

Luke: The Son of Man



Many people do not understand why there are four gospels in our Bibles. As a matter of fact, some people when they do their daily readings, and try to read through the Bible in a year, they really believe reading four gospels is repetitive. I pray, as we travel down Route 66, we're beginning to understand why there are going to be four gospel presentations of Christ, and how while they're alike, they are very unlike. They paint four different portraits of Christ, therefore, giving us a fuller picture of who He actually is.

In this day and age of digital photography, just imagine out of all of the photos that I have of my wife, if I had to pick just one photo to hang in my office that pictured her as a wife. Imagine me going through all of the pictures of her, and my intent is to pick a picture that pictures her as my wife. Now, imagine my kids going through all of my pictures of her, and they choose one to hang in their homes that picture her as a mother. Now imagine my grandsons sorting through all of the photographs of her to hang in their room as their grandmother. Now imagine going to my mother-in-law's house, and you would see a completely different picture of her as her daughter. Do you see how if you wanted to see my wife in her fullness as a woman, there would be a different picture of her as a wife, a different picture as a mother, a different picture as a grandmother, and a complete different picture as a daughter. And while there would be a resemblance that would be the same in all the pictures, the pictures would be different.

Can you imagine, even under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a person trying to picture Christ on earth in His fullness? It's just not possible. So to

give us the fuller picture of Christ, we have Matthew presenting Jesus as the King of the Jews because he's writing to the Jews. Mark, writing to a church in or near the city of Rome, pictures Jesus as the suffering servant. In the introduction of the gospel according to Luke, Luke tells us who he's writing to so we don't have to search. He says he's writing to a man named Theophilus, which name means "lover of God." It's a Gentile name, therefore, most scholars believe Luke's writing to a Gentile who has come to know Christ. But all of a sudden, he finds himself in a racially mixed body of believers. There are Gentiles and Jews trying to get along, and they just didn't get along before. And maybe he's beginning to question whether or not he really should be in this new community, asking himself if he had done the right thing. And so according to his introduction, Luke is writing so that Theophilus will know that everything he has heard and been taught about Jesus being the Christ is true. Luke acknowledges that there are people who have already written accounts about Jesus, but he felt like there was a need to carefully research. The term he uses here is a medical term, just like a doctor would carefully examine a patient, Luke has carefully examined the evidence about Jesus, and he's made a diagnosis. And so he tells us, "He is the Son of Man."

Our Scripture is from Luke 19:1-10. It is probably the most famous passage in Luke's gospel because it was one of the stories that we learned in Sunday school really, really, early. Many churches devote a whole night or a whole day to this story in Vacation Bible School. There have been songs written to help us remember this story about this little bitty, tiny, short man who had to climb a tree. I don't know how I was so slow, but I have struggled for weeks of outlining Luke; to really capture what he was trying to say. And then all of a sudden, with the help of Ray Steadman, I realized, whoa Luke 19:1-10 really captures what Luke's writing about when he presents Jesus as the Son of Man. So we're actually going to use this story to outline the entire book of Luke.

Scripture

"He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on

ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Now my ESV says "the lost." But when I was in Bible college, I actually got to study this book and this verse with my Greek teacher. He taught me that in the Greek, it literally says, "that which is lost," which I think is how the King James Version of the Bible translates that. Whoa! In this day and age of new translations, you don't hear many preachers saying that the King James is actually closer than our newer translations. The Son of Man is in the house of Zacchaeus for He "came to seek and to save that which is lost."

In his gospel presentation, I believe Luke, writing to Theophilus, paints a portrait of Jesus as the Son of Man. I'm sure you've noticed this, but more than any other gospel, Luke paints Jesus speaking about Himself on many occasions, not in first person, "I," but in third person, "Son of Man." He uses another title to refer to Himself. It would be like me saying, "Brother Ricky," yet I'm talking about myself. Now, I think all of you would realize if I was to talk about myself as Brother Ricky, I am signifying to you in the capacity that Brother Ricky, being the pastor of Hardin Baptist Church, is doing this because he's called by God, and it is God's choice, not my choice. Many of you would think it would be odd if I were running around referring to myself as Brother Ricky. Twenty-five times in Luke's portrait, Jesus, when speaking about Himself, will say "the Son of Man." And before you knew it, the disciples, and the crowd, and the Pharisees, and the Sadducees began to understand that He is claiming to be the Son of Man; The Messiah. Some even begin to understand that He's claiming to be God in the flesh, because only God can do the things He's doing.

