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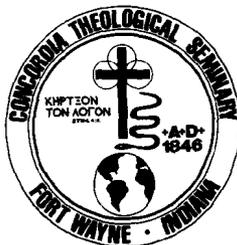
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Luke the Preacher: Preparing Sermons for the Gospels of Series C

Arthur A. Just, Jr.

The advent of the three-year lectionary series has given each evangelist a significant place in the church's liturgical life. Luke the evangelist is a preacher and theologian who records the words of Jesus and organizes them to proclaim the gospel. As the third of the synoptics, Luke gives the church a different perspective on the life of Jesus than do Matthew or Mark. He is the most thematic of the evangelists, utilizing the best literary techniques of his day to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. He structures his gospel around specific themes that "will be developed, dropped, then presented again,"¹ and brought to completion at the end of the gospel. The historical-grammatical method of exegesis encourages this thematic view of Luke, building on a syntactical and linguistic analysis by observing how the structure of the language is patterned to aid the reader in seeing the author's intentions. Tracing Lukan motifs through the gospel assists us in word studies by letting Scripture interpret Scripture through the use of parallel passages.

A thematic approach to the gospel is *historical*, discovering the original context of meaning and addressing the specific historical and cultural context of Luke's gospel. The first concern of the interpreter is to consider carefully the first century reader's understanding of Lukan themes, that is, how the original audience would have understood Luke's words. Early Christian readers traced the themes of Luke's gospel to discern the purpose of God as it is reflected in Luke's narrative. By perceiving Luke's gospel as literature, today's preacher may use structural and thematic analysis of the gospel to assist him in the formation of a sermon theme or structure. Thus, the preacher is able to see the value of the gospel for preaching and catechesis.²

The goal in any interpretation of the New Testament for preaching is first to assess the *theological significance* of the text for the original audience, and then from there to see the appropriate application for today's world. But the application must correspond to the theological significance so that one may both preserve the original intention of the words and apply that original intention to congregations today.³ As Luke preaches to his congregation by relating to them the preaching of Jesus, so we today as preachers of the gospel

proclaim to people the words of Jesus by means of the preaching of Luke. Thus, the more we know about the evangelist and his literary, structural, and thematic intentions, the more we shall be able to discover accurately the theological significance of his text for the original audience and apply that significance to congregations today. In preparation for preaching on the gospels of Series C, this overview of Luke will focus on the theological significance of Lukan structure and themes.

The Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)

Luke is the only gospel with a literary prologue that begins as the Hellenistic world begins good literature. In one brilliant periodic sentence, using some of the best Greek prose in the New Testament, Luke tells the reader what the gospel is about, what his research methods are, and what the goal of his work is. This gospel is an apostolic work, received from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, proclaiming the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation in the events of Jesus' life. Luke writes this work to Theophilus as catechesis (κατηχήθης), confirming for him what he has already been taught, so that he might have assurance concerning this word about Jesus. (The prologue is part of the gospel for St. Luke's Day, October 18.)

The Infancy Narratives (Luke 1:5-2:52)

Immediately following the prologue, Luke shifts from brilliant Hellenistic Greek to archaic Septuagintal Greek. Something is communicated by this drastic shift in literary style that Luke wants the reader to note. This is no ordinary narrative about any ordinary man. It sounds like the Old Testament Scriptures because it is a continuation and fulfilment of those Scriptures in the person of Jesus Christ. The story of Jesus is ancient history with a long pedigree, tapping into Israel's history and completing it. As Luke's genealogy will relate, the seed of Jesus goes back to the first man, Adam. The Hellenistic world would have been impressed by this point. One of the reasons that people tolerated the Jews was their ancient roots. Luke appeals to this history apologetically so that the reader may give this life of Christ a serious reading. Even the language will

suggest this appeal.

