



PCM D-Groups 201: The Gospel from Cover to Cover
Session 13: Luke-Acts and the Resurrection of the Son of God
By Nick Roark

PCM Discipleship Group Details:

- To get into a small group, sign up on your tables tonight!
- Text questions to pcmdgroups@gmail.com
- Next week you will meet in small groups
- Next Big D is March 30. We will study the Pauline epistles.

Review

- Who are we waiting for?
- What is the chief message of the Gospels? _____
- The Gospel according to Matthew: Jesus is the Davidic Messiah and prophet like Moses
- The Gospel according to Mark: Jesus is the divine Suffering Servant and Son of Man
- The Gospel according to John: Jesus is the eternal Son of God who perfectly reveals the Father
- The cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are central in each Gospel.

Goals:

1. Why should we read Luke and Acts as one unified narrative: Luke-Acts?
2. What is the main message of Luke-Acts and how does this message connect to the prophetic message of the OT?
3. How do we submit ourselves to God under this portion of Holy Scripture?

Understanding Scripture:

I. Why should we read Luke and Acts as one unified narrative: Luke-Acts?

1. The Gospel according to Luke and the book of Acts ought to be read as a single two-volume work.
 - a. Why was the Gospel according to John placed between Luke and Acts in the NT canon?
 - i. Luke ends (24:49) and Acts begins (1:4-5, 8) with the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Because Jesus gives extensive teaching concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the “Farewell Discourse” in John 14-17, it seems appropriate for John to have been inserted between Luke and Acts.
 - b. Both volumes were written to the same man “Theophilus” (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1)
 - i. What title is given to Theophilus? Luke 1:3 - “most excellent” is a title used for governors in other places in the book (26:25 – Festus, 23:26 – Felix, 24:3 – Felix)
 - c. If “most excellent” is a title given to political leaders in the rest of the book, it is likely Theophilus is some political official or governor of some sort. This “political agenda” is also



reflected in the content of the book itself. Governmental leaders are continually faced with a decision – to accept or reject the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Luke 23:1-25; Acts 5:33-39; 12:20-23; 17:6-7; 22-28).

- d. Luke brings Theophilus (and us!) to a moment of decision: either join the Messiah’s mission or else. Nothing can stop the forward progress of the gospel to the ends of the earth.
 - i. Gamaliel’s counsel in Acts 5:38-39 sounds like a warning: “If this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!”
 - ii. In the OT we read of some foreign kings who vainly stood in the way of God’s blessing. Who were they or where did the OT teach about this?
 1. Pharaoh (Exodus 1), Balak (Numbers 22)
 2. Psalm 2 (quoted in Acts 4:25-26)
 3. The narratives show that more was at work than earthly kingdoms in this opposition to the blessing. Luke records how the powers of darkness and Satan himself were being overthrown in the ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
 - a. Satan heightens efforts to disrupt the plan (Luke 22:3, 31, 53).
 - b. We do not battle against flesh and blood (cf. Ephesians 6)

II. What is the main message of Luke-Acts and how does this message connect to the prophetic message of the OT?

The main message of Luke-Acts centers on the Messiah and His mission.

1. Jesus of Nazareth is the long awaited Davidic Messiah who fulfills the prophetic hope of the OT through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.
 - a. In Luke-Acts, Jesus not only explains the OT, but the OT explains Him.
 - i. "Luke presents both Jesus as interpreting the Scriptures and the Scriptures interpreting Jesus."¹
 - ii. **John Sailhamer:** "When the NT says that the OT is fulfilled in Jesus, it means that we can identify Jesus as the Messiah because He fits the picture of the Messiah in the OT. The proof that the Gospel is true lies not only in an accurate prediction, but also in an accurate identification of Jesus with the one promised by the Law and the Prophets."²
 - b. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises given to the patriarchs (1:26-35; 1:54-55; 1:67-79). He is the Savior (2:11) who will cause the rise and fall of many in Israel and who will also bring blessing to the Gentiles (2:32).
 - i. Jesus is the Son of God (Ps. 2:7; Luke 3:21–22); He is the one at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Luke 20:41–44; 22:69; Acts 2:30–36); He is the rejected stone that is none the less exalted (Ps. 118:22; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11); He is to be the returning Son of Man (Dan. 7:13–14; Luke 21:27); He is the Lord of all, so the gospel can go to all (Luke 20:41–44; Acts 2:30–39; 10:34–43).
2. The mission of Jesus the Messiah that begins in the Gospel according to Luke *continues* in the book of Acts. This mission is to bear witness to the Gospel from Jerusalem unto the ends of the earth in the power of Holy Spirit.
 - a. Acts is not simply the “Acts of the Apostles.” It is not simply the “Acts of the Apostles empowered by the Holy Spirit.”

¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Hermeneutical Dynamics of 'Reading Luke' as Interpretation, Reflection and Formation" in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection and Formation*, Ed. Craig Bartholomew (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 22.

² John H. Sailhamer, "The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible," *JETS* 42/1 (1999) 99-102.



- b. Rather, “Acts recounts the continuing work of Jesus, that is, what He continued ‘to do and to teach’ by His Spirit through His apostles.”³

The Messiah in Luke-Acts

Example #1: Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24)

1. The beginning of Luke 24 recounts Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. **Read the Emmaus road account in Luke 24:13-35.**
2. The death and resurrection of Jesus is emphasized as a fulfillment of the prophets and of Jesus’ own words. **Luke 24:5-7, 24:25-27, 24:44-47**
3. The death of Jesus and the glory of Jesus were predicted by the prophets. This is nothing new. It was in accordance with the Scriptures. It was necessary for this to happen.
4. **Read verse 27 and verse 44.** What do you think Luke is emphasizing? Jesus is the promised Messiah to Whom the whole book pointed.
5. If we want to know Jesus, we must open the book.
 - What is the three-fold division of the OT in verse 44? Law, Prophets, Psalms (writings)
 - Notice some similarities and reversals of the Fall narrative and this one:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Two people, Adam and Eve | Two people, Cleopas and another |
| Sought wisdom, but were foolish (3:6) | Jesus tells them “O foolish men...” (24:25) |
| Eyes were opened when eating (3:7) | Eyes were opened when eating (24:30-31) |
| “cool of the day”? | Evening? 24:29 |
| “blessing” lost in eating | Jesus blesses the bread and they eat |
| God walked among them | Jesus walked among them |

- **Read Luke 24:44-53.**
 - a. “Thus it is written...” is the way Jesus begins in verse 46. What does this show us about how Jesus understood the message of the Old Testament? It’s the same as the new.
 - b. What will be proclaimed to all the nations now? Forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name
 - c. Who is the promise of the Father that will clothe them with power? The Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:33)
 - d. What important word from the Pentateuch is repeated in verse 50-51? Jesus blessed them.
 - e. There are hints of a new creation in this chapter, a restoration of what was lost in the Fall in this narrative. Death is overcome, the blessing restored, the first day of the week (24:1) which could signify a “restart” of the week in Genesis 1, eating as a sign of fellowship with God just like the trees God provided in Eden but now through the bread of Jesus’ body, eyes being opened, and God walked among them again in Jesus.

Example #2: The Apostolic preaching in Acts concerning Jesus

1. Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (2:14-41)
 - Jesus was raised from the dead
 - Acts 2:24 “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”
 - Preaches from Psalm 16:8-11.
2. Peter’s sermon after the healing of the lame beggar (3:11-26)
 - Promises to the Fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob); Foretold in the OT (i.e. prophets); Prophet like Moses; Seed of Abraham.
 - Jesus was raised from the dead. (v15, v26)

³ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A biblical theology of mission*, NSBT, vol. 11 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 158.



3. Peter's defense before the council (4:8-12)
 - Jesus was raised from the dead (cf. 4:1-4; 4:10, 16);
 - Cornerstone (Psalm 118:22)
4. Stephen's sermon before his martyrdom (7:1-53)
 - Read vv. 51-53. The prophets "announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One."
5. Peter's sermon at Joppa (10:34-43)
 - Read vv. 37-43. "To Him all the prophets bear witness..."
 - Jesus died on a tree, and God raised Him from the dead (v.39-40).
6. Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia (13:16-41)
 - Read vv.26-41. Those who crucified the Messiah didn't "understand the utterances of the prophets" in Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 55:3, Psalm 16:10, and Habakkuk 1:5.
 - Jesus was raised from the dead (v.30).