Now please understand Luke's intent. If you've been reading your gospels, just thinking they are a biography of Jesus, they will be redundant to you. But when you study Luke's gospel and understand that Luke has a different vantage point of Jesus, a different purpose in painting the picture of Jesus than Matthew and Mark, you will begin to see it's completely different. As a matter of fact, 40% of Luke's gospel has different teachings, different stories, and different miracles than the other gospels. Mark Driscoll points out that there are 41 unique passages in Luke that are not presented in Matthew and Mark. Yet, Luke follows the basic outline of Mark in his presentation of Jesus, as does Matthew. When Luke quotes Jesus being the Son of Man so often in his Gospel presentation, he is presenting Jesus as the perfect Man. I've met a lot of men, but I've never met a perfect man, except by faith, the man Jesus. There are a lot of people I look up to, there are a lot of people you look up to, and there are a lot of people we sometimes use as an example of how to live. But what Luke's writing to Theophilus about is this: Jesus, while here on the earth, is the Son of Man. If you want to see how God designed life to be lived, you need to look at Jesus.

Now ultimately, we all know that we didn't live the life we were supposed to live. So for salvation, we're going to have to depend on Another. Luke is saying that the One we're following, the One we're depending on, and the One we're trusting in lived life exactly as it should be lived. And he lived His life in place, on behalf of, you and me. He's the perfect man.

Now, in the story about Zacchaeus, Luke said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." That is the outline of Luke:

- 1. The Son of Man Came - Luke 1:5-4:13**
- 2. The Son of Man Seeks - Luke 4:14-19:27**
- 3. The Son of Man Saves - Luke 28**

We aren't going to divide Luke geographically like we do Matthew and Mark. The reason is because he is writing to present Jesus as the perfect man who is going to go to a cross and present a perfect sacrifice on behalf of mankind who doesn't measure up. They fail, they're miserable, they're wretched, they're broken; they've got problems. And that's who Jesus is

seeking in the middle part of Luke's gospel presentation. Luke is writing to show Theophilus who Jesus is, the Son of Man.

But he's also writing to show him why he should stay in the Church that is racially mixed. You do know there are people who are not comfortable around people who are not like them? I'm not criticizing, but it tickles me to see all of the Southern Baptist Churches in Detroit. Do you know how most of them got there? People from the South moved to the North and didn't like the church they were going to. So they started their own church that would reflect the church they came from out of the South. They even called men to leave Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee to move to Detroit to pastor them because they didn't want to associate with Northerners. It's one thing to work with them all week, but it's another thing to think to worship with them. Wow, that BLOWS MY MIND! There is a tendency, even in the Church today, for us sometimes to be uncomfortable with some who claim the same allegiance to Christ as we claim, and it's why God has given us Luke. Therefore, we, the church at Hardin, and the church today, needs this powerful portrait of Luke's Gospel.

Jesus Came

Because Luke is going to focus on the Son of Man coming, he doesn't do like Mark and start the ministry of Jesus at His baptism. He doesn't have him stepping out of the unknown into the river Jordan being baptized by John, the forerunner of the Messiah. No, he gives us a birth narrative, two full chapters, that not only talk in detail about the birth of Jesus, but talk about the birth of John, and how unique both births were. One was born to a barren woman, I can kind of get that one, but the Messiah was actually born of a virgin. Unlike Mark, Luke takes the time to let us know that the Son of Man IS the Son of God. Like us, yet unlike us, because He is of God. He's not just of God, He IS God.

