

Background of Minor Characters in Luke

Came to Jesus	Text	Background
The Shepherds	2.8ff.	
Simeon	2.25ff.	righteous and devout; Holy Spirit was upon him
Anna	2.36ff.	widow; 84 years old; never left the temple; worshipped night and day by fasting and praying
Man possessed by a demon	4.33ff.	
Simon's mother-in-law	4.38ff.	suffered from a high fever
Man with leprosy	5.12ff.	leprosy
Paralytic dropped through roof and friends	5.17ff.	
Man with shriveled hand	6.10-11	
A Centurion	7.3ff.	built the synagogue; Jesus was amazed at his faith
Widow at Nain	7.11ff.	widow; one son; Jesus heart went out to her
Sinful Woman at the Pharisees house	7.37ff.	lived a sinful life
Jesus' Mother and Brothers	8.19	
Demon Possessed Man	8.27ff.	Wild, loud, unable to be bound; naked
Jairus and his daughter (12 years old)	8.40-42; 49-56	only daughter
Bleeding Woman; bled for 12 years	8.43-48	bled for 12 years
Boy with evil spirit and his father	9.37-45	
Mary and Martha	10.38-42	Martha: distracted
Crippled woman (by an evil spirit for 18 years)	13.10-13	bent over
Synagogue ruler	13.14-17	indignant and then humiliated
Man suffering from dropsy	14.2ff.	
Samaritan Man	17.11-19	
Rich Young Ruler	18.18-30	
Blind Beggar (Mark calls him Bartimaeus)	18.35-43	
Zacchaeus	19.1-9	wealthy chief tax-collector; short
The Poor Widow	21.1-4	
Joseph of Arimathea	23.50-56	A good and upright man; did not consent to the actions of the other Jews; waiting for the Kingdom of God
Cleopas	24.18ff.	face was downcast

Luke: The Universal Gospel
By Travis Long

I. Introduction

- a. The morning prayer of a Jewish man was this: “Thank you Lord that you have not made me a gentile, a slave, or a woman.”
- b. Luke records the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam (father of all); not Abraham (the father of Israel)
- c. Luke completes John the Baptists quotation of Isaiah 40: “And all mankind will see God’s salvation.” (3.6)
- d. Luke wants to reach all corners of the earth (13.29; Acts 1.8)

II. Luke’s use of Gentiles

- a. Simon prophesied/quoted it: “For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” (2.30-32)
- b. Samaritans
 - i. The only one of the ten to thank Jesus for the healing was a Samaritan (17.11-19)
 - ii. Luke is the only one to record the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10.25-37)
 - 1. Notice how the expert in the Law who answered wouldn’t mention the Samaritan (10.37)
 - iii. Luke does record their unwelcoming Jesus (9.51-56); but Jesus was still heading there; something a good Jew would never do
 - iv. John can record the animosity between Jews and Samaritans (John 4.9); but Luke would have none of it.
- c. Romans
 - i. The Centurion (7.3ff.) sent some elders to Jesus to plead for healing of his servant; Jesus was amazed at his faith
 - ii. “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” (7.9)
 - iii. The Centurion (23.47) praised God after Jesus death on the Cross
- d. Others
 - i. Jesus mentions the Widow in Zarephath (4.26)
 - ii. Jesus mentions Naaman the Syrian’s healing (4.27)

III. Luke’s use of Women

- a. Birth Narrative is told from Mary’s point of view
- b. Jesus’ Genealogy in Luke 3 comes from Adam through Mary
- c. Prominent Women that we only read about in Luke:
 - i. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1)
 - ii. Anna, the prophetess who never left the temple. Who worshipped night and day by fasting and praying. (2.36ff.)
 - iii. Widow at Nain (7.11ff.)
 - iv. The Sinful Woman who anointed Jesus (7.37ff.)
 - v. The Crippled woman who Jesus healed on the Sabbath (Luke 13.10ff.)
- d. They followed Jesus; gave him council; and provided for his needs (8.2-3)
- e. Jesus commends the widows offering (21.1-4)
- f. Luke tells of the woman who has been bleeding for 12 years (8.43-48)

IV. Luke’s use of Jewish Outcasts

- a. Shepherds
 - i. On the list of unclean and dishonest professions according to Rabbi’s, partly because