The Mission in Luke-Acts

1. The mission of the Messiah in Luke-Acts follows a geographic structure. Luke moves toward Jerusalem for Jesus' death, burial and resurrection and the flow of Acts moves away from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

A. What is the geographic structure of Luke?

- Luke begins with an emphasis on the temple and Jerusalem (Luke 1-2).
- Luke traces the ministry of Jesus in and around Galilee (Luke 3:1-9:50).
- A key turning point in Luke's narrative is in **Luke 9:51-52**.
 - This begins the "Journey to Jerusalem Section" (**9:51-19:44**) focuses the reader's attention on the mission of Jesus.
- What was central in the mission of Jesus? To seek and to save the lost! (Read Luke 15)
 - The "work He came to earth to accomplish" is "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ of God" (9:20), Jesus explicitly reveals His mission to the disciples, a mission that culminates with His crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem: "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (9:22).
 - The Messiah's mission is emphasized at the beginning of the journey to Jerusalem (9:44, 51) as well as at the end of the journey (18:31-33).
 - **18:31-33** And taking the twelve, He said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² For He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³ And after flogging him, they will kill Him, and on the third day He will rise."
- Where is Jesus determined to go? Jerusalem
 - What moment in Jesus' life is mentioned that is also the topic in Luke 24:52, Acts 1:2, 9-10? The ascension
 - What is unique about this? None of the other gospel writers explicitly mention Jesus' ascension. Luke mentions it twice.
 - Is there any relationship to Acts 1:9 and Daniel 7:13, which is Daniel's vision of the Son of Man? The Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days.
- Where does the narrative of Luke end? Read 24:52 – Jerusalem
 - George Ladd argues that Luke "has depicted a transfer of the mission from Jesus to the church, by means of the sequence of events linking his two books: resurrection, post-resurrection teaching, ascension... and so to Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit now present in the church takes up the mission that Jesus 'began' (Acts 1:1)."

B. What is the geographic structure of Acts?



- Where does the narrative of Acts begin? Acts 1:4 – Jerusalem
- What does Jesus command them to do in Acts 1:8?
- Be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, remotest parts of the earth
 - Acts 1:8 functions sort of like a table of contents. This verse provides the key that unlocks the rest of the narrative.
 - **Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

- The Book of Acts is organized geographically as follows:
 - I. “Jerusalem” – Acts 1-7
 - II. “Judea and Samaria” – Acts 8-12
 - III. “End of the Earth” – Acts 13-28...
- The phrase “end of the earth” is from **Isaiah 49:6** LXX: “It is too light a thing that you should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”
- In other words, God intends His salvation to extend beyond the borders of Israel to the nations. This will be accomplished by the Servant of the Lord, whose salvation will reach to the end of the earth. This phrase “end of the earth” also occurs in the book of Acts at the outset of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 13:47.
 - **Andreas J. Köstenberger**: “In the Gospel of Luke and its sequel, the book of Acts, the theme of mission is of profound importance. So significant is this motif that Luke’s two-volume work may be the clearest presentation of the church’s universal mission in all of the New Testament. The Gospel tells the story of Jesus and His salvation; Acts traces the movement of that salvation to Israel and the Gentiles.”⁴

2. The mission of the Messiah will be triumphant despite encountering stiff opposition.

- There is stiff opposition to the gospel message and the gospel mission in the book of Acts. Demonic forces, worldly powers and authorities, governmental opposition, language and cultural barriers, intense suffering and bloody persecution, unjust imprisonment, Jewish and Gentile unbelief, internal struggles of disunity, and even shipwrecks and snakes all rise up to attempt to stop the triumphant march of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. These attempts are in vain. God has promised to bless all the nations in Christ.
- The triumphant march of the gospel mission in the book of Acts is detailed in several summary statements that Luke sprinkles throughout the narrative:
 - **Acts 2:47** And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 - **Acts 5:11, 14** And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.
 - **Acts 6:7** And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.
 - **Acts 9:31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
 - **Acts 12:24** But the word of God increased and multiplied.
 - **Acts 13:49** And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.
 - **Acts 16:5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.
 - **Acts 19:20** So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.
 - **Acts 28:30-31** He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance... (or ‘unhindered’).

⁴ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A biblical theology of mission*, NSBT, vol. 11 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 111.