Why would Luke spend so much time writing a birth narrative? Well, you have to remember that the early Church struggled, especially the Jewish Church, with whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. The Messiah couldn't be a Nazarene because he was supposed to be born in Bethlehem, according to the Old Testament. And Jesus's home town of Nazareth

struggled to believe he was the Messiah because he grew up there. And so Matthew and Luke show Matthew writing to the Jews, but Luke writing to a Gentile who is being influenced by, and becoming part of, a Jewish church. Many Jews are probably telling him, hey, why are you joining them? Jesus is not the Messiah! And so Luke writes a birth narrative to let us know Jesus was born in Bethlehem, even though He was raised in Nazareth. Then Luke has to tell us how He got from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and after he was born, why they left Bethlehem and came back to Nazareth. Except Luke goes farther...In the birth narrative, he pictures Jesus being presented in the temple. He told of a really, really old man who was told by God that the Holy Spirit would show the Messiah to him before he died. And when Jesus was presented in the temple as an infant, the Holy Spirit said, *there he is!* Wow! And now you understand from this man that Jesus is going to be a light to the Gentiles, and He is going to be the glory of Israel. So all of a sudden, Theophilus (and we, the reader) understands that this man knew Jesus wasn't just coming to bring salvation to the Jewish nation, but to the Gentiles as well, even though He is a Jew.

Can you imagine how difficult it would have been for a Gentile to follow a Jew and be a part of a church that was predominantly Jewish? That is why Luke has given us this unique perspective of the birth narrative. But again, Luke doesn't stop there. He is the only writer who tells us that when he was 12 years old, they went back to Jerusalem, but he didn't go back home. He stayed in the temple teaching. His parents had lost him, but they find him in the temple after they had looked all over the city. I mean, you don't expect to find a 12 year old in church, amen? But he's unlike any 12 year old you've ever met. He's actually teaching the religious leaders. And He makes that famous statement, "...knew you not (*Mom*) that I must be about my father's business?" We see that Luke is painting a picture of Jesus as the Son of Man who's coming for a purpose, and that's to fulfill the very purpose of God.

As Jesus begins to grow, we see Him as a full grown man, stepping into the water with John. We are already prepared for this because, Matthew and Mark told us the heavens opened. Mark says, "...a voice from heaven said, 'You are my beloved Son; with You, I am well pleased.'" Now, Luke does something different from Matthew. Luke records the genealogy of Jesus! Matthew takes it all the way back to Abraham, to show He is the

promised seed, and traces Him through David to show He is the Davidic king. Luke trace Jesus back, not through Solomon, but through Nathan and goes all the way back to Adam. Then he makes this statement: "Adam was the son of God." Did you catch that? That is big! Luke is trying to tell us that the first son of God on the Earth was Adam. Our immediate reaction when we see that is *he blew it!* Early in the garden, in a full relationship with God, he seemed to be the perfect man. But he sinned against God and he blew it, and he wrecked humanity!

Notice what Luke does right after the genealogy. Now at this point in Mark, he has the Holy Spirit throw Him into the wilderness where there are wild animals, but not Luke. Luke is presenting Jesus as the perfect Man. So the perfect Man listens to the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit leads Him quietly into the wilderness. There, under the leadership of God's Holy Spirit, He faces Satan. Luke gives us the full account of the temptation of Jesus because he is presenting Him as the Son of God. He has already told us the first son of God was Adam, and he traces Jesus all the way back to Adam because he is trying to tell Theophilus that salvation is not just for the Jew; salvation is for Gentiles too. So he takes him all the way back to the father of us all! But the first Adam blew it; the second Adam went into the wilderness, and the outcome was that He did not fail! Three rounds with Satan, and after forty days, He comes out faithful. We see Him as the perfect Son of God in the flesh, who will now be revealed as the Son of Man, the perfect Man.

