

# Reading Lukewise

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An overview of Luke's Gospel

Steve Walton

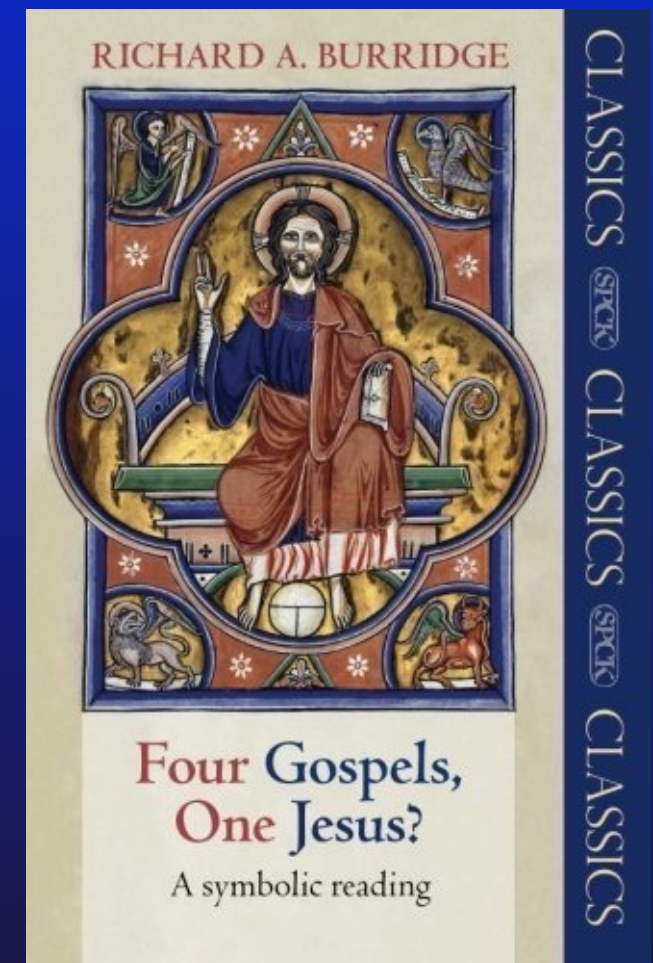
# Where we're going

- A. What kind of book Luke's Gospel is
- B. How Luke organises his book
- C. Luke's sources of information
- D. Luke's special emphases among the Gospels

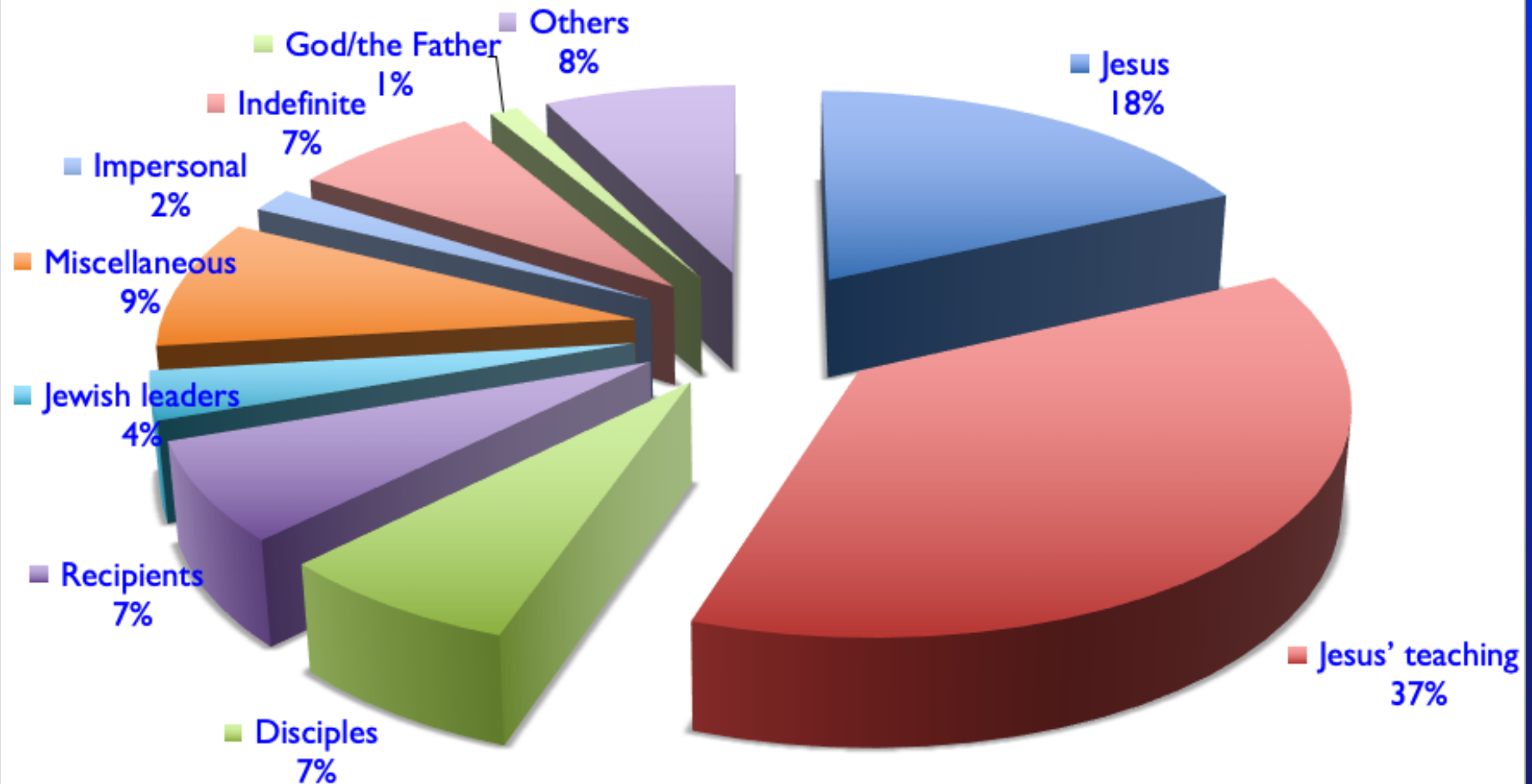
What kind of book  
is Luke's Gospel?

