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Studying Jesus'  
mission in Luke

# Study the Galilee section of Luke

- 3:1–9:50
  - What do you learn about Jesus' mission? What has Jesus come to do?
  - You will also notice things about Jesus' identity (who he is): how do these link with his mission?

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Luke 23: Listening to  
Luke's story of the cross



## Luke as painter

St Luke drawing the  
Virgin

by Rogier van der  
Weyden

painted c.1435–1440

# Luke 23

- central figure is Jesus on the cross vv 32-46
- the series of hearings vv 1-25
- Simon of Cyrene v 26
- the weeping women vv 27-31
- the circumstances of the crucifixion vv 32-46
- the centurion v 47
- the people v 48
- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53

# Luke's theology of the cross

Mark 10:45 'The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Luke 22:20 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood'

Acts 20:28 '...the church of God which he purchased with the blood of his own'

- Luke is doing theology **narratively**

# Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
  - Pilate vv 4, 14, 22
  - Herod v 15

# Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod

When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time...

...because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. v 8; cf. 9:9



# Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod
- Pilate
  - declared Jesus innocent three times—not just once  
vv 4, 14, 22 (+ v 15, reporting Herod)
  - the path of Pilate's failure  
vv 1-2, 3, 5, 6-7, 11b, 13-16, 18-19, 20, 24-25

So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished. vv 24-25

# Verses 1–25

- The innocence of Jesus
- Herod
- Pilate
- Responsibility for the death of Jesus
  - the Sanhedrin vv 1, 5, 18, 21, 23

But **they** kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and **their** voices prevailed. v 23

“

It is hardly likely that the Jewish leaders, who had planned the arrest and trial of Jesus so carefully, left the composition of this crowd to chance.

R. T. France

“

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Acts 4:27

“

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. **They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.**

Acts 4:27-28

# Verses 1–25

- God's purposes in the death of Jesus
  - the charges against Jesus v 2

We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.

- Jesus' real crime was blasphemy 22:70-71
- God's purposes for Israel Genesis 12:1-3

“

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Genesis 12:1-3

# Verses 1–25

- God's purposes in the death of Jesus
  - the charges against Jesus v 2

We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.

- the Sanhedrin were perverting the nation
- Jesus did not forbid tribute to Caesar 20:21-26
- the Jewish leaders' aims were political power



# Verses 1–25

- God's purposes in the death of Jesus
  - the charges against Jesus v 2
  - Barabbas vv 18-19, 25

“

Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.)...[Pilate] released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Luke 23:18-19, 25

## Verses 26–46

- Jesus' innocence vv 31, 41
- the two thieves vv 39-43
  - one criticises Jesus v 39
  - the other vv 40-42
- three small scenes vv 44-46
  - the sun withdraws its light vv 44-45a
  - the veil of the temple is torn in two v 45b
  - Jesus commends himself into God's hands v 46

## Verses 26–46

- Jesus' innocence vv 31, 41
- the two thieves vv 39-43
- three small scenes vv 44-46
- Simon of Cyrene v 26
  - the procession to crucifixion
  - Simon carrying the crossbeam (*patibulum*)
  - Simon may have become a believer Mark 15:21;  
Romans 16:13

# Carrying the cross

Then [Jesus] said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves **and take up their cross daily and follow me.**” Luke 9:23

**Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me** cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and **the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death**, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:10-11

# Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
  - the centurion v 47
  - the people v 48
  - Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53

## Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence

- Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53

**All of them** asked, “Are you, then, the Son of God?” He said to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!” Then **the assembly rose as a body** and brought Jesus before Pilate. 22:70–23:1

# Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
  - Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53
  - the centurion v 47
    - a gentile



# Verses 47–53

- Jesus' innocence
  - Joseph of Arimathea vv 50-53
  - the centurion v 47
  - the people v 48
  - preparing for Pentecost

...this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, **you** crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. Acts 2:23

# Responsibility for Jesus' death

...this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, **you** crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. Acts 2:23

Because **the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders** did not recognise [Jesus] or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, **they** fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though **they** found no cause for a sentence of death, **they** asked Pilate to have him killed. When **they** had carried out everything that was written about him, **they** took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

Acts 13:27-29 (in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch)

