

Importance of women:

An important part of God's concern for people is that it is manifested towards groups not highly esteemed in first-century society; women, children, the poor, the disreputable. He gives a significance place to women. In the first century women were kept very much in their place, but Luke sees them as he object of God's love and he writes about many of them. In the infancy stories he tells of Mary, the mother of Jesus and of Elizabeth and Anna. Later he writes of Martha and her sister May (10:38-42), of Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Susana (8:2f). He refers to women whom he does not name, such as the widow of Nain (7:11f) the sinner who anointed Jesus' feet (7:37 ff), the bent woman (13:11), the widow who gave all she had to God (21:1-4) and the 'Daughters of Jerusalem' who lamented for Jesus as he went to the cross (23:27ff). Sometimes women turn up also in the parables, as in those of the lost coin (15:8ff) and the unjust judge (18:1ff). **Children:** The most obvious example of Luke's concern for children is in the infancy stories. ¹

The poor: Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor (4:18), and Luke reports a blessing on the poor (6:20; by contrast there is a woe for the rich, 6:24), whereas Matthew speaks of 'the poor in spirit (Matt. 5: 3). Preaching good news to the poor is characteristic of Jesus' ministry (7:22). The shepherds to whom the angels came (2:8ff) were from a poor class. Indeed the family of Jesus himself seems to have been poor, for the offering made at the birth of the child as that of the poor (2:24; cf. Lev. 12:8). In general Luke concerns himself with the interests of the poor (1:53; 6:30; 14:11-13, 21; 16:19ff). The other side of this coin is an emphasis on the dangers of riches. Luke has a 'Woe' for the rich (6:24), and he tells us that God sends rich people away empty (1:53). There are parables warning the wealthy, such as the rich fool (12:16ff), the unjust steward (16:1ff), Dives and Lazarus (16: 19-31). There are warnings for the rich on the stories of the rich young ruler (18:18-27), of Zaccheus (19:1-10), and of the widow's mite (21: 1-4).²

The disreputable: Luke tells us that on one occasion 'the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus (15:1). This is not an isolated incident, for Luke finds occasion to mention many who were scarcely respectable. Thus he tells us of Zaccheus (dismissed by the bystanders as 'a sinner', 19:7), and of the feast Levi made for the crowd described by the Pharisees as 'tax collectors and sinners' (5: 30). In the same strain he recounts the story of the sinful woman who wept over Jesus' feet and anointed them and of whom Jesus said that her many sins were forgiven and that 'she loved much' (7:37-50). The prodigal son was not exactly a model of rectitude and the unrighteous have a way of turning up in the parables in this Gospel (7: 41f; 12:13-21; 16: 1-12; 19-31; 18:1-8 9-14).³

2: 6-7: that Mary wrapped the child herself points to a lonely birth. That he was laid in a manger has traditionally been taken to mean that Jesus was born in a stable. He may have been. But it is also possible that the birth took place in a very poor home where animals shared the same roof as the family. A tradition going back to Justin says it occurred in a cave (*Dialogue with Trypho* 78) and this could be right. Some have thought that the birth took place in the open air (possibly the courtyard of the inn), that being where a manger would likely be. We do not know. We know only that everything points to poverty, obscurity and even rejection. *There was no place for them in the inn.* Joseph may have left his journey too late. Or the innkeeper may not have wished to have them. Another possibility is that the word does not mean *inn* here, but a room in a house (as in 22:11). It had been meant for Joseph and Mary, but was occupied by others by the time they arrived.⁴

¹ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 44.

² Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 45.

³ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 46.

⁴ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 92.

Shepherds: Flocks were supposed to kept only in the wilderness. As a class shepherds had a bad reputation. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law-courts. They did come from a despised class. ⁵[It could be that Luke tried to show that Jesus came from and to a lower class in his society].