Luke begins and ends his gospel in Jerusalem in the temple to indicate that Jesus' Jewish roots are important. The infancy narratives show in the fashion of step-parallelism⁴ that John and Jesus are the two great figures of biblical history, and their relationship shows how the old gives way to the new. This theme will be carried out throughout the gospel (Luke 3, 5, and 7 in particular).

The identity of Jesus is firmly established in the first two chapters. He is called Jesus (1:31) and given the strongest characteristics: "He will be called great (μέγας) and Son of the Most High (υἱὸς ὑψίστου), and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (1:32-33). The angel goes on to tell Mary that the child conceived in her womb will be called holy, the Son of God (υἱὸς θεοῦ). At Jesus' birth the angels announce to the shepherds that Jesus is the Savior (σωτήρ) who is Christ the Lord (χριστὸς κύριος). Simeon says that he will not die until he sees the Lord's Anointed One (τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου). The entire infancy narrative is filled with themes of the gospel that proclaim that now, in John and Jesus, God's final end-time salvation is breaking in.

The infancy narratives are also filled with superb representatives of the Old Testament remnant. Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna are all witnesses to the faith of those who wait in expectation for the coming of God's Anointed One to be the suffering righteous fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. The canticles in Luke's first two chapters, which announce themes that will be carried through the rest of the gospel, build upon the canticles of the Old Testament. Since the Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria in Excelsis, and Nunc Dimittis now serve as liturgical songs, the church transcends time when it uses in its divine liturgy and prayer offices Old Testament hymns found in a New Testament context. The church is a church of both the Old and New Testaments. During the Advent and Christmas cycle, Luke's infancy narrative dominates all three series, for Luke is the Christmas gospel.

The Preparation of Jesus (Luke 3:1-4:13)

Luke has a brief but significant transition from the infancy narratives to the ministry of Jesus. From 3:1 to 4:13, John and Jesus take center stage once again, but this time they are featured as actively engaged in their biblical roles. John prepares the way for the Christ by "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (3:3, κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν). The step-parallelism between John and Jesus is highlighted in Jesus' baptism, where only Jesus is mentioned (3:21-22). Jesus now stands alone as Savior, for John, who is "great before the Lord" (1:15), has prepared for this moment and now gives way to the "Great" One (1:32) who stands in the Jordan anointed by the Spirit and declared as the beloved Son by the Father. It is here that Luke places the genealogy of Jesus so that the reader sees that the ancestral heritage of Jesus has significance for both Jewish (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David) and world (Adam and Noah) history. The movement from the genealogy to the temptation is clear to the reader: the Son of Adam, son of God (3:38), is now tempted to doubt His sonship ("if you are the Son of God," 4:3, 9). But Jesus' defeat of Satan sets the tone of His entire ministry, a foreshadowing of the "opportune time" (4:13) when Jesus will meet Satan once and for all in Jerusalem and achieve His ultimate victory. In the lectionary Luke 3 occurs in Advent II and III and in Epiphany I, the Baptism of our Lord; and Luke 4:1-13 is the Gospel for Lent I, the Temptation of our Lord.

The Galilean Ministry (Luke 4:14-9:50)

The Galilean ministry of Jesus begins with a simple introduction in 4:14-15. The same Spirit who anointed Jesus in His baptism filled Him up and led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan; now Jesus returns in the power of that Spirit to Galilee to begin His ministry of teaching and miracle-working. His first sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth in Luke 4:16-30 is foundational for the rest of Jesus' teaching (Epiphany III and IV). Based on the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 61, where the messianic ministry is described as proclamation, it outlines what He would preach throughout His ministry. Three of the four infinitives in

Luke 4:18-19 deal with preaching: proclamation of good news to the poor (εὐαγγελισασθαι πτωχοις), proclamation of release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind (κηρύξαι αιχμαλώτοις ἄφεςιν καὶ τυφλοις ἀνάβλεψιν), and proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord (κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν). The fourth infinitive speaks of setting free those who are oppressed (ἀποστειλαί τεθραυσμένουσ ἐν ἄφῆσει). "Today," Jesus says, "this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Isaiah 61 and Luke emphasize the notion of release, or what we often translate as forgiveness (ἀφῆσιμι). The essence of Jesus' proclamation was release—release from the bondage of sin, sickness, and Satan. The good news is that this release is present in Him who was to be crucified to accomplish that release and raised from the dead to proclaim that in Him all of creation would be freed from the bondage of its fallenness.