# How to respond to Jesus' death

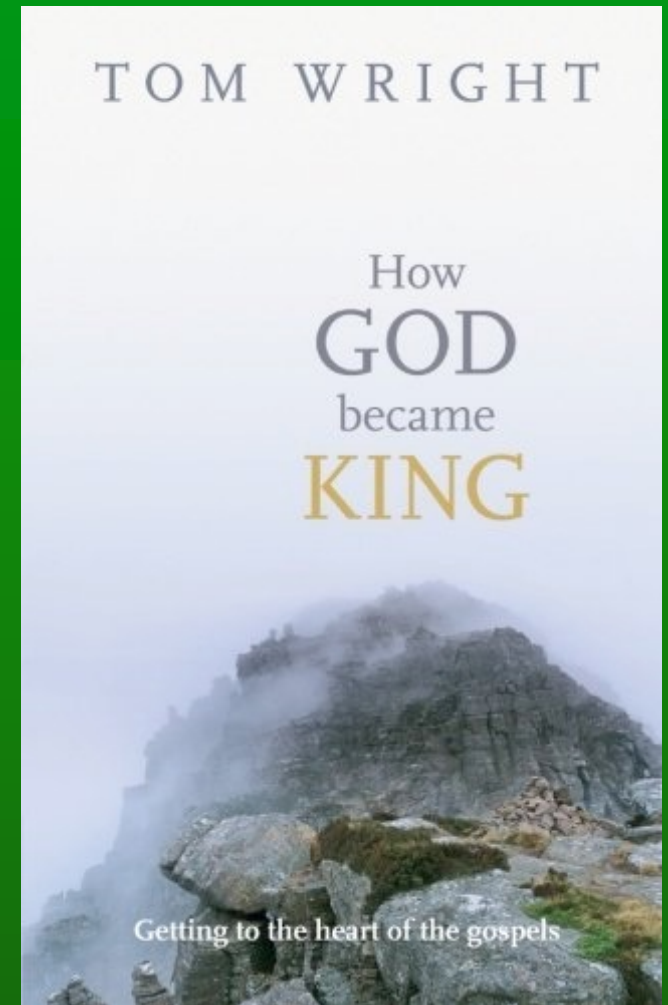
- three negative pictures: what not to do
  - the Jewish leadership: opposition
  - Herod: ridicule
  - Pontius Pilate: fence-sitting
- three positive pictures: what to do
  - the people: sorrow for sin
  - the penitent thief: asking for help
  - Simon of Cyrene: following the way of the cross

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Listening to Luke  
through Tom Wright's  
four 'loudspeakers'

# Tom Wright, *How God became King*

- Four 'loudspeakers' to use to listen to the Gospels
  - the climax of Israel's story
  - Israel's God returning to his people
  - foundation documents for the renewed people of God
  - the kingdom of God clashing with the kingdom of Caesar



# The Gospels as the climax of the story of Israel

- the fulfillment of Scripture
  - the infancy stories Luke 1–2
  - the mission of Jesus as a new exodus

“

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God’s salvation.’”

Luke 3:4-6, quoting Isaiah 40:3-5

# The Gospels as the climax of the story of Israel

- the fulfillment of Scripture
  - the infancy stories Luke 1–2
  - the mission of Jesus as a new exodus
  - the death of Jesus



# Jesus' story as the story of Israel's God coming back to his people

- again, notice 3:4-6

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# Jesus' story as the story of Israel's God coming back to his people

- again, notice 3:4-6
- who is John? 7:27

“

“Behold, I send my messenger, and **he will prepare the way before me.** And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, he is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.’

Malachi 3:1

# Jesus' story as the story of Israel's God coming back to his people

- again, notice 3:4-6
- who is John? 7:27
  - if John is the messenger who prepares for the Lord, then Jesus must be the Lord
- Jesus inspects the temple 19:45-46

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When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Luke 19:45-46, quoting Jeremiah 7:11

# Jesus' story as the story of Israel's God coming back to his people

- again, notice 3:4-6
- who is John? 7:27
  - if John is the messenger who prepares for the Lord, then Jesus must be the Lord
- Jesus inspects the temple 19:45-46
- sadness and surprise that the leaders of God's people reject Jesus
  - Luke 21 echoes fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC



# The Gospels as foundation documents for a new movement, telling the story of the launch of the renewed people of God

- discipleship theme in the journey to Jerusalem 9:51–19:44
  - this is what the life of the renewed people of God is to be like
- Luke's emphasis on including marginalised people
  - women, people in poverty, people considered disreputable (tax collectors and sinners, Samaritans, people with leprosy, children)

# The Gospels as the story of the kingdom of God clashing with the kingdom of Caesar

- Luke alone places Jesus' birth in the context of **world** history 2:1-2; 3:1-2

“

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This census too place before the census while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Luke 1:1-2 (my translation)



