

New Testament Foundation 2

It is Finished!

Dr. Luke is author of the two volume work called the Gospel (of Luke) and Acts. He is a Gentile who, after accepting Jesus as the Messiah, became a missionary and a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. His work is addressed to Theophilus (probably Luke's patron) and his purpose in writing is that through careful investigation he will confirm the truth of the Gospel story, that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, the promised One of God. As the story unfolds, Jesus performs many signs and wonders that only God could do (healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead and performing many miracles of nature like calming the storm and feeding 5,000) which led Jesus' audiences to the question, "Who is he?" The answer is finally realized in a conversation between Jesus and his disciples in Luke 9:20. Peter, the chief disciple of Jesus, answers, "You are the Christ of God!" The disciples understand that Jesus is the Messiah, but the expectation is that the Messiah will defeat the Romans and set up that longed for political kingdom. Once his disciples understand his identity, Jesus began to tell them God's plan for the Messiah; he did not come to set up a physical kingdom but "I have come to suffer, and die, and to rise again on the third day." (Luke 9:21, 22; 9:43-45; 18:31-34) Following Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ (Greek) / Messiah (Hebrew), Jesus set his face "resolutely for Jerusalem" (Lk. 9:51) where he would fulfill the purpose for which he was sent.

Jesus' Journey toward Jerusalem – Luke 9:51-19:27

During this journey, Jesus' ministry looks the same as he continues to heal the sick, cast out demons and teach that God's plan of salvation is for all people, rich, poor, old, young, male, female, slave, free, clean, unclean, Jew and Gentile. However, his focus changes to that of training his disciples.

1. Jesus used parables (stories using everyday life to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth related to the kingdom of God) to teach his young disciples about the cost of discipleship. One such teaching was on the proper use of wealth. Jesus said that God views wealth (money, possession, power) as a test. What did Jesus teach that this test of wealth reveals about a person's character? (Lk. 16:10, 11)

2. What is the danger in the lure of wealth? (Lk. 16:13)

3. Jesus also taught about leadership. What did he say about someone who would purposefully cause someone else to sin? (Lk. 17:1, 2)

4. What was his warning to his disciples? (Lk. 17:3a)
5. What does that mean in practical terms? (Lk. 17:3b, 4)
6. Knowing how difficult that would be, they asked Jesus to increase their faith. (Lk. 17:5) Jesus answered that if they had only a “mustard seed” sized faith (very tiny) but in the right place (in Jesus), as his servants they could accomplish the impossible. As Jesus continued his journey toward Jerusalem he was followed by ever increasing crowds which always seemed to include some Pharisees (teachers of the law). Because Jesus taught about the “Kingdom of God,” everyone was wondering if and hoping that he was going to re-establish the throne of David. The Pharisees finally asked, “When will the Kingdom of God arrive?” What was Jesus’ answer to them? (Lk. 17:20b, 21)
7. Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is not a physical, earthly kingdom but rather spiritual. At this point Jesus was nearing Jerusalem where they would celebrate the Feast of Passover. Because of the crowd, Jesus took his twelve disciples aside to tell them what to expect when he arrived. What did he say was about to take place? (Lk. 18:31-33)
 - Did these young disciples understand? Why or why not? (Lk. 18:34)

Jesus’ Final Week in Jerusalem - Luke 19:28 - 23:56

Sunday

8. Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem was on the tenth day of the month of Nisan, traditionally believed to have been Sunday. According to Exodus 12:3, on this day each family is to select their lamb for Passover. Then they are to, “Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.” (Ex. 12:7) Jesus and his disciples walked along as part of the huge crowd going to Jerusalem to select their lamb. As they approached the city limits, Jesus stopped and asked two of his disciples to go ahead into Bethphage and bring an unbroken colt (donkey) to him. When the colt was brought, it was saddled with the disciples’ cloaks and Jesus was placed upon it. As they crossed the Mount of Olives with Jesus riding the donkey, what did the whole crowd of disciples do? (Lk. 19:37, 38)

9. Please stop here and notice what they are expecting of Jesus:
 - What title do they give Jesus?
 - What are they expecting him to bring?
10. Through his careful investigation, Luke shows that this event brought mixed reactions from the crowd, while the disciples are loudly rejoicing because the Messiah is arriving. The Pharisees have a much different reaction. Concerned that the commotion will attract the attention of the Romans, they ask Jesus to rebuke (or stop) his disciples from their joyful celebration. What was Jesus' response? (Lk. 19:40)
11. God's plan will go forward but Jesus knew that the people, including his own disciples, still did not understand what that meant. As he came up the Kidron Valley into the city gates with the crowd hailing him as king, what did Jesus do? (Lk. 19:41)
 - Why? (Lk. 19:44b)