Jesus' ministry is a continuous expression of this release to those who are captive. After the episode in Nazareth, Jesus continues teaching and healing, making no distinction between physical sickness and demonic possession. In 4:35 He rebukes the man possessed with demons, and in 4:39 He rebukes the fever of Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus will rebuke both fevers and devils and say, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God (εὐαγγελισασθαι με δεῖ τὴν βασιλειαν τοῦ θεοῦ) to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (4:43). The kingdom comes with the proclamation that in Him all things are to be released from bondage and that a new era of salvation is now present. "Which is easier," Jesus asks the Pharisees, "to say, 'your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'rise and walk'?" (5:23). Jesus tells them that the Son of Man has authority both to forgive sins and heal paralytics; both demonstrate that the Creator has come to His creation to release it from its fallenness.

In His sermon in Nazareth Jesus announces through His use of Isaiah that He is now present to complete the prophetic pattern of teaching and miracle-working. His Galilean ministry is a demonstration of this pattern. But there is another element to the pattern that is also marked here in Nazareth and will continue until He arrives

in Jerusalem. Part of the prophetic pattern is rejection, seen here in Nazareth's rejection of Jesus, the only time before the cross when Jesus is physically assaulted with the intention of death. In Moses, of course, one already finds the pattern of those prophetic characteristics that mark the Messiah as well: He was a great teacher and miracle-worker who was rejected by the Israelites for His prophetic proclamations. But Jesus chooses Elijah and Elisha to illustrate this pattern in His sermon in Nazareth, two prophets known for their teaching and miracles; but as His illustration points out, two prophets who were rejected by Israel and sent to Gentiles—Elijah to the widow of Zarephath, Elisha to the leprous Syrian Naaman. This same pattern may be seen in Abraham, David, John the Baptist, and the apostles in Acts. Jesus fits the pattern of the prophets in His life and death and completes it (cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Jesus, therefore, is the teacher who completes the teaching of the prophets; He is the miracle-worker who demonstrates the presence in the world of the new era of salvation; He is the rejected One who fulfills His own prophecy that "a prophet should not perish away from Jerusalem" (13:33) and makes atonement in Jerusalem for all the people.

During the Galilean ministry, Jesus demonstrates that the kingdom of God is present in Him by His teaching and miracles, but there is yet no explicit mention of His death and resurrection. The evangelist alludes to the death of Jesus by his numerous references to His rejection by Israel, particularly by the religious establishment (such as the Pharisees in 5:17-26 and 7:29-30). Jesus' controversy with the Pharisees foreshadows the complete rejection of Israel at the time of His crucifixion. As the gospel moves towards its climax, this rejection becomes more obvious as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and elders (the Sanhedrin) plot His death, a plot which the people join in Jerusalem.

But it is not until Luke 9 that Jesus explicitly ties the freedom He proclaimed in His teaching and demonstrated in His miracles to His suffering, death, and resurrection; the shock of the means of accomplishing this release was too much even for His most intrepid disciples. Luke 9 is the watershed chapter because of the juxtaposition of pericopes that lead to a climax. The theme of proclamation

and healing is carried over from Jesus' Galilean ministry into the commission of the twelve to accomplish the same things which Jesus did. With the gospel now spreading everywhere (9:6), the identity of Jesus is becoming an issue, even for Herod the tetrarch. Jesus is considered by Herod and the people to be a prophetic figure. Thus, He is placed in the same category as John the Baptist, Elijah, and the prophets of old (9:7-8). Is Jesus a great prophet or is He something more?