John's response to people: 3:10-11

John's teaching was rejected by Jewish leaders (7:30), but it led others to ask questions (what shall we do?). People wanted to know what was expected of them. John's first answer is intensely practical: **People should share** what they have with those who have nothing. **The Romans taxed** people by farming out the taxing rights to the highest bidder. The successful man would pay Rome the amount he bid, but he would collect more than that to pay expenses and to give him his legitimate profit. But it was a strong temptation to levy more tax than was strictly necessary and to pocket the extra. This provoked resentment, especially among the patriotic, who in any case did not like to see Jews helping the Romans by collecting their taxes for them. A vicious circle developed: the more they overtaxed the more they were hated and the more they were hated the more they overtaxed. The *tax collectors* who came to John's baptism were the agents of the tax farmers, not the tax farmer themselves. John's preaching had convinced some of them that what they were doing was wrong and they wanted to express their repentance in baptism. John's advice is *collect no more than is appointed you*. ⁶

Soldiers: Luke does not say whether the soldiers were Jewish or Roman. Most agree that they were probably Jewish and some think they may have been associated with the tax collectors in providing the backing which enabled to do their work. Either way they were a privileged position over against the general public. Citizens could have little redress when troops used violence or false charges to rob them (soldiers characteristically loot!). ⁷

Luke 4:18-30 : Jesus saw himself as coming with good news for the world's troubled people. Jesus began by saying that the prophecy he had just read was being fulfilled. The words of Isaiah applied to the ministry he was beginning (cf. 7:22). *Today* is important. He saw God as acting in the present, in his own work. 'Not in the future age but *now* is the captive power of sin to be broken, communion with God to be established, and the will of God to be done.'⁸

6:20-23: The Beatitudes:

Together with the following woes these beatitudes make a mockery of the world's values. They exalt what the world despises and reject what the world admires. Jesus pronounced a blessing on them [disciples] as poor (cf. 4:18). He is not blessing poverty in itself. Nor is he pronouncing a blessing on one social class above all others. He is speaking of his disciples. They are poor and they know that they are without resource. They rely on God for they have nothing of their own on which to rely.⁹

[In my opinion, Jesus mean all the poor in his world including his disciples because he didn't come to bring good news just to disciples but to all who are poor].

The woes (6:24-26): They pronounce a surprising verdict on qualities and states which people have universally regarded as desirable. But the world's blessings may encourage an attitude of self-sufficiency which is fatal to spiritual growth. *Woe* does not convey the exact force of Jesus' *ouai*. It is more like 'Alas' (NEB) or 'How terrible' (GNB). It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat. ¹⁰

[This sounds a weak expression. Since Jesus saw so much of the rich's exploitation of the poor he couldn't have a weak expression of the rich although he may not have hated the rich *person* per se but his greedy *behavior*].

⁵ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 93.

⁶ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 105-106

⁷ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 106.

⁸ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 107.

⁹ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 139.

¹⁰ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 140.

24. **The first woe is for you that are rich.** This is not addressed to the disciples, for they were not rich. Jesus may have been addressing rich people in the great multitude.’ Wealth predisposes people to think they have need of nothing. They then rely on riches, not on God. Their attitude is the very opposite of that commended (20). ... When all that anyone has is worldly wealth he is poor indeed. That kind of prosperity goes with an inner emptiness. Comfort is not to be mistaken for blessedness.¹¹ [I think, there were the rich and poor, sick and homeless in the multitude that followed Jesus, he is more likely addressing his audience with both blessings and woes, not just addressing one kind of people in audience].

25. **You that are full** means much the same as ‘you that are rich,’ but there is more emphasis on the state of the persons concerned. They are not only rich but have all they want and feel the lack nothing. People who live thinking that what they have is all-sufficient, who allow material possessions to be all-in-all and who think they have no need of God, are assured *you shall hunger*. This does not necessarily refer to physical hunger. Jesus is referring to ultimate reality. In the Kingdom of God it is these people who are the paupers. One day they will see this for themselves.¹² [Depending on how we interpret ‘full’ it can include physical hunger.]

You have laugh now. Jesus is not objecting to laughter as such. His whole ministry was a protest against the killjoy attitude. It is shallow merriment that will give way to mourning and weeping.¹³

26. It is a danger when *all men speak well of you*, for this can scarcely happen apart from some sacrifice of principle. It is true, a sense in which being well thought of by outsiders,’ but that is different from universal popularity. It is the false prophets who win wide acclaim.¹⁴

7: 18-23: Jesus’ response to John’s question:

John the Baptist was in prison. Evidently he was expecting Jesus to do something spectacular. When nothing seemed to happen he sent men to Jesus to find out why and possibly to provoke some action.