# It's all about Jesus

- The Gospels as ancient biographies (Richard Burridge)
- the subject dominates the action



## Verb subjects in Luke (Burridge's analysis)



# It's all about Jesus

- The Gospels as ancient biographies (Richard Burridge)
  - the subject dominates the action
- so look for
  - what Luke says about Jesus' identity
  - what Luke says about Jesus' mission
  - what Luke says about how to respond to Jesus

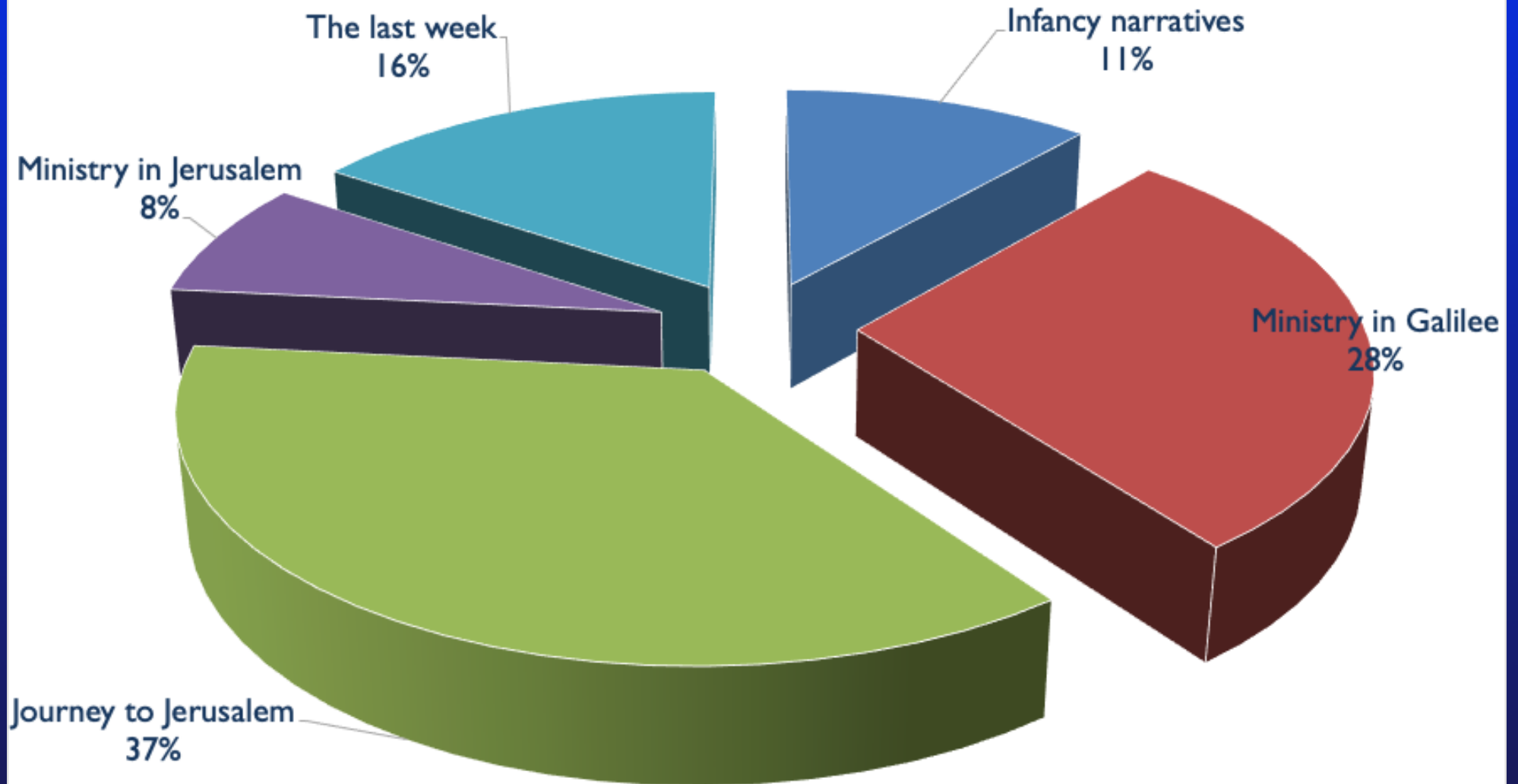
How is Luke's Gospel  
organised?