This question is answered in the very next pericope. The feeding of the five thousand is the great messianic miracle that helps identify Jesus as the Christ. Here the differences prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15 come to light. In Jesus God has raised up a prophet like Moses but greater than Moses. In the days of Moses the people were fed with manna, sufficient for the day, with all leftovers turning to rot. But Jesus the Creator comes to His creation, feeds His people, and there is abundance, leftovers, twelve baskets full. The people are satisfied (ἐχορτάσθησαν). (The same word occurs in the beatitude, "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied [6:21, χορτασθήσεσθε]).

It is this great miracle that elicits Peter's confession in 9:18-21. But the confession that Jesus is "the Christ of God" comes only when the prophetic categories are reiterated at the prompting of Jesus. Here comparing Luke to Mark is worthwhile; after the feeding of the five thousand, there is the so-called "great omission" of Mark 6:45-8:26. Luke 9 connects the feeding of the five thousand, the confession of Peter, and the passion prediction in one seamless narrative (cf. the grammatical link between 9:21 and 22 in Nestle's twenty-fifth edition). With the passion prediction (9:22) the rejection of Jesus as Messiah is now given historical dimensions; the religious establishment will reject Him through suffering and death, and on the third day He will be raised. This announcement of the Messiah's suffering carries over to the disciples; just as they follow in His pattern of preaching and healing, so they too will follow the pattern of His suffering by taking up His cross daily. They will suffer rejection for proclaiming Jesus as the Christ who must suffer and rise (9:18-24, Pentecost V). Luke makes clear that there is an order to the kingdom, suffering before glory, demonstrat-

ed by the juxtaposition of the passion prediction (Jesus' suffering), the call to discipleship (disciples' suffering), and the transfiguration (Jesus' glory). Even within the manifestation of glory at the transfiguration the passion inserts itself as the way to that glory, for Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets, converse in glory about Jesus' "departure, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem" (9:31, τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἠμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, the "exodus" referring to His death, resurrection, and ascension, with a reminiscence of the greatest event in Israel's history). The words of Deuteronomy echo in the command of the Father: "Listen to Him!" (9:35)

The Galilean ministry occupies the attention of five Sundays in Epiphany (V, Luke 5:1-11; VI, Luke 6:17-26; VII, Luke 6:27-38; VIII, Luke 6:39-49; and Transfiguration, Luke 9:28-36) and four Sundays in Pentecost (II, Luke 7:1-10; III, Luke 7:11-17; IV, Luke 7:36-50; V, Luke 9:18-24). Thematically, this section includes the calling of the disciples (Luke 5), the sermon on the plain (Luke 6), the discourse on John and Jesus (Luke 7), and the transfiguration (Luke 9).

The Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27)

Most scholars distinguish between the Galilean ministry of Jesus (4:14-9:50), the journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27), the ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38), the passion narrative (22:1-23:56a), and the resurrection narrative (23:56b-24:53).⁵ The big turning point is in 9:51 where Jesus turns His face to go to Jerusalem (Pentecost VI, using Luke 9:51-62, being a turning point in the lectionary as well). Jesus' journey to Jerusalem extends until His entrance into the temple in 19:45. When Luke uses the expression ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας, he describes the inexorable destiny of Jesus in Jerusalem. Between 9:51 and 19:45 Jesus' journey is marked by notices in 13:22 and 17:11, two structural breaks within the narrative. Jesus' being "received up" (τῆς ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ) refers to the passion, resurrection, and ascension in Jerusalem, an expression similar to one used at the transfiguration in 9:31 to describe Jesus' departure (τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ). Luke graphically describes Jesus turning His face to Jerusalem (αὐτὸς

τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν), the place of destiny, and journeying (τοῦ πορεύεσθαι) towards His goal of death and resurrection.