3. The mission of the Messiah is for the Church to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is for Luke the key sign that “last days” have arrived (cf. Joel 2:28-32). The Spirit is also associated in the OT with the advent of the New Covenant (cf. Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36:22-32) that was purchased and inaugurated by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Luke 22:20; Acts 2:22-24).
- Jesus is the anointed servant of Isaiah 11:2 (cf. Luke 4:18-19) who lives and walks by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (1:35); He was filled with the Spirit (3:22; 4:1; 4:18), led by the Spirit (4:1), walked in the power of the Spirit (4:14), and rejoiced in the Spirit (10:21). He alone baptizes in the Spirit (3:16).
- And He is the one who sends the Spirit (24:49) upon His people to carry out His mission in the world (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4). Prior to Pentecost the disciples are weak. In Acts 2:1-11, the Holy Spirit, God’s empowering presence, is poured out on His disciples and enables them to begin fulfilling His commission just as Jesus had promised.
- In Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel, God confused the language of the people and caused them to spread out over the face of the earth. Pentecost is a preview of how the cursed effects of the Tower of Babylon will be reversed in the Holy Spirit-empowered mission of the church. It also is a preview of the glorious ingathering of peoples from every tribe, nation and tongue (cf. Revelation 7:9-12).

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|--|
| Compare Genesis 11:1-9 and Acts 2:1-11 |
| They gathered in one place (Acts 2:1) (cf. Genesis 11:2, 8) |
| God came down to them (Acts 2:4) (cf. Genesis 11:5) |
| People came to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5) (cf. Genesis 10:32; 11:1) |
| They understood one another’s language (Acts 2:8) (cf. Genesis 11:9) |

4. The mission of the Messiah to take the gospel to the ends of the earth is not finished yet!

- The message has not been taken to all nations... yet.
- In Acts 1:8, “Jesus outlines the mission, and Acts ends with that mission still incomplete.”⁵
- In Acts 28, the book ends with Paul preaching the gospel in Rome. The last word in the book of Acts is “unhindered.” The message is unhindered but the mission is not yet completed.

Standing Under Scripture (Submission):

How do we submit ourselves to God under this portion of Holy Scripture?

1. Be thankful to God the Father for raising His Son from the dead.

We learn in the book of Acts that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead makes possible the following:

- The sending of the Spirit (Acts 2:33).
- Physical healings (Acts 3:15-16).
- The conversion of sinners (Acts 3:26).
- Salvation by union with Jesus (Acts 4:11-12).
- Jesus’ role as the leader of his church (Acts 5:30-31, Acts 9).
- Forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:30-31).
- Comfort for the dying (Acts 7).
- The commissioning of gospel messengers (Acts 9, Acts 10:42).

⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation, Vol. 2: The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 17-18.



- Freedom from the penalty and power of sin (Acts 13:37-39).
- Assurance that the gospel is true (Acts 17:31).
- Our own resurrection (Acts 17:31).
- Jesus future judgment of this world (Acts 17:31)⁶

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the ethical backbone of the Christian life (cf. Colossians 3). No resurrection, no Christianity. If Christ has not been raised, we are fools and most to be pitied. We ought to simply eat, drink, for tomorrow we will die and rot in the grave (cf. 1 Corinthians 15). But Christ Jesus has been raised from the dead. "Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Christ's resurrection is simply the firstfruits (15:20, 23). Christ's resurrection, being the first, guarantees our resurrection with Him (Lev. 23:20, Prov 3:9-10). This means that in Christ we see a ray of the dawning of the new age over the horizon of this fallen world. Much more is coming and is guaranteed to come, but for now we must wait until all of Christ's enemies are completely abolished. The age to come and the age that is have intersected in Christ. People who are savingly related to Christ experience being a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), yet still await the new creation Christ will bring (Rev 21-22). Death is a result of Adam's sin, and life will be the result of Christ's resurrection. One day soon, death will be put to death.

NT Wright: "The resurrection isn't just a surprise happy ending for one person; *it is instead the turning point for everything else*. It is the point at which all the old promises can come true at last: the promises of David's unshakable kingdom; the promises of Israel's return from the greatest exile of them all; and behind that again, quite explicit in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the promise that all the nations will now be blessed through the seed of Abraham."⁷

Do you neglect the resurrection in your understanding and appreciation of the Gospel? Warnock writes: "The degree to which we neglect the resurrection is also the degree to which we neglect to think about Jesus as He really is, now. Jesus is enthroned in heaven, and reigning inside every believer. His powers are limitless, and He is at liberty to do as He wishes... We should never neglect to stress how Jesus died and bore the punishment for our sins. But, without any declaration that Jesus Christ has now risen from the dead and is now reigning, the biblical gospel has not been preached at all."⁸

2. Be thankful to God the Son for seeking and saving the lost.

Jesus loves lost sinners. Jesus said "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." He is the Savior of all peoples: Jew and Gentile, the rich, the poor, men and women, from all tribes and nations. For Luke, salvation is for all people, including the lowly and oppressed (1:52-53; 4:18; 6:20-26; 14:4-11). Luke emphasizes the salvation that Jesus brings is for all who will repent and believe. Luke focuses much attention on groups of people who would have been considered outsiders and marginalized people. **All of heaven rejoices when one lost sinner repents and returns to the Father (cf. Luke 15).**

3. Be thankful to God the Holy Spirit for empowering us to fulfill the mission of the Messiah.

The early church was filled with Holy Spirit and they turned the world upside down in thirty years. What could God do if this college age generation were dominated with the Spirit of His grace and His global purposes? What could we accomplish in the power of the Holy Spirit?

