

3x7 Things in Luke's Gospel

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Und die Engel sagten zu ihnen, habt keine Angst, denn ich bringe euch gute Zeugnisse von großem Freude, die für alle Menschen sein werden. Und die Engel sagten zu ihnen, habt keine Angst, denn ich bringe euch gute Zeugnisse von großem Freude, die für alle Menschen sein werden. Und die Engel sagten zu ihnen, habt keine Angst, denn ich bringe euch gute Zeugnisse von großem Freude, die für alle Menschen sein werden. Denn für euch wird dieser Tag geboren, in der Stadt von David, ein Heiliger, der Christus ist, der Herr. Es wird euch ein Zeichen geben, ihr werdet die Baby finden, verkleidet in schmutzigen Kleidern, liegend in einem Schlafzimmer. Und plötzlich war da mit dem Engel eine Menge der göttlichen Gäste, die Gott präsentieren und sagen, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[00:01:07] And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. [00:02:18] I have been impressed much lately with the gospel by Luke. How many fine, excellent golden threads there are, traced through this lovely gospel, which we can pull together in the meditation of our souls, that are for our blessing.

What a happy thing, that a gospel has been singled out by the Holy Spirit and soul and body.

[00:03:18] One of the ways in which the perfection and completeness of the perfect, dependent manhood of Christ is emphasized in the gospel by Luke, is that again and again things are collected in sets of seven, God's number of completeness and fullness. And how many there are that we can rejoice together in. Now, time does not permit, and it is not my intention, but let us note in passing verse 10. Fear not. Seven occasions in the gospel, where there are those who are encouraged not to fear. Among other things, Luke's gospel is the gospel of peace. [00:04:12] Verse 18, all they that heard it wondered. Seven times in the gospel, there is a demonstration of the proper sense of awe and wonder that comes upon the soul in meditating upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect man. Again, it's not the intention to look at that tonight. But what I do want to look at is that which comes into verse 14 and verse 20. And it is this.

From the outset of the sojourn on earth of the Lord Jesus Christ in perfect manhood, our attention is drawn again and again to the fact that God was glorified in him. [00:05:13] We enjoy thinking about our blessing, things that have been done for us, challenges that are open to us, and that's right and proper.

But it is entirely as laid out in the canon of scripture that before there can be any blessing for man, mankind, there must of necessity be that which satisfies and maintains the glory of God. And so, in this first little study here this week, let us look at the seven occasions where it is said of the Lord Jesus that God was glorified in him. [00:06:09] Now, it's a good, solid, scriptural phrase to say that God was glorified in him, in Christ, in the Lord Jesus.

It is perhaps not so easy to convey to each other in words what we understand by that term, God is glorified in him.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to manifest God, to fully reveal him. And because of the revelation of God that is resident in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is produced that capacity in man to respond to God and to ascribe to God that of which he is truly worthy. [00:07:12] I want to make a statement which some of you may recognize.

You may feel it's rather trite. Work it out, discover what it means, and then put it into your own simple words and tell me afterwards.

It is because God is who he is that he does what he does. Axiomatic, I suppose. And it's when he does what he does that he reveals who and what he is. [00:08:03] That's a statement which is worth thinking about, and certainly when we come to the Gospel by Luke, we find that God manifested in flesh, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is that knowledge of God which is gained and could be gained in no other way. Let us go to Colossians.

Image of the invisible God.

We don't get our teaching, our exposition from the words of hymns, even our excellent hymns. But after pondering for many years, I eventually came to the conclusion that the words of one of our hymns really puts in a very clear way what we can understand by that term, image of the invisible God. [00:09:08] Listen to the words.

And it is as that spotless, perfect life of the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh is detailed in the Gospel by Luke, that we learn some of the facets, some of the aspects of all that there is to gain in the knowledge of God in the person of Jesus Christ in manhood. [00:10:03] I want to refer to these seven in brief. Tonight we'll be using the telescope, not the microscope, and we'll see what it is that was happening at the time that caused glory to be given to God. That there should be that understanding of who and what God is in the manifestation of God in the person of the Son that made it possible for man to appreciate, respond to, and to ascribe worthy of all acclaim, dignity, and honour the blessed God who was revealed in him. When you take up your private studies, you will take note that in this incident, the entrance into this world of the Son of God as a babe at Bethlehem, [00:11:08] it's so wonderful that more than one of these full demonstrations of God in the person of Jesus comes through. In other words, this is one of the fear nots.

It's not the first. There are two, I think, in chapter one. It is certainly the first of the causes of wonder

that here there were those who were in awesome wonder here upon earth because God was manifested in flesh. Here the incarnation of the Son of God began as far as outward manifestation was to be concerned. Now, let us look then at verse 13. Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men, giving God his place, his right place, the highest place, was the true precursor to man being brought into blessing. [00:12:27] But the phrase in verse 20 is what I want to single out. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them. From the outset then, there is that which is taken account of, which results in glory redounding to the blessed God, beginning in outward expression in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[00:13:13] Now, I leave that for your meditation and we must move on to chapter five. The section is verses 17 to 26.