- (1) In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar
- (2) when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
- (3) Herod tetrarch of Galilee,
- (4) his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis,
- (5) and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene
- (6) during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas

the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Luke 3:1-2

# The Gospels as the story of the kingdom of God clashing with the kingdom of Caesar

- Luke alone places Jesus' birth in the context of **world** history 2:1-2; 3:1-2
- Jesus is the saviour of the **world**
  - 2:32 'a light for revelation to the gentiles and glory to your people Israel'
- The gospel message has implications for the great social and political powers of the day
  - Acts 17:7 the believers announce '**another king, Jesus**'

# Listening through the loudspeakers

In groups study one of these passages from Luke aiming to listen for the four loudspeakers at work—they will not necessarily be the issues I've talked about, and there may not necessarily be all four loudspeakers at full volume in every passage

1:46-55

1:67-79

2:25-38

18:31–19:10

24:13-35

24:44-53

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# Overview of John

# John's 'spiritual Gospel'

...John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. (Clement of Alexandria)

I like the comparison of John's Gospel to a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant can swim. It is both simple and profound. It is for the veriest beginner in the faith and for the mature Christian. (Leon L. Morris)

Scripture is like a river again, broad and deep, shallow enough here for the lamb to go wading, but deep enough there for the elephant to swim. (Gregory the Great)



# How John shapes his story

- **1–12 The book of signs**
  - 1:1-18 prologue
  - 1:19-51 beginnings
  - 2–4 Jesus' ministry begins: from Cana to Cana
  - 5–10 revelation and testimony
  - 11 the raising of Lazarus
  - 12 transitional
- **13–21 The book of glory**
  - 13–16 teaching discourse
  - 17 Jesus at prayer
  - 18–19 trial and crucifixion
  - 20–21 resurrection

# How John tells his story: 'the signs'

- 'sign' Greek *sēmeion*

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. 20:30-31

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For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. (11:15) = **continue to believe**

Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." (6:29) = **come to believe**

# How John tells his story: the 'signs'

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Better: that **the Messiah (who is the son of God) is Jesus**

—so John is answering the question, 'Who is the Messiah?'

# How John tells his story: the 'signs'

- 2:1-11 water into wine (v 11)
- 4:46-54 healing of the official's son (v 54)
- 5:1-18 the healing of the man at Bethesda
- 6:1-15 feeding five thousand (v 14)
- 6:16-21 walking on water
- 9:1-41 healing the man born blind (v 16)
- 11:1-53 raising Lazarus (v 47; 12:18)
- 20 resurrection of Jesus (2:18-19)
  - questions about signs
  - statements that Jesus did signs

# How John tells his story: 'I am'

- 'I am' Greek *egō eimi*
- 6:35, 41, 48, 51 bread of life, living bread
- 8:12 light of the world
- 10:7, 9, 11, 14 gate, good shepherd—Ezekiel 36
- 11:25 resurrection and life
- 14:6 way, truth and life
- 15:1, 5 (true) vine

# How John tells his story: 'I am'

- 'I am' Greek *egō eimi*
- 8:58 'before Abraham was, **I am**'
  - God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, '**I AM** has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:14
  - "I, the LORD—with the first of them and with the last—**I am he.**" Isaiah 41:4
  - "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that **I am he.** Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. Isaiah 43:10

# How John tells his story: 'I am'

- 'I am' Greek *egō eimi*
- 8:58 'before Abraham was, **I am**'
  - Jesus to the Samaritan woman: '**I am**, the one speaking to you' 4:26
  - '**I am** the one who speaks' Isaiah 45:19; 52:5



# How John tells his story: teaching

- seven teaching discourses
  - 3:1-21 Nicodemus
  - 4:1-26 Samaritan woman at the well
  - 5:19-47 relationship of Father and son
  - 6:22-59 bread of life
  - 7:14-36 in temple
  - 8:12-59 light of the world
  - 10:1-39 good shepherd

# How John tells his story

	Week 1	Passion week
Day 1	1:19-28	
Day 2	1:29-34 'the next day' 1:29	
Day 3	1:35-39 'the next day' 1:35	
Day 4	1:40-42	
Day 5	1:43-51 'the next day' 1:43	
Day 6	(travel to Cana)	
Day 7	2:1-11 'on the third day' 2:1	

