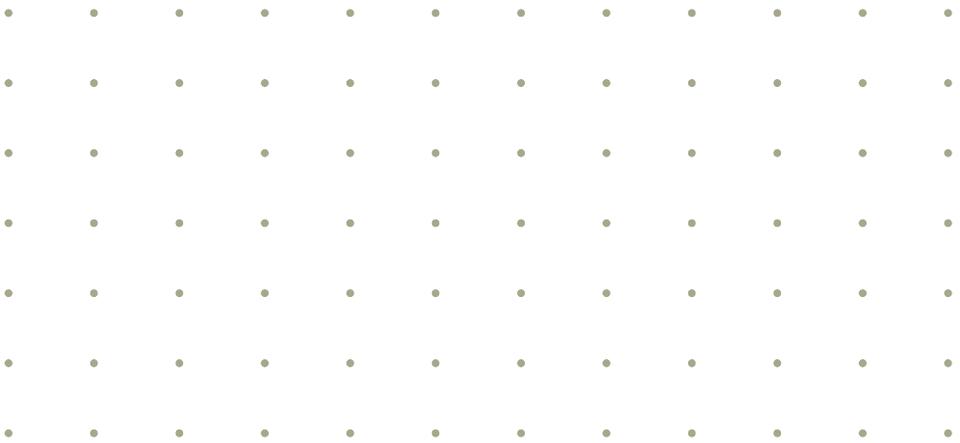




LUKE

A 12-WEEK STUDY

C. D. “Jimmy” Agan III



J. I. Packer

THEOLOGICAL EDITOR

Dane C. Ortlund

SERIES EDITOR

“This series is a tremendous resource for those wanting to study and teach the Bible with an understanding of how the gospel is woven throughout Scripture. Here are gospel-minded pastors and scholars doing gospel business from all the Scriptures. This is a biblical and theological feast preparing God’s people to apply the entire Bible to all of life with heart and mind wholly committed to Christ’s priorities.”

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“What a gift to earnest, Bible-loving, Bible-searching believers! The organization and structure of the Bible study format presented through the *Knowing the Bible* series is so well conceived. Students of the Word are led to understand the content of passages through perceptive, guided questions, and they are given rich insights and application all along the way in the brief but illuminating sections that conclude each study. What potential growth in depth and breadth of understanding these studies offer! One can only pray that vast numbers of believers will discover more of God and the beauty of his Word through these rich studies.”

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KNOWING THE BIBLE

J. I. Packer, Theological Editor
Dane C. Ortlund, Series Editor
Lane T. Dennis, Executive Editor

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Genesis	Matthew	Galatians
Exodus	Mark	Philippians
Ruth/Esther	Luke	Colossians/Philemon
Psalms	John	Hebrews
Proverbs	Acts	James
Isaiah	Romans	Revelation
Daniel	1 Corinthians	

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LUKE

A 12-WEEK STUDY



C. D. "Jimmy" Agan III

Knowing the Bible: Luke, A 12-Week Study

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S E R I E S P R E F A C E

KNOWING THE BIBLE, as the series title indicates, was created to help readers know and understand the meaning, the message, and the God of the Bible. Each volume in the series consists of 12 units that progressively take the reader through a clear, concise study of that book of the Bible. In this way, any given volume can fruitfully be used in a 12-week format either in group study, such as in a church-based context, or in individual study. Of course, these 12 studies could be completed in fewer or more than 12 weeks, as convenient, depending on the context in which they are used.

Each study unit gives an overview of the text at hand before digging into it with a series of questions for reflection or discussion. The unit then concludes by highlighting the gospel of grace in each passage (“Gospel Glimpses”), identifying whole-Bible themes that occur in the passage (“Whole-Bible Connections”), and pinpointing Christian doctrines that are affirmed in the passage (“Theological Soundings”).

The final component to each unit is a section for reflecting on personal and practical implications from the passage at hand. The layout provides space for recording responses to the questions proposed, and we think readers need to do this to get the full benefit of the exercise. The series also includes definitions of key words. These definitions are indicated by a note number in the text and are found at the end of each chapter.

Lastly, for help in understanding the Bible in this deeper way, we would urge the reader to use the ESV Bible and the *ESV Study Bible*, which are available online at www.esvbible.org. The *Knowing the Bible* series is also available online. Additional 12-week studies covering each book of the Bible will be added as they become available.

May the Lord greatly bless your study as you seek to know him through knowing his Word.

J. I. Packer
Lane T. Dennis

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW



Getting Acquainted

Like other Gospels, Luke's Gospel recounts the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God, who fulfills all of his Father's saving promises. Unlike other Gospels, Luke has a companion volume—Acts—in which salvation¹ advances, in Jesus' name, to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Luke's Gospel invites us to be part of this worldwide spread of the Christian message by showing how Jesus brings salvation to the last, the lost, and the least.

Luke's Gospel describes a world turned upside down. Sinners are saved while religious leaders are exposed as frauds. "Outsiders" embrace Jesus while "insiders" reject him. The poor rejoice while the rich are "sent away empty" (Luke 1:53). Because such paradoxes can create doubt, Luke writes to assure us that Jesus represents the fulfillment of God's saving purposes.

The most glaring paradox Luke presents is that of Jesus himself. No person has ever lived more faithfully than Jesus, yet no person has ever endured more suffering. As it points us to Jesus' cross and resurrection, Luke's Gospel prepares us to follow Jesus through hardship and humiliation, strengthened by faith in the God who exalts the lowly. (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, pages 1935–1938, or visit www.esvbible.org.)