Monday

12. After all the shouting and celebrating on Sunday, what was it like when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Monday morning? (Matt. 21:10)
13. What was the answer being circulated throughout Jerusalem? (Matt. 21:11)
14. Jesus went to the Temple to worship only to find the Court of the Gentiles filled with merchants taking advantage of the Passover crowd. Jesus turned over their tables (Matt. 21:12), drove out the merchants that were in the Temple courts (Mark 11:16, Lk. 19:45) and after making a whip of cords drove out all the animals (Jn. 2:14-16). Jesus was furious at what the Temple had become. Using Luke 19:46:
 - What did Jesus say they had made the Temple?
 - What was the intended purpose of the Temple for which Jesus set about cleansing it?

Tuesday

Jesus' activities at the Temple on Monday created an even bigger stir than Sunday's entry. The Temple and its courts were run by the Sadducees (priests). History tells us the High Priest and his family were getting proceeds from these courtyard sales. As a result, on Tuesday, the

religious leaders confronted Jesus asking, “By what authority are you doing this?” and “Who gave you that authority?” (Lk. 20:1, 2) Rather than answering their questions directly, Jesus asked them a question of his own related to the authority of John (the Baptist.) “Was John’s authority from heaven, or from men?” (Lk. 20:4) The religious leaders debated how to answer recognizing they were caught in a trap. “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”

15. What was the answer they finally gave Jesus? (Lk. 20:7)

16. How then did Jesus answer their original question? (Lk. 20:8)

Wednesday

17. There is no written record of what Jesus did specifically on Wednesday other than Luke’s general summary of Jesus’ last week. According to Luke, what did Jesus do every day, including Wednesday? (Lk. 19:47a)

Thursday/Friday

The Jewish day begins at sundown, so on the 14th day of Nisan, Passover began with a “Seder,” commonly referred to as “The Last Supper.” The Seder is a time of remembrance and celebration of God’s protection and provision of His people Israel as He led them to freedom from Egyptian slavery. During the celebration, four cups of wine are drunk in remembrance; the cup of sanctification, the cup of plagues, the cup of redemption and the cup of praise.

18. During the third cup, the cup of redemption, what did Jesus say about this cup to his disciples? (Lk. 22:20)

19. The symbol of this new covenant is our Communion or Eucharist which Jesus gave to his disciples that night. What else did he tell them? (Lk. 22:21, 22)

20. After the Seder, “Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives and his disciples followed him.” (Lk. 22:39) Luke said he went a stone’s throw away from them and knelt down to pray. He prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me.” (Lk. 22:42a) The cup was the cup of redemption, the price to reconcile man and God. Jesus knew the cost was his life. How did he end that prayer? (Lk. 22:42b)

21. This would not be easy for Jesus; in fact, the stress and weight of what he was about to do pressed so heavily upon him that Dr. Luke describes it this way: "His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Lk. 22:44) How did God the Father reassure his Son? (Lk. 22:43)
22. While it was still dark, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived leading a crowd. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss (sign of friendship) after which Jesus was seized and led away. Where was Jesus taken in the early hours of the morning? (Lk. 22:54a)
23. Over the next few hours, Jesus was put through six "trials;" three were before the Jewish religious leaders and three were before the Roman authorities. The Jewish trials ended after Jesus truthfully answered the question, "Are you the Son of God?" What was Jesus' answer to the High Priest and the members of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish high court)? (Lk. 22:70b)
24. They accused Jesus of blasphemy saying they needed no further testimony. Jesus was then taken to Pilate the Roman governor. After questioning Jesus what was Pilate's finding? (Lk. 23:4)

Verse 8 says, "But they insisted." They (the religious leaders) mention that Jesus had started this trouble in Galilee, so Pilate jumped on the opportunity to send Jesus to Herod (Antipas) who was in Jerusalem for Passover. Herod was delighted to finally meet this miracle worker. But when Jesus refused to "perform" for him or even answer his questions, Herod had Jesus beaten and sent back to Pilate.