Jesus Seeks

The Son of Man came, He is here, God in the flesh! And now, He starts to seek. The presentation Luke gives is that Jesus goes at it alone; just Him. I don't know if we could ever understand what that would feel like. Most of us have always had someone; parents, siblings, or a spouse. But it is just Him, and the first place He goes is the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth. He takes the scroll and read Isaiah 61:1-2, about the coming of the Messiah and how He would be anointed with the Spirit and what He would do. When He closed the scroll, everyone went, *wow...He is an awesome reader! You could feel the passion!* He closed the scroll and said, "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." What He just said was, *I AM HE*. Amen! They began to go, *whoa, whoa, whoa! Is this not Joseph's son?* Luke is immediately telling Theophilus that the reason some Jews do

not believe He is God's Son is because they believe He is Joseph's son. They don't recognize the virgin birth of Jesus! I have a commentary in which the first paragraph of the virgin birth account says, "The Church does not compel us to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ." Are you kidding me?? If you are in a church that doesn't compel you to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, you are not in a church! You are in a society of men, but not in a community of God. But see, His hometown didn't understand who He was. Then He knows they are going to make Him prove it, and He starts quoting these Proverbs. He said, "A prophet has no honor in his hometown." Then He will quote the prophets, Elisha and Elijah, and how during that time of drought in Elijah's day, there was only one widow that he ministered to, and she was a Gentile. Of all of the Jewish widows who needed help, Elijah never helped one of them! When Elisha healed the lepers when leprosy was rampant in the country, who did he heal? It was Naaman, a Gentile. After hearing Jesus, all of a sudden, the people in the synagogue, turned on Him. Now I like to believe that He was the darling of the community until this moment. But now they are trying to find a cliff to throw Him off of...whoa! That would be like you turning on my son, Kory! This is the only church he has ever been in. That is what they did to Jesus, and He slips away. The next thing you know is that He is seeking. Luke gives this account of Him teaching. While He is teaching, He borrows a fisherman's boat. The fisherman's name is Peter, and he is mending his nets. They cast out into the deep and Jesus tells Peter to let the net down, and they catch a lot of fish. Luke says that Jesus tells Peter, let's not fish in the shallow water like normal, let's launch out into the deep; and the word He uses here means, a guaranteed catch.

Now, I have fished a little bit, but beware when a fisherman tells you when you go fishing that you are guaranteed to catch fish. Usually, when they tell me those kind of things, we don't catch anything. But they tell me how the fish was biting yesterday, and they assure me that if I'll come back, they will bite tomorrow. But Jesus is telling a story with this. He is saying that we aren't only going to fish on the Jewish shoreline. If you follow Me, we are going to launch out into the deep waters of the Gentile world, and I am guaranteeing you that we are going to catch fish. Jesus is saying, follow Me guys, and I'll make you fishers of men. They leave their nets and their families and they follow Him.

Now it's one thing to seek out a fisherman, Jesus being Jesus, He sought out a tax collector, Levi. Once he decided to follow Him, he threw a supper for Him and invited his friends. Well, if you are a tax collector, your friends are other tax collectors. So now Jesus is eating with tax collectors, and the religious leaders are questioning why He is eating with tax collectors and sinners. Then Jesus gives that famous declaration that those who are well don't need a physician, but those who are sick. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The next thing you know, He is in a crowd of people and discussing John the Baptist. He turned to the crowd and said, HEY, John didn't eat or drink and you said he was possessed with a demon. I eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners and you call Me a glutton and a drunk, and a friend of sinners. Immediately after this, Luke takes us into a Pharisee's home. Remember, the word, Pharisee, means 'set apart one.' They were the holy ones of Israel. Get this picture: One of the holy ones of Israel invites the Holy One of Israel into his home. And while He sits down with them, a woman slips in. Now, you realize that women were not looked upon then as they are today. They were looked at as a little bit above cattle. But she comes in and Luke says she is a sinner. (Do you notice every time that Luke identifies the crowd as sinners?) This woman brings some ointment and puts it on Jesus' feet. She takes her hair down and begins to wipe His feet, and then kisses His feet. Simon, the Pharisee, said that if Jesus really was a prophet, He would have known this woman was a sinner. What is the implication? If Jesus knew who this woman was, He wouldn't let her touch Him. He would be like us and He wouldn't associate with her! But we know that He does know who she is. It was the fact that He knew who she was, not Simon's wife, but a woman in the community who was a sinner that He let her wash and kiss His feet. He painted this picture: Simon, you haven't been forgiven much, therefore, you don't think much about Me. But this woman, she has been forgiven a lot, and she loves much. Some of us really struggle with that. Because we lived a pretty good moral life when most of us got saved, we do not understand the appreciation that someone who's been at the bottom of the totem pole, spiritually, so to speak. We don't understand the gratitude they have with Jesus when He redeems them from a life of brokenness; a life of bondage. They can't help but do what they do! How dare we judge them! What is the point that Jesus is trying to make? He is the perfect Man, tempted to sin, yet did not. But He