For brevity, I will read verses 25 and 26.

Immediately he that was sick of the palsy rose up before them and took up that whereon he lay and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today.

[00:14:16] Terrible chapter, Luke chapter five.

Everything is in a terrible mess. Everything is broken down.

Have you considered why it is that the order of the miracles, the parables, the incidents that take place is different in the different gospels? Matthew gives us the dispensational order in the presentation of Christ as King. Mark gives, as near as we can tell, the chronological order of the activities of the perfect servant. [00:15:02] Luke, speaking of moral matters, gives us the moral order of events, and John has its own sequence.

One of the plainest chapters in which to see that is to see the moral condition that's described in chapter five. Everything under man in responsibility broken down. Have a look at chapter five, verse six, broken nets. Verse 12, a man with a broken body.

Verse 28, Levi with a broken career. 36, a broken garment. 37, broken bottles.

A terrible mess under the hand of men. This incident that we read is no exception. [00:16:04] A broken roof, broken tiling. A general commentary on man's moral condition before God outside of Christ.

Here, this poor man is found, his friends bring him, let him down through the tiling.

The Lord says, thy sins are forgiven thee. The scribes and the Pharisees quibble, who can forgive sins but God alone? Jesus perceived their thoughts. What reason ye in your heart, which is easiest to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, he said unto the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, arise and take up thy couch and go into thy house.

[00:17:10] John, in his epistle, tells us that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world to undo the works of the devil. Indirectly, Luke chapter 5 is a catalogue of the results of the works of the devil in God's fair creation. Man in responsibility being the devil's tool.

And here, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, come into the world to undo the works of the devil, to demonstrate that he is the man who is competent to deal with sin. Here he makes an open display of his ability to deal with the effects of sin, even before he went to the cross. [00:18:06] The result, as ever, first of all, glory to God.

Verse 25, he departed to his own house glorifying God. He gave glory to God.

The onlookers, they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today. Trace it out, this moral grouping in the Gospel of Luke, and see what a solemn picture it gives of the effect of sin. But here, the Lord Jesus comes into the world, and here, his first work in this group after his birth, it results in God being glorified. Again, yes, a man was brought into blessing. [00:19:04] Yes, his life was put right. But the important primary thing is that God was glorified in that which Jesus did. Chapter 7.

Verse 11.

It came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came, and touched the bear, and they that bear him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. [00:20:09] And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he delivered him to his mother, and there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about, and the disciples of John showed him of all these things. Verse 22, Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. [00:21:10] I'm not sure whether it was here or in another place that mention was made that the number eight very often tells us that God is making a new start, bringing in something new.

It is not without significance, of course, that apart from the Lord Jesus personally, and that rather strange incident recounted in Matthew 27, when we read that the bodies of many of the saints arose, albeit temporarily, no doubt. Apart from those special occasions, there are eight persons of whom we read in the scripture that they were raised from the dead. [00:22:12] Interesting again, that there were three in the Old Testament, three in the gospels, one by the apostle to the circumcision, Peter, and one by the apostle to the uncircumcision, Paul. Again, it's worthy of note that Elijah was responsible under God's hand, privileged to, of raising one individual from among the dead. Elisha, who asked for a double portion of the spirit Elijah to rest upon him, seen in that he was privileged to be responsible for two being raised from the dead. In the gospels, three by the Lord Jesus Christ. Cyrus' daughter, Lazarus, and here the widow of Nain's son. [00:23:07] Pulling together various verses and references from the prophet Isaiah, the Lord reinforced what he did by his statement recorded for us in verse 22. If John Baptist has any doubts, tell him what's happening. Tell him that the word of the prophets is being fulfilled. See if he has any doubts after that. It just occurs to me, we should have had 30

minutes prayer before I started, is that right? I'm sorry that I didn't remember, and I'm sorry the brethren didn't remind me too. [00:24:07] We are looking at those occasions in the gospel by Luke where God is glorified in Christ. There's one thing I'm even-handed. I did the same once at High Street, I now recall. The widow of Nain's son then. The personal bodily resurrection of the widow of Nain's son, resulting in fear coming upon all and God being glorified in the event.

Let us pause again. Here we have an incident on earth where the activities of a man, a perfect man, result in glory redounding to the blessed God, and God is glorified in him.

[00:25:21] John Baptist, obliged to take account of what was going on, and receives the exhortation, blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Now, that is the third incident, and we can move on to chapter 13.

Verse 10. Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. [00:26:13] And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. Two or three years ago, I remember visiting a city where there was a Christian lady I hadn't seen for a few years. I enquired, she was at home, and would appreciate a visit. I was warned that the dear lady was in a sorry plight.