25. What did Pilate tell the religious leaders after his "trial" with Herod? (Lk. 23:14b, 15)
 - What was Pilate's solution? (Lk. 23:16)
26. But that wasn't the response the religious leaders wanted. "With one voice they cried out, 'Away with this man!'" Luke says that Pilate wanted to release Jesus, so he tried again, "But they kept shouting, Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Lk. 23:20) How many times did Pilate try to reason with them? (Lk. 23:22)
27. After declaring him innocent, Pilate finally, "Decided to grant their demands, and Jesus was led away to be crucified." Jesus was hung on the cross at 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25), the time of the morning sacrifice for the sins of Israel. While Jesus was being crucified, the Gospel's record that he prayed to the Father in heaven. What did he ask his father to do? (Lk. 23:34)

28. Jesus hung on the cross a total of six hours that day. From the sixth hour to the ninth hour (noon to 3 p.m.) what does Luke say took place? (Lk. 23:44, 45a)
29. On that cross, Jesus fulfilled the role for which he was sent. John (the Baptist) describes that role best. What did he say Jesus was and would do? (John 1:29)
30. What were the final words of Jesus that Luke recorded to let his readers know that no one took Jesus' life, but that he gave it freely? (Lk. 23:46)
31. What were the last words of Jesus that John recorded? (Jn. 19:30)
32. How does Matthew describe Jesus' final moment? (Matt. 27:50)
33. The death of Jesus was at the ninth hour or 3 p.m., the time of the evening sacrifice. One can only imagine what it must have been like for those so insistent upon Jesus' death when inside the Temple the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies where God resides was torn in two. What important detail does Matthew add about the tearing of the veil? (Matt. 27:51a)
34. How did the Roman Centurion, whose job it was to guard men as they were being crucified, react to the way Jesus died? (Mark 15:39)
35. Because it was nearing sundown which would bring in the Sabbath, a day of rest, Jesus' body was quickly removed from the cross and hastily buried in a tomb nearby. Who asked for Jesus' body and then buried him in his own tomb? (Lk. 23:50-54)

Sunday

36. The Sabbath begins at sunset (dusk) on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. When the first light of day appeared on Sunday morning (the first day of the week), who does Luke say were the first to arrive at Jesus' tomb? (Lk. 23:55-56; 24:1)

37. They had come early expecting to properly prepare Jesus' body for burial. However, when they arrived the stone had been rolled away and upon entering the tomb they found it empty, there was no body of Jesus. Suddenly two angels appeared. What news did they bring? (Lk. 24:6a)
38. Excited to share the good news (the Gospel), they immediately went to tell the Eleven (and the others.) Who were the first ones to share the Gospel? (Lk. 24:10)
- Did the Eleven believe them? (Lk. 24:11)
 - Who did Luke say went to check it out? (Lk. 24:12)
 - In John's Gospel he writes that he (called the other disciple) also went to the tomb. What does John mention about his own reaction to the empty tomb? (Jn. 20:8, 9)

The Resurrection and Ascension – Luke 24

The account of Jesus' resurrection is given in all four Gospels (Matt. 28:1-10, Mk. 16:1-8, Lk. 24:1-12 and John 20:1-9), and they record that Jesus made an appearance to many individuals beginning with Mary Magdalene (Matt 28:1, 9-11 & Jn. 20:11-18), then two disciples traveling on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-32). Over the next 40 days he appeared to (Simon) Peter (Lk. 24:34, 1 Cor. 15:5), eleven of his disciples in the upper room (Lk. 24:36-43, Jn. 20:19-31), seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-23), eleven disciples in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20, Mk. 16:15-18), to his brother James (1 Cor. 15:7), and to more than 500 at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus was and is undeniable.

But before Jesus ascended into heaven, he had some final instruction to give to his disciples. After opening their minds so they could understand the Scriptures and how he fulfilled them, Jesus commissioned them to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name.

39. For whom is this forgiveness of sins according to Jesus? (Lk. 24:47)
- Where was this good news to begin? (Lk. 24:47)

40. Jesus assured them that they would not be alone, "I will send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Following these final instructions, Jesus led them to the Mount of Olives and while he was blessing them, "He was taken up into heaven." What was the immediate response of the disciples? (Lk. 24:52)