- "Three crucial decades in world history. That is all it took. In the years between AD 33 and 64 a new movement was born. In those thirty years it got sufficient growth and credibility to become the largest religion the world has ever seen and to change the lives of hundreds of millions of people. It has spread into every corner of the globe and has more than two billion putative adherents. It has had an indelible

⁶ This list is from Adrian Warnock, *Raised With Christ* (2009), Unpublished manuscript.

⁷ N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (New York: Harper One, 2008), 236.

⁸ Adrian Warnock, *Raised With Christ* (2009), Unpublished manuscript.



impact on civilization, on culture, on education, on medicine, on freedom, and of course on the lives of countless people worldwide. And the seedbed for all this, the time when it took decisive root, was in these three decades. It all began with a dozen men and a handful of women: and then the Spirit came.”⁹

⁹ Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World: The Book of Acts for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993/2002), p. 7.



“Facing a Task Unfinished”

By Frank Houghton, 1930

Facing a task unfinished,
That drives us to our knees,
A need that undiminished,
Rebukes our slothful ease,
We, who rejoice to know Thee,
Renew before Thy throne,
The solemn pledge we owe Thee,
To go and make Thee known.

Where other lords beside Thee
Hold their unhindered sway,
Where forces that defied Thee,
Defy Thee still today,
With none to heed their crying
For life, and love, and light,
Unnumbered souls are dying,
And pass into the night.

We bear the torch that flaming
Fell from the hands of those,
Who gave their lives proclaiming
That Jesus died and rose.
Ours is the same commission,
The same glad message ours,
Fired by the same ambition,
To Thee we yield our powers.

O Father Who sustained them,
O Spirit Who inspired,
O Saviour, Whose love constrained them,
To toil with zeal untired,
From cowardice defend us,
From lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us
To labour for Thy sake.¹⁰

¹⁰ (c) Overseas Missionary Fellowship (formerly China Inland Mission)



APPENDIX

The Genealogies in Matthew and Luke

The Genealogy in Matthew

Matthew pointedly excludes Joseph as being the actual biological father of Jesus. In the phrase “of whom was born Jesus,” “whom” is a feminine pronoun, referring to Mary. The verb “was born” is passive. Every previous occurrence of this verb, “to beget,” in 1:2-16a is active. Matthew is already alluding to the activity of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ conception which we find immediately following this genealogy in 1:18. The account of the virgin birth immediately follows Christ’s genealogy (1:18-25). Matthew does not leave his reader wondering about how Jesus was born.

Why, then, the differences in the two genealogies? We have seen that Matthew’s genealogy presents a *descending line*, from Abraham through David, through Joseph, to Jesus, who is called Messiah. On the other hand, Luke’s genealogy presents an *ascending line*, starting from Jesus and going back through David, Abraham, and even to ‘Adam, the son of God’ (Luke 3:23-38). Luke’s record is apparently traced from Mary’s side, the Eli of Luke 3:23 probably being Joseph’s father-in-law (often referred to as a father) and therefore Mary’s natural father. In other words, Mary and Joseph were both from the Davidic line, probably related to one another as distant cousins.¹¹

Matthew’s intent is to validate Jesus’ royal claim by showing His legal descent from David through Joseph, who was Jesus’ legal, though not natural, father. Luke’s intent is to trace Jesus’ actual royal blood ancestry through his mother, thereby establishing His racial lineage from David.

Matthew follows the royal line through David and Solomon, David’s son and successor to the throne. Luke follows the royal line through Nathan, another son of David. Jesus was therefore the *blood descendant* of David through Mary and the *legal descendant* of David through Joseph. Genealogically, Jesus was perfectly qualified to take the throne of David.