From this point Jesus moves towards Jerusalem. But in the opinion of many scholars His movement is haphazard and without purpose. They do not perceive the inner thematic unity of Jesus as He teaches and prepares His disciples for the events in Jerusalem. Throughout this journey Jesus develops the themes of His Galilean ministry, showing how the rejection of His Messiahship and its content intensifies. The lines are being drawn in Israel between those who accept by faith the presence of God's kingdom in Jesus and those who reject it. Those who accept His messianic ministry and violent destiny are the outcasts in society who see in Jesus God's humble solution and have humbled themselves before God. The so-called "roles of reversal" dominate this journey—the first will be last and the last first (13:30); the exalted will be humbled and the humble exalted (14:11; 18:14). Tax collectors represent this group of sinners, and Luke frames Jesus' ministry with two significant pericopes on tax collectors, namely, Levi (5:27-39) and Zacchaeus (19:1-10), the "chief tax collector" (ἀρχιτελώνης, a *hapax* in the New Testament and all of Greek literature). The prophetic words of Luke 7:29-30 are illustrated repeatedly in the teaching of Jesus: "When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."

The hostility of the religious establishment heats up as Jesus' own teaching becomes more and more directed against it. During the Galilean ministry the negative response was rather mild: in 5:17-26 the Pharisees and teachers act in a confused way about His claim to forgive sins and accuse Him of blasphemies; in 6:11 they are filled with fury and plot against Him after a miracle on the Sabbath; and in 7:36-50 the same confusion exists about His forgiving sins. It is not until Luke 9:22 that this rejection is given substance in Jesus' prediction of the passion; the members of the Sanhedrin are declared to be the ones who will put Jesus to death. From this point on the conflict between Jesus and the religious establishment intensifies.

But Luke makes clear that there is a division in locale within the Sanhedrin itself—the Pharisees (including the lawyers and the scribes, who were "leaders" among the Pharisees) representing Jesus' opposition outside Jerusalem, the Sadducees His opposition in Jerusalem. As He journeys to Jerusalem, Jesus comes up against the opposition in chapter after chapter (e.g., 10:25 and 11:37).

Some significant texts summarize this opposition in a vivid way. Jesus' most poignant words occur in Luke 13-15. His eschatological discourse in 13:22-35 shows Israel that those to be included in the future feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Gentiles and that there is no guarantee that the Jews and their leaders will be present. In 14:11-24 Jesus gives a lesson in humility to the Pharisees while dining in a Pharisee's house, concluding with a parable that shows the rejection of God's messianic banquet by Israel and the entrance to the feast by Gentiles. Luke summarizes all these things in 15:1-2: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" The parable of the prodigal son demonstrates that repentance and joy mark the essence of the kingdom and those who are members of that kingdom. The older son represents the Pharisees and their cohorts, the prodigal all sinners who repent and believe in Jesus. Other stories that are uniquely Lukan illustrate a similar theme, such as the rich man and Lazarus in 16:19-31 and the Pharisee and tax collector in 18:9-14. Jesus' presence at Zacchaeus' home in 19:1-10 summarizes all of Jesus' teaching about sinners and the self-righteous with the telling proclamation of Jesus that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (19:10).

The Ministry in Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-21:38)

The ministry in Jerusalem is the climax of Jesus' teaching, coming to an end in Luke 19:44, where Jesus, having drawn near to Jerusalem, weeps over the city "because you did not know the time of your visitation." The last word from the Pharisees in Luke's gospel is heard in 19:39: "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." This is in response to "the whole multitude of disciples" who praise God in 19:38 for the "mighty works" (δυνάμεων) they had seen in Jesus

by saying: "Blessed is the King who comes (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ βασιλεύς) in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" This final opposition by the Pharisees to Jesus results from the people assigning to Jesus the messianic title ὁ ἐρχόμενος and designating Him as ὁ βασιλεύς. The Pharisees reject the fulfilment in Jesus of the messianic promises of the Old Testament, the very type of rejection Jesus experienced at the beginning of His Galilean ministry in His hometown of Nazareth in Luke 4:16-30.