Placing It in the Larger Story

Luke's Gospel begins, and Acts ends, with a pointed reminder that the coming of Jesus fulfills God's promises, expressed in the Old Testament, to redeem² the world through Israel. As Luke's genealogy of Jesus makes clear, everyone who is descended from Adam—all humanity—has departed from God. Only "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:47) can restore us to the fullness of life that God intends for his human creatures. God's purpose is to raise up a king in Israel who can remove sin, defeat death, and pour out the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit on all who embrace his rule. Jesus is this messianic King, the greater "son of David" who brings God's promises to completion, and through whom "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6, citing Isa. 52:10).

Key Verse

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

Date and Historical Background

Luke was likely written in the early 60s, sometime after the events described in Acts 28 but before two major events that are not mentioned in Luke or Acts—Paul's martyrdom in AD 64/65, and the destruction of the temple in AD 70. This means that Luke wrote within decades of Jesus' ministry and death.

In Luke's day, the Christian message had spread throughout Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. The stability of the Roman empire enabled Paul and other Christian missionaries to travel extensively, preaching to Jews and Gentiles alike. Both groups had difficulty accepting the possibility that a crucified man could be the Savior of the world—Jews because crucifixion represented a divine curse, and Gentiles because crucifixion represented weakness and humiliation. Other questions were raised by the fact that many Gentile "outsiders" were embracing Jesus, while many Jewish "insiders" continued to reject him and his followers. Luke wrote, at least in part, to reassure readers that the message about Jesus is true, despite such paradoxes. Today, Luke's Gospel continues to offer assurance to anyone who wrestles with the challenges of trusting and following Jesus.

Outline

- I. The Prologue (1:1–4)
- II. The Infancy Narrative (1:5–2:52)

- A. The birth of John the Baptist foretold (1:5–25)
- B. The birth of Jesus foretold (1:26–38)
- C. Mary visits Elizabeth (1:39–56)
- D. The birth of John the Baptist (1:57–80)
- E. The birth of Jesus Christ (2:1–52)
- III. Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1–4:15)
 - A. John the Baptist prepares the way (3:1–20)
 - B. Jesus' baptism, genealogy, and temptation (3:21–4:15)
- IV. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee (4:16–9:50)
 - A. The beginning (4:16–5:16)
 - B. The beginning of controversy (5:17–6:11)
 - C. Jesus teaches the disciples (6:12–49)
 - D. Who is this Jesus? (7:1–50)
 - E. Jesus teaches in parables (8:1–21)
 - F. Jesus is Lord of nature, demons, disease, and death (8:22–56)
 - G. Jesus and the Twelve (9:1–50)
- V. The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27)
 - A. The first mention of the journey to Jerusalem (9:51–13:21)
 - B. The second mention of the journey to Jerusalem (13:22–17:10)
 - C. The third mention of the journey to Jerusalem (17:11–19:27)
- VI. The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (19:28–21:38)
 - A. The Triumphal Entry (19:28–40)
 - B. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41–44)
 - C. Jesus cleanses the temple (19:45–48)
 - D. The authority of Jesus challenged (20:1–8)
 - E. The parable of the wicked tenants (20:9–18)
 - F. Paying taxes to Caesar (20:19–26)
 - G. Sadducees ask about the resurrection (20:27–40)
 - H. Whose son is the Christ? (20:41–44)
 - I. Beware of the scribes (20:45–47)
 - J. The widow's offering (21:1–4)
 - K. Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem (21:5–24)
 - L. Jesus foretells the coming of the Son of Man (21:25–38)
- VII. The Suffering and Death of Jesus (22:1–23:56)
 - A. The plot to kill Jesus, and the Passover meal (22:1–38)
 - B. The arrest and trial (22:39–23:56)
- VIII. The Resurrection of Jesus (24:1–53)
 - A. The empty tomb (24:1–12)
 - B. Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:13–35)
 - C. Jesus appears to his disciples (24:36–49)
 - D. The ascension of Jesus (24:50–53)

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW

As You Get Started . . .

What teachings of Jesus or events from his life do you associate with Luke's Gospel in particular (as opposed to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John)? (Hint: some of Jesus' best-known parables are found only in Luke.) How have these shaped your understanding of salvation?

What is your current understanding of how Luke's Gospel contributes to Christian theology? Are you aware of any ways in which this book clarifies our understanding of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, or any other doctrine?

What aspects of Luke's Gospel would you like to understand better? Are there any specific questions that you hope to have answered through this study?

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Take a few minutes to ask God to bless you with increased understanding and a transformed heart and life as you begin this study of Luke.

Definitions

¹ **Salvation** – Deliverance from the eternal consequences of sin, in order that one may completely enjoy all of God's promised blessings. Jesus' death and resurrection purchased salvation for believers.

² **Redeem** – In the context of the Bible, to buy back someone who had become enslaved or something that had been lost to someone else. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus purchased redemption from slavery to sin and its consequences for all believers (Col. 1:13–14).



THE BOOK OF LUKE is the most thorough historical account of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But Luke's Gospel is more than just history; it's also a rich source of life-giving theology, revealing Jesus' identity as Israel's long-awaited Messiah and the Redeemer of the world.

In this study, New Testament scholar Jimmy Agan III walks readers through Luke's Gospel, helping Christians see that Jesus is not simply a great teacher but the great Savior.

ABOUT THE *KNOWING THE BIBLE* SERIES

Over the course of 12 weeks, these studies explore books of the Bible and:

- Ask thoughtful questions to spur discussion
- Show how each passage unveils the gospel
- Tie the text in with the whole story of Scripture
- Illuminate the doctrines taught in each passage
- Invite you to discover practical implications
- Help you better understand and apply God's Word

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GRAEME L. GOLDSWORTHY,
author, *According to Plan*

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BIBLE STUDY