is seeking out those who were tempted to sin and fell to the temptation and have been crushed under the weight of sin! While He hates sin, He loves them, the sinner! How dare we, in our hatred of sin, hate sinners? Jesus did not pass out evangelistic tracts. He did not try to publish the good news in a way that kept Him at a distance. He belied up to the table with sinners. He ate and drank with them. Up to this point He's had a good reputation and He has now blown it. He is a friend of sinners; even letting women touch Him.

Time passes and Jesus is trying to train the twelve, and He starts telling them that He is going to a cross when I go to Jerusalem; I'm going to suffer, I'm going to die, but I'll rise again. Now, Luke does differently than Mark. Do you remember how Mark painted the disciples as kind of dull, spiritually? Luke takes a different angle. Every time the disciples don't get who Jesus is, Luke says that they couldn't see because it was withheld from them. So in Luke's gospel, you get this opinion that it's not their fault. It is God preventing them from seeing who Jesus is. So we have a different perspective because they have a different purpose. Then we come to the famous chapter 15 with the prodigal son. There was a lost son who wasted his inheritance on riotous living. He repented and came back home and the father restored him back into full fellowship. You remember how that story started right? You see, Jesus started out and didn't build a building and start a preaching ministry and expect people to come. He went where they were, but now they are coming to Him. Now you have tax collectors and sinners all coming to Jesus and they sit down with Him. He started seeking them, and now they are seeking Him. Boy, that is good...When they are seeking Him, He is still doing the same thing He did from the beginning; He is eating with them. The Pharisees grumble that He eats with tax collectors and sinners, and then He tells this story: If a man has a bunch of sheep and he lost one of them, wouldn't he leave the ninety-nine and go look for the one that was lost? That makes sense, right? You are a poor manager of animals if you have a hundred animals and you lose one and are not concerned about the one you lost. Man, you are going to look for that one that's lost. A lady has ten coins and she loses one of them. She sweeps the house, and doesn't quit until she finds the coin. Now we don't understand that one, but let me tell you what is going on. In that world, if you are a single lady, you built a headdress. When you got ten coins, you put them on it and went to town and circled the village well. The women circled the