When Jesus finally enters Jerusalem in 19:45, He immediately goes to the temple to take possession of it as the place of His final teachings (Luke 20-21). These teachings will be the basis for His rejection by the Sanhedrin. Only Luke among the synoptics makes this point explicit by stating twice in three verses that Jesus was teaching in the temple. In 19:47-48 the daily teaching of Jesus in the temple (καὶ ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ) prompted the chief priests, scribes, and principal men (Sanhedrin) to plot "to destroy Him" (ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν ἀπολέσαι), but they were handcuffed because "all the people hung upon His words" (ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ὅπασ εἰς ἐξεκρέματο αὐτοῦ ἀκούων). In 20:1 (the very next verse) Luke describes Jesus as "teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel" (καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν διδάσκοντος αὐτοῦ τὸν λαὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ εὐαγγελιζομένου). Luke's use of εὐαγγελίζομαι links it to Jesus' sermon in Nazareth in 4:18 and His travel summaries in 4:43 and 8:1, where Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom of God (4:43, εὐαγγελίσασθαι με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ). Again the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Sanhedrin) challenge His authority. Luke concludes this section in 21:37-38 with another summary statement concerning Jesus' teaching in the temple: "And every day He was teaching in the temple (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων) . . . and early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him" (καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὠρθηρίζεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀκούειν [an infinitive of purpose] αὐτοῦ). Jesus' teaching in Jerusalem in Luke 20-21 is framed by these references to His teaching in the temple and the positive response of all the people (ὁ λαὸς referring to Israel) to Him. Thus, Jesus has entered into the

temple and replaced the Sanhedrin's authority with His.

The teaching of Jesus in Luke 20-21 is directed against the religious establishment of Jerusalem, as is evident in the climactic parable of the workers in the vineyard in Luke 20:9-18. It is prophetic of what Jesus will soon suffer in Jerusalem (Lent V). Jesus' citation of Psalm 118, "the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner" (20:17), and His interpretation, "every one who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but when it falls on any one it will crush him" (20:18), is an ominous sign to the establishment and is interpreted by them as such: "The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him at that very hour, but they feared the people; for they perceived that He had told this parable against them" (20:19). The death of Jesus is now imminent.

The Passion Narrative (Luke 22:1-23:56a)

The passion narrative begins with the passover meal, which serves as the occasion for the Jerusalem authorities to make the final plans for the death of Jesus. On the basis of Jesus' opposition to the religious authorities of Jerusalem in His teaching at the temple, the chief priests and scribes set in motion the arrest of Jesus, in 22:1-6, through Jesus' disciple Judas "as the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the passover." The connection between the passover (πάσχα) and the passion (πάσχω) is unavoidable. The meal as the place of betrayal is a firm part of the eucharistic tradition of the church. Paul introduces his narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23 with "on the night when He was betrayed" (ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ καὶ παρέδωκα). The intentions of the authorities in Jerusalem reach a climax as Jesus prepares for His final teaching at the meal with His disciples. Only Luke records the five dialogues between Jesus and His disciples after the words of institution in Luke 22:21-38, an unfortunate lapse in the lectionary (Maundy Thursday includes only the Lukan institution narrative of 22:7-20 [the longer text]). These final teachings of Jesus look back and encapsulate much of what Jesus taught in Galilee and as He made His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus is put to death by the chief priests, His antagonists in

Jerusalem, and the Pharisees, His antagonists outside Jerusalem. Four charges against Jesus may be discerned in His trials, and it is the fourth charge, in Luke 23:5, that seals His death: "But they [the members of the Sanhedrin] were urgent saying, 'He stirs up the people, teaching (διδάσκων) throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.'" Such a charge encompasses Jesus' teaching from its beginning in Galilee in His sermon in Nazareth (in Luke 4:16-30) down to His teaching in Jerusalem in the temple (in Luke 20-21), illustrating the Lukan geographical perspective of moving Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, the city of His destiny. Jesus is rejected for His teaching that He is God's anointed Messiah, present in the world to fulfill the Old Testament promises of salvation.

