come (verse 35)?

5. What does Jesus say about the life of Christians in the age to come (v.36)?

Throughout the history of the church, these verses have been used for perspectives on marriage and singleness. It's helpful to listen to the voices of previous generations as we are all products of our time and our reading of the Bible is biased by our own culture!

The early Church Fathers argued 'neither marry nor be given in marriage' (v.35) to mean no sexual desire or intimacy in the age to come. Since we will no longer die (v.36) there is no further need for producing children. Some (like Origen of Alexandria, 185-253AD) even said that we will become angels in the resurrection!

The Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546 AD) said there won't be marriage in heaven, and so a wife no longer belongs to her husband. Luther's friend Philip Melancthon also said Jesus shows us the 'happy and blessed state after the resurrection,' and so thought we would be celibate like Jesus. John Calvin took a similar line in arguing marriage won't be needed as we will have no need to increase the race as we do on earth.

Up until this time, singleness and chastity were highly regarded and upheld by Christians as good for it served as a symbol for Christians of the age to come.

In the modern era, Charles Spurgeon and J.C. Ryle understood Jesus to be saying the resurrection body will be a body of a different constitution and so marriage, births, and a constant succession of inhabitants will no longer be needed.

As romantic love became a feature of marriages in the modern era (19th Century), commentators began arguing that surely marriages would continue into the age to come. In fact, so strong was the revolution of romantic love in the domestic family that ‘meeting one’s family in heaven’ became a more pressing concern than union with God in heaven.

So, clergy and theologians tried to walk the thin line of acknowledging families survive after death and upholding that those who take part in the age to come ‘in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels.’

More recently, Ben Witherington III said Jesus is addressing Levirate marriage and so not marriage in general - bodily resurrection means there may be continuity of marriage in heaven. Hans Schafer, similarly, contended Jesus is saying there will be no new marriages. But these are isolated explanations. Most modern commentators take Jesus’ words at face value in saying there will be no marriage in the age to come.

That said, people like R.C. Sproul have said even ‘if marriage is no longer an institution in heaven, love will be [...] for I do not think that the love I have for [my wife] or the love she has for me or that closeness that we enjoy will be removed in heaven. Rather it will get better. I believe my relationship with [her] will be superior in heaven to what it is on earth.’

This is an example of where our experiences on earth easily bias our reading of what Scripture actually says.

Even though there won't be marriage in heaven as we know it, it's good to remember that marriage is just a symbol of our union with God and his love for us (for example, Ephesians 5:31–32). Our union with God in heaven will be far better and real than marriage or any expression of love in this age, and we will have that love with God and all the saints too!

Back to Jesus and the Sadducees...

6. The Sadducees believed all the Jewish Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) were the Word of God but placed particular focus on the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Old Testament written by Moses). So, Jesus points the Sadducees to the words of the LORD God to Moses in Exodus 3:6. According to verses 37 and 38, how does Moses' words in Exodus prove there will be a resurrection?

The point of this passage is there will be a resurrection of the dead. However, we normally reference this passage to talk about marriage and singleness. Let's finish by thinking about how the resurrection effects life now.

7. How ought the resurrection shape our views to singleness and chastity now?

8. How ought the resurrection shape our views to marriage and families now?

9. How ought the resurrection shape our views on evangelism?

Let's close in **prayer**:

Give thanks that Jesus came to bring us into his kingdom.

Pray for single people you know to be content and looking forward to the resurrection.

Pray for married people you know to be content and looking forward to the resurrection.

Pray that as a church we would appreciate and realise what it means to be a family united to God and each other.

Pray for the 3 non-Christian contacts you are praying for.

If your Growth Group is the Host Group this month, pray for new people you met at church on Sunday. Pray God would bring more new people to church, pray for 3 local families to join us.

Other prayer points...?