- they were unable to perform religious duties on account of work. The fact that they were always on the job made it impossible to follow all regulations. Most Rabbi's considered them to be thieves.
- ii. Luke places shepherds at the Birth of Jesus; and has them leaving praising God (2.8-20)
 - iii. They receive divine messages from the Angels concerning Jesus birth (2.10-15)
- b. Lepers
- i. They were forced to live outside of the city and forced to keep their distance from people
 - ii. Jesus healed the 10 lepers (17.11-19)
 - iii. Jesus heard the request; healed him; and reinstated him into his religion (5.12ff.)
- c. Poor (4.18; 6.20; 7.22; 14.13; 14.21; 16.20; 16.22; 18.22; 19.8; 21.3)
- i. When Mary brings her offering for purification, it is the offering of the poor (2.24)
 - ii. Jesus words:
 - 1. His Beatitudes
 - a. Matthew 5.3: "Blessed are the poor in Spirit"
 - i. However, Luke 24.17 says Cleopas' face was downcast, which is along the same lines as "poor in spirit"
 - b. Luke 6.20: "Blessed are you who are poor."
 - 2. Words to John's disciples mention, "the good news preached to the poor." (7.22)
 - iii. Luke is the only one to tell the Parable of the Rich man and the Poor Man (16.19-31)
 - iv. Poor Widow was commended for her giving (21.1-4)
 - v. Jesus healed the Blind Beggar (18.35ff.)
 - vi. Negative Example: Rich Young Ruler (18.18-30)
- d. Tax Collectors
- i. Zacchaeus was a tax collector, to whom Jesus brought salvation (19.1-9)
 - ii. Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18.9ff.)—Tax Collector comes out smelling like roses
- e. Criminals
- i. Deuteronomy 21.23: "anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse."
 - ii. Positive Example: The Criminal on the Cross, who Jesus gave hope to (23.40-43)
 - iii. Negative Example: The Criminal on the Cross who hurled insults at Jesus (23.39)
- f. Demon Possessed
- i. Drove a demon out of a man in the Capernaum synagogue (4.33ff.)
 - ii. The Gadarenes Demoniac (8.26ff.)
 - iii. Boy possessed by an evil spirit the disciples were unable to rid him of (9.37ff.)
 - iv. Crippled woman was crippled by an evil spirit (13.10-13)
- g. Physically Disabled
- i. Healed just between them and Jesus:
 - 1. Simon's Mother-in-law with a high fever (4.38ff)
 - 2. Jairus' daughter, who ended up dying until Jesus came (8.40-42; 49-56)
 - 3. Bleeding woman, who had bled for 12 years (8.43-48)
 - 4. Blind Beggar (18.35ff.)
 - ii. Healed with full view of Pharisees:
 - 1. Paralytic and cohorts (5.17ff.)*
 - 2. Man with a shriveled hand (6.8-11)*
 - 3. Crippled woman (13.10-13)*
 - 4. Man with dropsy (14.2-4)*
- h. Miscellaneous
- i. Luke is the only one to tell the story of:
 - 1. The helpless: The Lost Sheep (15.3-7)

2. The hidden: The Lost Coin (15.8-10)
3. The stupid: the Prodigal Son (15.11-32)
4. The proud: the Older Brother (15.32)

V. Luke's use of the Jewish Elite

- a. Synagogue Ruler
 - i. Positive Example: Jairus came to Jesus to have him cure his daughter; Jesus raised her from the dead (8.40-42; 49-56)
 - ii. Negative Example: Synagogue ruler became indignant of Jesus for healing on the Sabbath; Jesus' answer then humiliated him (13.14-17)
- b. Members of the Council
 - i. Joseph of Arimathea was a good and upright man who did not consent to their actions (23.50)

VI. Conclusion

- a. Luke wants his Gospel to be equal inclusion for all; hence his inclusion of positive and negative examples of many.
 - i. Two Criminals on the cross (one comes to faith, one not)
 - ii. Two Synagogue Rulers (Jairus came in faith, other stood against Jesus' healing on the Sabbath)
 - iii. Two rich men (Rich young ruler and Zacchaeus)
 - iv. Samaritans were labeled as unwelcoming and also the only one to thank Jesus for the healing
- b. Luke pulls from every definitive class; race; and gender of those times