18-20: What Jesus had been doing was known widely in the countryside and word was taken to John in prison (3:20). So he summoned two disciples and sent them to ask Jesus, *Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another? He who is to come* (cf. 3:16; 13:35; 19:38; Heb. 10:37) was not an accepted Messianic designation, but clearly John is using it in this sense. But as he had long since borne witness to Jesus as the Mighty One who would come (3:16), it is not clear why he should ask this question (though we should remember that in this Gospel John does not specifically say that Jesus was that One). Perhaps the least likely solution is that which suggests that John himself had no qualms but his followers did. So he sent his disciples with a message, knowing that Jesus would give a satisfactory answer.... Up till this time, it is suggested, John had continued his own movement in opposition to Jesus, but now he began to wonder whether Jesus was the Great One he knew would come and whether he should accordingly abandon his own movement.¹⁵ Against this is the fact that John was in prison. He was certainly at this time not promoting any rival group. There is also the fact that our source show that John did point people to Jesus (Matt. 3:13f; Jn. 1:29ff; 35f; 10:41; Acts 18:25; 19:4). Others think that John’s faith in Jesus had failed a little. Perhaps it was not John’s faith but his patience that failed. Being in confinement in Herod’s prison, it was uncertain whether he would ever be released. His question may be in the spirit of, ‘You are the One we are expecting aren’t You? Then why not do something? This must remain as a possibility, but perhaps it is more likely that John was plain puzzled. He had prophesied that the Coming One would do some striking works of judgment (3:16f). But Jesus was doing nothing that sort. He was engrossed in works of mercy. Would somebody else then do those works of judgment? John wanted to know.¹⁶

21-23: Jesus’ answer is to direct attention to what was going on. Help was being given to the blind (Is. 35:5), the lame (Is. 35:6), lepers, the deaf (Is. 35:5), the dead and the poor (Is 61:1). The Old Testament parallels show that the

¹¹ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 141.

¹² Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 141.

¹³ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 141.

¹⁴ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 141.

¹⁵ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 155.

¹⁶ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman’s Pub. Co., 1988), 156.

healing miracles and the preaching to the poor have Messianic significance. They are the divine accreditation of Jesus' mission. It was in such works of mercy and not in spectacular victories over Roman armies that Messianic work would be accomplished [Jesus had already rejected to be this kind of Messiah when he had overcome his temptation in the wilderness.]. ('Jesus might not represent the kind of God they wanted, but the question was posed whether here might not be the kind of God they needed). Jesus had preached about this in the synagogue at Nazareth (4:18ff) [as his mission goal]. But this truth is not open to everyone's perception. So Jesus pronounces a blessing on him *who takes no offense at me*.¹⁷[Because people who expected to have a mighty Messiah who could exercise power over the Roman's oppression and deliver Israel from that tyranny. These people certainly could be offensive to what Jesus was doing. And Jewish leaders will be offended that Jesus cared about the poor whom they despised and discarded like a trash.]. So both groups could have been offended]

11: 1- 13: The Lord's Prayer:

3. The petition for the bread means the provision of our daily needs. The continuous present, 'keep giving,' and *the each day* makes it clear that we should look to God constantly, not ask for provision for a lengthy period and then proceed to forget him. The most favorable meanings are *daily*, 'for the morrow,' and 'the food we need' (GNB, i.e. 'the bread for existence; cf. Pr. 30:8).¹⁸ [Those who are not hungry might read this as spiritual bread but those who are hungry will read it as a physical bread, the sustenance of their life.]

4. Forgive our sins: (*Everyone who is indebted to us* refers not to financial transactions but to sin, here seen as a debt). This does not make a human action, the forgiveness of others, the ground of forgiveness. The New Testament is clear that forgiveness springs from the grace of God and not from any human merit. Rather the thought moves from the lesser to the greater: since even sinful people like us forgive, we can confidently appeal to a merciful God.¹⁹

[In Jesus' days, so many peasant farmers sit on heavy debts for not being able to pay Roman tax and ended up losing their land which is their livelihood. Therefore those who are on mount of debts would ask God to deliver them from their debts. More likely they would have debts in mind before they think of their sins.]

Lead us not into temptations: This does not imply that God does sometimes cause us to be tempted, and in fact James assures us that he never does (James 1:13). Rather Jesus is encouraging an attitude that flees from temptation (cf. I Cor.6:18; 10:14; I Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22). Christians recognize their weakness and the ease with which they give way to the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. So they pray to be delivered from them all.²⁰

¹⁷ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 156.

¹⁸ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 212.

¹⁹ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 212.

²⁰ Leon Morris. Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Luke, Gen. ed. Canon Leon Morris (Grand Rapids: Erdman's Pub. Co., 1988), 213.