[00:27:06] And I knocked at the door, looked straight ahead, expecting to look at the sister eye to eye, and I was horrified when she opened the door that she was just as the woman in this incident in the gospel. The highest point of her body was the lowest part of her back. She was bent double, and her head was at about knee height. And what a terrible state, what a constant ordeal for a poor woman to be in. I'm sure that's not unique. And here we read of an incident of a woman in that very case. She'd been like this for 18 years, couldn't no wise lift up herself. [00:28:12] Now, again, the words of the Lord Jesus, chosen with care, woman, thou art loosed. Oh, how much man is in need of liberty.

In all its horror, with its terrible effects, causing this and other kinds of physical conditions that won't go away, all the terrible commentary upon the works of the devil and the effect of sin.

Thank God for those of us who know what spiritual liberty is all about. Our souls have had their burden removed.

[00:29:09] Luke consistently gives these moral pictures of sin, its effects, and the Lord dealing with them. And here we have this poor woman who's taken up by the Lord Jesus and is loosed from her infirmity and is able to be erect. It is a cause of wonder to me how quickly lives which are soiled and spoiled by sin can be cleaned up. How quickly we can be clothed and in our right mind if we study the scriptures and obey the word of the Lord revealed therein.

[00:30:06] Sometimes the transformation is so great that someone who was still as we were might walk into the room and get entirely the wrong impression about the sort of people that we used to be.

Because our lives have been cleaned up and brought into liberty. And as the Lord said, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. The true liberty is the liberty that the Son of God brings you into. I remember many years ago now, a friend of mine saying, judge the results, he said, I hope we never get so respectable that sinners will stop listening to us. [00:31:13] Now, I think you know what

was meant by that. Wouldn't it be sad if a sinner walking into the room, conscious of his or her sinful state, had a quick look round and said, well, there'll be nobody here that understands me, there's no help for me here. Of course, these are moral things, but mustn't we be careful not to give the impression, as some get, that all we are is middle class do-gooders who don't understand what people really feel like. Of course, like the man in the Gospels, the Lord has cleaned us up in every way, in our thinking, in the way we attend to personal hygiene, in the way that we dress. [00:32:16] And it's right that we should be clean and tidy, but let us make sure that the way we speak to people and respond to people, yes, may well result in glory being given to God at the transformation, but that our moral response is so kind and compassionate that no one is put off. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, came into the world at Bethlehem, as we have read, performed these miracles, raised the dead even, but so was his composure and compassion that none were put off from coming to him, with the result that glory was given to God. [00:33:14] Verse 13. He laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. Chapter 17.

Verses 11 to 16. The cleansing of the lepers.

If the woman who was bent double needed liberty, and the bringing in of liberty caused glory to be given to God, lepers don't need healing, they need cleansing.

[00:34:14] This is why the gospels are full of references to those who tell us how dirty sin really is.

And here, ten lepers, all cleansed, and yet of the ten, only one came back and gave glory to God.

Verse 15. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God. I'm not bothered about percentages here.

The challenge does come to me. If I am in a group that receive blessing from the Lord, and there are ten of us who are so blessed, if there's only one who returns and gives God the glory, [00:35:25] my only possible exercise must be, if there's only one, it must be me. I mustn't look at other people.

This is personal. Personal opportunity for God to be glorified in that which he has done for us. And so we have it in this little incident. Chapter 18.

Incident 35-43. The giving of sight to the man who was born blind.

[00:36:14] It came to pass that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man, Luke always particularizes, doesn't he? And he says, a certain man, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging. Hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth, the despised one, passeth by. He cried saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. In his terrible plight, he didn't think of the Lord Jesus as the despised one. He said, here is the one in whom the promises of God are to be fulfilled, Jesus, thou son of David.

[00:37:10] The point comes where the Lord Jesus says, receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee.

Further than leprosy, the clearest picture of the results of sin is this condition of blindness again and again and again. Unable to see God as he really is.

Not one spark of response to God possible in any way. As we learn, dead in trespasses and in sins

and unable to see. The poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. Not one spark of response. The impediment being dealt with, again, the blind man's first movement is Godward. [00:38:08] And we find that God has been glorified in that which the Lord Jesus Christ has done. Chapter 23, verse 46.

When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, certainly this was a righteous man. If in his birth into the world there was glory for God, if in dealing with the several impediments, God was glorified in him. [00:39:09] When we come now to this vital moment, when as to his life on earth was concerned, that he died and died the death of the cross. We learn that one of the beholders, Gentile though he was, glorified God for what was going on. We are now at the crucial point of the gospel. This in verse 47, certainly this was a righteous man.

The seventh of seven occasions, when the microscope is focused upon this perfect man, and we read this man, this man, this man, and here for the seventh time. The centurion glorified God, saying, certainly this was a righteous man.

[00:40:14] Many true believers would consider what has been said tonight as rather trite. Many earnest believers would consider this kind of study to be purely academic, purely not being the right word in their estimation, entirely academic. An intellectual pursuit.

But here we have a clear outline within the gospel speaking of the perfect man, that the first primary all important consideration is that having come into the world, the primary consideration was that there might be glory for God as a result of his coming into the world, going through the world, and then going out of the world. [00:41:10] We do well, if we single out these opportunities to see where God was glorified in him, and join in the praise that is due.