village well one way, and the men circled the well the other way. The women who had the ten coins on their headress were eligible. They were prized women. They were going to make good wives. So when this lady only has nine, she can't go down to the village well tonight! What would you do as a lady? You would look the house over. She looks the house over and gets that coin! We understand that. Then you should understand that if a man had a son who squandered it all but he came back home, that father would get off of the porch and run to that son and welcome him back home! Oh, but he had another son, who was the brother. The brother didn't take too kindly of what the father did. Those first stories about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son is pointing to the fact that the Pharisees are just like the elder brother. They don't understand the heart of God! God sent His Son to seek sinners. When you get to the last part in the journey to Jerusalem, he sums it up with Zacchaeus; don't miss this. As soon as Jesus tells Zacchaeus to come down, He said, I've got to go home with you today. Everybody there wanted Jesus to go home with them, and he picked out Zacchaeus! And all the crowd could do was grumble...they said, He's a guest in the house of a sinner. The perfect Man, while here on the earth, sought out sinners. He didn't spend a lot of time with the righteous; He didn't join the holy huddles. He sought sinners, and He didn't let how they were unlike Him cause Him to neglect them. As a matter of fact, in the midst of this, He tells a story. Do you remember what he called Zacchaeus? The son of Abraham. "Salvation has come to your house today, for you are a son of Abraham." In chapter 13, He went in the synagogue on one Sabbath, and there was a woman there with a disabling spirit. She had been bound by Satan for eighteen years. Jesus saw a woman with a disability and He just healed her, right there in church, so to speak. And the leader of the synagogue got upset and gave Him a sermon about the Sabbath. Then Jesus said, you hypocrite. You're going to go home and untie your donkey and lead him out of the stall and take him down to the creek and water him, aren't you? The leader said, sure! You can't let an animal stay in a stall all day long without water! Do you see why Jesus is calling him a hypocrite? You wouldn't let an animal stay in bondage for one day, and yet you want me to let this woman stay in bondage, and she has been bound for eighteen years by Satan! The Son of God, in the flesh as the Son of Man, fulfilling perfect humanity, loved sinners and sought them out. He didn't wait for them to come to Him, He went to them.

Jesus Saves the Lost

But now, He is going to Jerusalem, because He didn't just come to seek; He came to save that which was lost. What was lost in the Garden of Eden? We need to understand that what we lost in the Garden of Eden was a relationship with God, and Jesus came to seek and to save that relationship. Therefore, He ministered to people who had a broken relationship with God. His purpose of going to the cross was to die for people who did not have a relationship with God! Luke presents Jesus as migrating to the crippled, the blind, the lame, the women, the children, the tax collectors, and the sinners. He even said, hey, if you're going to throw a feast, don't invite your friends, don't invite your family; invite a crippled man, a lame man, a man who can't hear, a blind person, or a poor person. Intentionally invite someone who can't pay you back. When is the last time you did that?

He's going to Jerusalem, He's going to ride a donkey into town, He's going to cleanse the temple, He's going to prophesy the temple will be destroyed, and He is going to prepare a room to eat the Passover with His disciples. He is going to institute the Lord Supper, and He will let them know that the bread is His body and the cup is the blood that is poured out for the New Covenant. Then, He is going to be arrested while He prays in the garden. One of His very own will kiss Him; he will betray the Son of Man with a kiss. He will go before a council, before Pilate, before Herod, and then back to Pilate. They will finally release Barabbas and they are going to crucify Jesus. Only Luke says this next part. While He is dying with the weight of the sin of the world on Him, bearing the wrath of God, He saves a thief. A man who is not coming down off that cross, a man who is never going to serve Him is going to spend eternity forever with Jesus in the glory of His kingdom! That is grace! That is grace!

Then after He gets up from death, He is going to open the eyes of two disciple on the road to Emmaus. But then, the whole group will get together and He will open their eyes. He will say, I told you; now it's fulfilled. The Son of Man must suffer, He must rise again, and be proclaimed to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. And then He leaves.

Have you ever been at a movie theater and a movie ends, and you walk out of there thinking that they intentionally left that wide open for a sequel? I don't know if you got it or not, but Jesus is saying, Theophilus, you ought to be in a community of people who believe I died for the sin of the whole world and that I rose again! And that part has been fulfilled, but there is one part that hasn't been. He must not only suffer, He must not only rise; He must be proclaimed to all the nations, starting in Jerusalem. Luke ends with this thought: Jesus did His part! He is the perfect Man. I am a follower of the perfect Man, so what am I supposed to be doing now? Proclaiming Him, so that repentance and forgiveness of sins can be proclaimed in His name. It is supposed to start in Jerusalem, and so I know that Luke is going to write another book. That book will be the book of Acts. It will talk about those who are following the perfect Man. If you are following Him, you should be making Him known, giving people the opportunity to repent of a sinful lifestyle and be forgiven of all of their sin. And like Theophilus, be a part of a racially mixed group where the walls have been broken down. The only thing that matters is that we know Jesus.