# The shape of Luke's Gospel

- chs 1–2 introduce Jesus: the 'infancy narrative'
- 3:1–9:50 focused in Galilee
  - 3:1-22 starting with John the baptiser
  - 3:23-38 where Jesus comes from
  - 4:1–9:50 Jesus' initial ministry
- 9:51–19:44 the journey to Jerusalem
  - 9:51, 53, 56, 57; 10:1; 13:22, 31, 33; 14:25; 17:11; 18:31, 35-36; 19:1, 11, 28
  - much distinctively Lukan material here
  - focus on reforming the people of God
- 19:45–24:53 focused in Jerusalem itself



# The shape of Luke's Gospel



# The shape of Luke's Gospel

- 2:40 = 12 years

'The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.'

- 2:52 = ?18 years

'And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.'

- 19:28–24:53 = ?a week

- 22:1–23:56 = ?48 hours

# A two-volume work

1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach from the beginning 2 until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. (Acts 1:1-2)

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# Who was Theophilus?

- an actual person or a fictional character?
- a believer, an enquirer or an unbeliever?
- a Gentile, a godfearer or a Jew?

# Luke's special emphases

# The context of world history

2:1-2 'In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.'

3:1-2 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.'

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# Marginalised people: women

- infancy narratives
  - Mary, Elisabeth, Anna
  - contrast Matthew 1:20-21

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph] in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

# Marginalised people: women

- helpers of Jesus

8:1-3 'Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.'



# Marginalised people: women

- helped by Jesus
  - the woman bent double 13:11-17
    - ‘And ought not this woman, **a daughter of Abraham** whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?’ (v 16)

# Marginalised people: women

- women as subject of parables  
(sometimes 'paired' with a parable about a man)
  - the lost coin 15:8-10
    - cf. the lost sheep 15:3-7

# Marginalised people: people in poverty

- Jesus' mission
  - 4:18-19 (Isaiah 61:1-2) good news to poor people

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim  
freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

# Marginalised people: people in poverty

- Jesus' mission
- care for people in poverty
  - 14:12-14 Invite poor people to banquets

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But **when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.** Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

# Marginalised people: people in poverty

- Jesus' mission
- care for people in poverty
- parables about wealth and poverty—all distinctively Lukan
  - the rich fool 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

But God said to him, ‘**You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’**

**This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are not rich toward God.”**

Luke 12:31-21

# Marginalised people: people who are disreputable

- Samaritans
  - the parable of the good Samaritan 10:25-37
    - 10:33 'a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.'
  - and note Philip going to Samaritans with the gospel message Acts 8:5-25

# Marginalised people: people who are disreputable

- Samaritans
- 'tax collectors and sinners' 5:29-32

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

- people with leprosy 5:12-13

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.



# Marginalised people: people who are disreputable

- Samaritans
- ‘tax collectors and sinners’
- people with leprosy
- the thief on the cross 23:39-43

‘And we indeed have been condemned justly, for **we are getting what we deserve for our deeds,** but this man has done nothing wrong.’ (v 41)

# Prayer and praise

- prayer

- Jesus praying—a Lukan distinctive

‘When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And **as he was praying**, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.’ 3:21-22

- Jesus teaches about prayer 11:9-13

“So I say to you:**Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.** For everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**

# Prayer and praise

- praise and joy
  - ‘Luke’s is a singing Gospel.’ (Leon Morris)
  - hymns in infancy narratives 2:29-32

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel.”

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- rejoicing and joy

‘He [John] will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.’ 1:14-15

‘Then they worshipped him [Jesus] and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.’ 24:52-53

# Prayer and praise

- praise and joy
  - ‘Luke’s is a singing Gospel.’ (Leon Morris)
  - hymns in infancy narratives 2:29-32
  - rejoicing and joy
  - the joy of repentance
    - ‘Rejoice with me...there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents’ 15:9-10

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