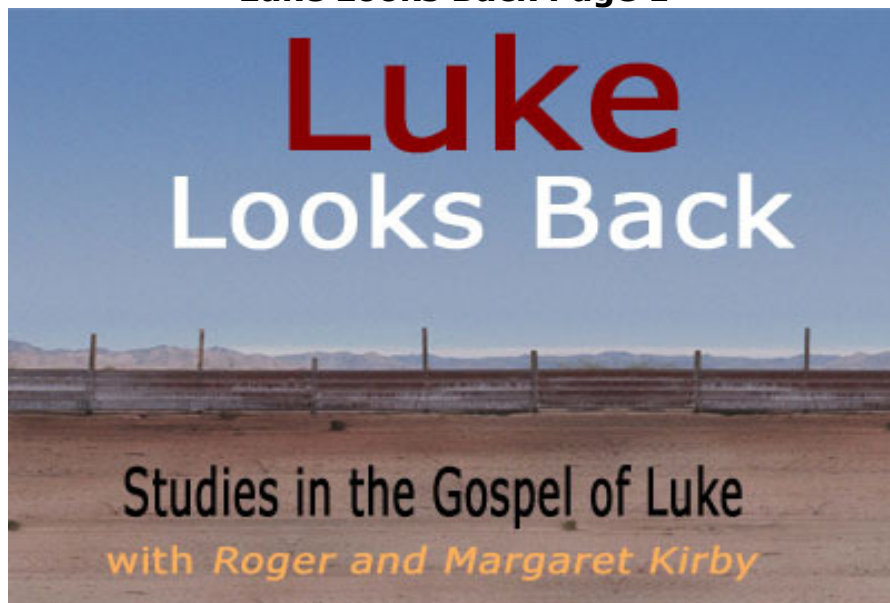


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Luke Looks Back

Bible Study questions for Small Groups

The Early Life and Galilean Ministry of Jesus
in Luke 1 – 9.

Introduction

The aim of these questions is to give those taking part some real knowledge and spiritual understanding as a result of discussing the answers to them.

The standard sermon format is good for challenging, encouraging and motivating people. It is less good for teaching people to understand scripture and how it should apply to their lives in daily living. To do that they need opportunities to discuss Scripture, argue

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about what it means for them and find out how other people struggle with the challenges of making it a real influence in their lives.

They were first written for use in a group in England. In putting them on the Internet I know they may be used in very different cultures from ours and not all the questions will make good sense in every culture. So feel free to download the studies, modify them as much as you like and translate them into your language if you wish. (With translation in mind they have been written in simpler English that will hopefully make that task easier for whoever does it – may you be blessed in that work). I will simply be happy if they turn out to be of use to other people.

They are designed for use in small group meetings where few, except the leader, will have spent much time in preparation. That leader should be an ordinary member of the church. Few if any pastors will be successful in leading a group. The questions are designed for discussion, not one person telling the rest what the answers are. Even if the pastor is good at not using his position to dominate the group many ordinary church members will be very reluctant to offer opinions about scripture with him or her present.

Whoever the leader is they need to be very conscious of what a group discussion is trying to achieve and not start telling everybody what the answers are. In order to do this the leader needs to have thought out beforehand what extra questions they can ask to draw the other members of the group towards an answer to the main question.

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The best size for a group is probably in the range 6 – 15 people. If there are any fewer and some are unable to go to a particular meeting the number present will become too small. Any larger and there will be too many people who just listen and don't say anything.

The Bible Study should be only part of the meeting along with Worship, Prayer and Fellowship, perhaps around food and drink, depending on how else the larger church works.

Be warned: people are only willing to share their struggles, successes and failures in the Christian life if they have got to know each other well (at least in our culture – it may be different in yours!). Don't expect your group to be an immediate success. It may take weeks or months before people feel easy with each other and the discussion is really rewarding.

The questions are a mixture of the easy to answer (study 1, question 2) and some that are more difficult (study 1, question 5). Some are deliberately unexpected in what they ask (study 1, question 6), hoping to make people think. Included are some questions on the way Luke wrote and the structure of his writing in order to identify what Luke saw as the main points he wanted to make, believing these are therefore the points the Holy Spirit would wish us to understand as the most important (1 Pet 1: 10 – 12; 2 Pet 1: 20,21). The ancient texts did not have headings, paragraphs, sentences or even spaces between words so the only way of conveying structure was in the actual words.

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The English version of the Bible used in writing these notes was the NIV.

They include 'icebreakers'. These are to get everybody talking and help folk to know more about each other in a non-threatening way.

A study covers a section of the gospel rather than a single session of discussion. Many of them will take two or more sessions to complete.

Each study will print on an A4 page as two A5 pages. Printing on both sides of the paper and then cutting down the middle will give two convenient A5 double-sided copies.

Bibliography. The following (English) books would be helpful for discussion leaders where available:

- Saviour of the World: Message of Luke (The Bible speaks today) by Michael Wilcock
- According to Luke by David Gooding
- Luke for Everyone by Tom Wright
- Luke by Darrell Bock (NIV Application Commentary)
- Luke by R Alan Culpepper in the New Interpreter's Bible (unfortunately only available as half volume IX)
- Jesus from a Middle Eastern Perspective by Kenneth Bailey (This new book written by an American who has spent both his childhood and most of his working life in the Middle East is highly recommended. It explores questions of

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structure and brings a new and very interesting and informative perspective to the culture of the gospels. Many comparisons with life in the developing world are possible.)