The Genealogy in Luke

Bible scholar D. S. Huffman explains the reason why Luke’s genealogy of Jesus differs from the genealogy recorded in Matthew 1:1-17: “While Luke seems similarly concerned to show Jesus to be a descendant of David (Luke 1:27, 36, 69; 2:4; 3:31; 18:38-39; Acts 2:22-32; 13:22-23), he traces the messianic line through David’s son Nathan instead of through Solomon. Even though no other known biblical or Jewish genealogy culminates in the naming of God, this is not to be used alone as an argument for Jesus’ divinity any more than it is for the divinity of Joseph and the others in the list. It is noteworthy, however, that Luke traces Jesus’

¹¹ The notion of Joseph marrying his (perhaps distant) cousin, Mary, should not be as shocking as it appears. While this is culturally taboo in the twentieth century, it was common practice in the first century. Other biblical examples of this would be Isaac and Rebekkah or Jacob and Rachel (and Leah).



sonship all the way back to God immediately after his record of the voice from heaven declaring Jesus, “my beloved Son’ (3:22). Likewise, after the genealogy Luke records the temptation of Jesus during which the devil asks Jesus if he is the Son of God (4:3, 9). Interestingly, the only voices in Luke to declare Jesus to be the Son of God are angelic (1:32, 35), demonic (4:41; 8:28), Satan’s (4:3, 9) and God’s (3:22; 9:35; cf. 22:70; Acts 9:20). While Jesus as the Son of God is more than a human ascription in Luke, his genealogy seems to underscore Jesus’ humanity.”¹²

In other words, Huffman understands the genealogy in Luke to be a way to underscore the universal scope of Christ’s mission to seek and save all of mankind. Huffman continues: “What is clear in Luke-Acts is that the Evangelist saw all peoples—Jews and Gentiles—as invited into a relationship with God through Jesus. The Jews were the vehicle by which God brought the savior of all humanity into the world. Luke’s point is not that all of humanity will be saved, but that salvation is equally offered to all of humanity. By placing this all-inclusive genealogy at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Luke indicates that the benefits of Jesus’ ministry will be available to all (Luke 24:46–47; Acts 1:8; 13:46–48; 26:23; 28:28).”¹³

N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (brief summary)

N.T. Wright’s *The Resurrection of the Son of God* looks at why Christianity began and why it took the shape it did. N. T. Wright (renowned NT scholar) answers these questions: What precisely happened at Easter? What did the early Christians mean when they said that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead? What can be said today about this belief?

This book is third in Wright’s series *Christian Origins and the Question of God* and it sketches a map of ancient beliefs about life after death in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds. It then highlights the fact that the early Christians’ belief about the afterlife belonged firmly on the Jewish spectrum, while introducing several new mutations and sharper definitions. This, together with other features of early Christianity, forces the historian to read the Easter narratives in the gospels, not simply as late rationalizations of early Christian spirituality, but as accounts of two actual events: the empty tomb of Jesus and his appearances.

How do we explain these phenomena? The early Christians’ answer was that Jesus had indeed been bodily raised from the dead; that was why they hailed him as the messianic son of God. No modern historian has come up with a more convincing explanation. Facing this question, we are confronted to this day with the most central issues of worldview and theology.

Occupied and Unoccupied Tomb: Various explanations for the Resurrection

Some claim that the tomb was actually occupied by Jesus:

1. Unknown tomb (resurrection born out of ignorance of where body was)
2. Wrong tomb (women went to the wrong tomb)
3. Legend (fabrication to vindicate a leader long since dead)
4. Spiritual resurrection (Jesus spirit lived on but not his body)
5. Hallucinations (disciples were so emotionally involved that they hallucinated)

Others claim that the tomb was unoccupied by Jesus:

1. Passover plot (mock death to fulfill OT)
2. Resuscitation (did not die, cold and spices revived him)
3. Body stolen by disciples
4. Existential resurrection (no need for historical resurrection, Christ is raised in hearts)
5. Historical bodily resurrection as recorded in scripture

¹² D. S. Huffman, “Genealogy,” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 253.

¹³ D. S. Huffman, “Genealogy,” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 253.



A brief five-point summary of Wright's book-length argument would be as follows:

1. Resurrection and its cognates mean "life after 'life after death.'"
2. Ancient paganism strenuously denied the possibility of resurrection.
3. A strong belief in the hope of future resurrection existed only within the bounds of certain sects of Judaism.
4. The *only* possible reason why early Christianity began and took the shape it did is that the tomb really was empty and that people really did meet Jesus, alive again.
5. Though admitting it involves accepting a challenge at the level of worldview itself, the best historical explanation for all these phenomena is that Jesus was indeed bodily raised from the dead.