The Book of Acts – Acts 1-8

41. Luke's second volume is called the book of Acts which is also written to Theophilus. In his introduction, Luke gives additional insight into what the disciples were thinking after Jesus' resurrection and before he was "taken to heaven." What did they ask Jesus? (Acts 1:6)
42. Jesus had to refocus their thinking saying those times and dates were by the Father's authority and not for them to know, however, what information did Jesus give to them? (Acts 1:8)
43. While they waited, what did the disciples do?
- Acts 1:14
 - Luke 24:53
44. Ten days after Jesus' ascension was the Feast of Pentecost also called the Feast of Weeks. This was one of three solemn Feasts (Passover/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost/Weeks and Tabernacles/Booths) in which God commanded that all Jewish men must appear before the Lord at the place where he will choose (Jerusalem), and to do so with sacrifices. (Deut. 16:16) According to Acts 2:15b, the next event took place at nine o'clock in the morning. Since it was the Feast of Pentecost, everyone that was obedient to the Lord in coming to Jerusalem would be at the Temple for morning sacrifices. The Temple is also called "The House of the Lord." What happened while they were at "The House"? (Acts 2:2-4)
45. Luke said this resulted in the disciples' speaking in other "tongues" meaning languages they had not known prior to this event. The list of languages spoken included many dialects used throughout the Roman Empire (Acts 2:9, 10), indicating that all the Jews at "The House" were hearing this in their own primary or heart language. What were the disciples saying? (Acts 2:11)

46. Peter stood up and, taking the role of leader, explained to the crowd what was happening. He shared the good news that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah and there is salvation to everyone who calls on his name. He also said that this crowd (with the help of wicked men) killed him. "But God raised him from the dead and that we are witnesses of that fact. And he has poured out what you now see and hear, the promised Holy Spirit." In Acts 2:36 Peter said, "Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Messiah)." What was the response of the people? (Acts 2:37)
- What was Peter's answer to this heartfelt cry? (Acts 2:38)
 - Whom did Peter say this promise was for? (Acts 2:39)
 - How many responded to the first Gospel message? (Acts 2:41)
47. Following the arrival of the Holy Spirit, what did this early community of believers (those who believed Jesus was the Messiah) devote themselves to? (Acts 2:42)
48. Luke began the book of Acts with the words, "All that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1) indicating that his death and resurrection were not the end but the beginning. After Jesus poured out his Spirit upon his disciples, Luke said, "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the Apostles." (Acts 2:43) What Jesus began is now continuing through the Apostles. And, just as Jesus' ministry was authenticated through signs and wonders, so too was the ministry of the Apostles. What was the dual effect of this?
- Acts 2:44
 - Acts 2:47b
49. But the religious leaders were not pleased with what was taking place. So after a large crowd gathered around the Apostles and a blind beggar that had been healed, Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. They were questioned, "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7) What was Peter's Holy Spirit filled answer? (Acts 4:10)

- What else did Peter say about “that name?” (Acts 4:12)
50. The members of the Sanhedrin were amazed at the courage of Peter and John. What did they “take note of?” (Acts 4:13)
51. Since Peter and John had not broken any law, the Sanhedrin could not punish them. However, before their release, they gave a command, “Not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” How did Peter and John react to this command? (Acts 4:19, 20)
52. The Apostles continued to teach and heal in the name of Jesus of Nazareth in the Temple courts in a section called “Solomon’s Colonnade.” But as the crowds continued to grow, what happened? (Acts 5:17, 18)
53. The story turns a bit humorous as to what happened that night (Acts 5:19-26); but in the morning the Apostles faced the Sanhedrin again. When reminded that they had been commanded not to speak in that name, Peter reminded them that, “We must obey God rather than men.” What else did Peter say? (Acts 5:31)
54. When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. Why didn’t they? (Acts 5:34-40a)
55. This time they were flogged before being released with yet another warning, “Not to speak in the name of Jesus.” How does Luke say this second arrest with flogging affected the Apostles?
- Acts 5:41
 - Acts 5:42
56. Luke records that the Apostles were not the only ones who stood before the Sanhedrin. In Acts 6 – 8, the story of a disciple named Stephen is given. How is Stephen described? (Acts 6:8)

57. Stephen was accused by false witnesses of blasphemy against the Temple and the law. Whose name did these false witnesses associate Stephen with? (Acts 6:14)

In his defense (Acts 7:2-53), Stephen gave the Sanhedrin a history lesson that was abruptly ended when he said, "You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers; you always resist the Holy Spirit!" Stephen accused them of betraying and murdering the Righteous One and challenged them saying they are the ones who do not obey the law. The response by the members of the Sanhedrin was immediate; they were furious. Stephen was dragged outside the city and they began to stone him.

58. Before he died, what two things did Stephen pray that Jesus would do? (Acts 7:59, 60)

With the death of Stephen, the first chapter of what would become the early church comes to a close. Luke sets the stage of what is about to take place next when he wrote that while Stephen was being stoned to death, "Saul was there giving approval to his death." (Acts 8:1a)

Our story will continue in New Testament Foundation 3 beginning in Acts 8 with the words, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church."