The passion material naturally occurs during Holy Week. The preacher's temptation at the beginning of Holy Week is to avoid the suggestion of the new lectionary to preach on the entire passion story (Luke 23:1-49) and to focus instead on one isolated incident within the passion story. But there is great wisdom in considering the entire passion on the newly named "Passion Sunday," for it not only sets the tone for the entire Holy Week vigil, but also brings to a conclusion the entire church year up to this climactic point. Passion Sunday begins a liturgical rhythm that carries the church along to its climax. The gospels themselves are nothing more than a long introduction to the passion story, and the same thing is true of the church year.

The Resurrection Narrative (Luke 23:56b-24:53)

Luke's final chapter is composed of four climactic pericopes, all of which summarize themes that he has developed in his gospel: 24:1-11 is an appearance of the angels to the women that announces the resurrection (Easter Day); 24:13-35 is the appearance of Jesus to the Emmaus disciples (Easter evening and Easter III A); 24:36-43 is the appearance in the upper room with the eating of fish; and 24:44-53 is the Lukan great commission (Ascension). Luke 24 is structured around three passion statements that figure significantly in three of the four pericopes. In 24:7 the angels tell the women to remember the words of Jesus in Galilee—that is, the words recorded in Luke 9:22 in the first passion prediction. The words here are

reminiscent of those words: ". . . that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise."

In the Emmaus story in 24:26, Jesus rebukes the disciples for not believing the prophets: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" Here the passion statement uses shorthand for Christ's crucifixion ("suffer these things") and resurrection ("enter into His glory"). And there is a new element added in 24:27 to the statement in 24:7, that this must take place in fulfilment of Scripture: "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." It is this opening of the Scriptures that causes their hearts to burn within them, but it is only in the breaking of the bread that they recognize Him. This is the climax of the gospel, the first time in Luke that anyone recognizes Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Christ.

In the final pericope of Luke 24, Jesus gives a commission to His disciples that is also in the form of a passion statement. He begins where He left off in the Emmaus story, with the fulfilment of Scripture (24:44) and the opening of their minds to understand the Scriptures (24:45). Then He says: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." It is this final element, repentance and forgiveness, that rounds out the kerygma and gives the disciples the form for their preaching in Acts. It is the perfect outline for preaching the gospel, for it contains the two kerygmatic parts of the gospel: the objective facts—His suffering, death, and resurrection—and the application of the gospel—our forgiveness. This gospel must be preached in a trinitarian context, as Jesus does, for He, the Son, sends the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, upon the disciples to preach the gospel. The gospel ends as it began—in the temple in a liturgical worship of praise to God with joy for His redemption.

For the preacher of Luke, a number of recent commentaries and monographs may be helpful in formulating textual sermons. The two major commentaries are still Joseph Fitzmyer's two volumes and

I. Howard Marshall's single volume.⁶ Fitzmyer is exhaustive in his bibliography (predating 1980) and very higher-critical in his commentary. His discussion of Lukan theology, comprising 283 pages, is an excellent introduction to the gospel. Marshall is less higher-critical and very insightful. Tannehill's aforementioned *Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* is much more helpful for the preacher, although it is not organized as a traditional commentary. These three commentaries will give the preacher access to monographs that treat individual Lukan themes.

Endnotes

1. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: Volume 1: The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 3.
2. For an excellent treatment of motif analysis, see Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts 1-9*, and Robert J. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 5-8.
3. See Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), who offers insights into the relationship between exegesis and preaching.
4. J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 313-314.
5. See J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, p. 134.
6. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978).