# How John tells his story

	Week 1	Passion week
Day 1	1:19-28	12:1-11 'six days before the Passover' 12:1
Day 2	1:29-34 'the next day' 1:29	12:12-36 'the next day' 12:12
Day 3	1:35-39 'the next day' 1:35	Jesus in hiding 12:36
Day 4	1:40-42	Jesus in hiding 12:36
Day 5	1:43-51 'the next day' 1:43	13:1-19:42 'the day of preparation' 19:31, 42
Day 6	(travel to Cana)	Passover/sabbath 19:31
Day 7	2:1-11 'on the third day' 2:1	20:1-23 'the first day of the week' 20:1

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## How John tells his story: misunderstandings

- Character interactions with Jesus (Christopher Skinner)
  - Jesus speaks/acts, especially about his mission
  - the character misunderstands
  - Jesus speaks again to clarify and correct the misunderstanding
  - one or more prologue themes are raised, drawing in the reader's (superior) knowledge

# How John tells his story: misunderstandings

- Character interactions with Jesus (Skinner)
- 6:54-71
  - Jesus says people must eat his flesh and drink his blood vv 54-57
  - the disciples misunderstand and some turn away vv 60, 66
  - Jesus clarifies that the flesh is useless; his words are spirit and life v 63
  - prologue: 'in him was life...the word became flesh' 1:14
  - 'you have the words of eternal life' v 67

# How John tells his story: trial theme

- 'Cosmic trial' theme (Anthony Harvey, Andrew Lincoln)



# How John tells his story: trial theme

- 1:19 and 21:24 as *inclusio* (bookends)
- Jesus testifies
- the Father testifies about Jesus
- the Spirit will testify for Jesus
- the disciples will testify for Jesus
- the Samaritan woman testifies
- Jesus' works testify
- the Scriptures testify to Jesus
- the crowds continue to testify
- the eyewitness of the cross testifies
- a group testifies about 'the disciple'

# How John tells his story: trial theme

- ‘Cosmic trial’ theme (Anthony Harvey, Andrew Lincoln)
- witness/testimony
- Jesus as both witness and judge
  - ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?’ Genesis 18:25
  - Rachel said, ‘God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.’ Genesis 30:6
  - the LORD raised up judges, who delivered them out of the power of those who plundered them. Judges 2:16
  - People will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth.’ Psalm 58:11
  - Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Psalm 67:4

# How John tells his story: trial theme

- ‘Cosmic trial’ theme (Anthony Harvey, Andrew Lincoln)
- witness/testimony
- Jesus as both witness and judge
- the world is being judged, although it thinks it is judging Jesus
  - “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” 19:10

In his witness to the truth, Jesus becomes the judge and both 'the Jews' and Pilate are by their response to Jesus. Thus the Roman trial becomes the vehicle for the irony that the apparent judge and the apparent accusers are in reality being judged by the apparent accused. Indeed, one could just as easily entitle the episode 'The Trial of the Jews before Jesus' as 'The Trial of Jesus before Pilate'.

Andrew Lincoln

# How John tells his story: glory

- *doxa* 'glory' *doxazō* 'glorify'
- 'glory' as a quality of God in the OT Scriptures
  - **the glory of YHWH** appeared in the cloud. Exodus 16:10
  - **The glory of YHWH** settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of **the glory of YHWH** was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Exodus 24:16-17
  - The heavens are telling **the glory of God**; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Psalm 19:1
  - YHWH as '**the king of glory**' Psalm 24:7-10
  - I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and **I will glorify your name** forever. Psalm 86:12

# How John tells his story

- *doxa* 'glory' *doxazō* 'glorify'
- 'glory' as a quality of God in the OT
- in Jesus, we see the glory of God
- Jesus glorifies the Father
- Jesus prays for the Father to glorify his name
- God glorifies Jesus
- glory through the cross
- the disciples reveal God's/Jesus' glory
- the Spirit will glorify Jesus

# How John presents 'the Jews'

- the hostile language
- which Jews?
- attributes of torah (Jewish law) are true of Jesus
  - God's word, pre-existed
  - source of light and life
  - grace and truth
  - obedience to torah becomes believing in Jesus and doing his word

# How John presents 'the Jews'

- John **divides** Judaism rather than opposing it
  - does John reflect a situation of conflict with unbelieving Jews?
    - 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 'put out of the synagogue'
    - *birkat ha'minim* 'blessing of the heretics'
      - 'For the renegades let there be no hope, and may the arrogant kingdom soon be rooted out in our days and Nazarenes and the heretics perish as in a moment, be blotted out from the book of life, and with the righteous may they not be inscribed. Blessed are you, O Lord, who humbles the arrogant.'
- I Thessalonians 2:14-16 early opposition of Jewish believers by other Jews



Question Time!