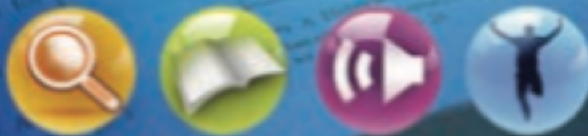


HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Luke 4³¹ – 6¹¹

Work Book

Hearing the Word Luke 4:31-6:11 Work Book

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Nigel Barge, December 2011

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

www.blueletterbible.org

Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



LOOK – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
 - a) What questions does it raise -
Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
 - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
 - a) the surrounding text
 - b) the Book of the Bible
 - c) the whole Bible
 - d) the place in the Bible Story



LEARN – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



LIVE – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God, (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace*
 - c) Jesus / his salvation**
- 2) What should I do?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the Fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

Reading Narrative

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. Exodus is mainly narrative (story), the most common type. To approach narrative correctly we need to keep in mind the following principles.

1 In General: It is *God's* story

The whole Bible recounts the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and the fall in Genesis, the rest describes how God works out his unfolding plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus. The OT prepares for the arrival, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The NT recounts these and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about Jesus. Therefore:

a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

So as we read, we should be asking – ‘what does this show about Jesus; what is He doing?’

b) Everything is relevant.

In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often we are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read Bible narrative – knowing how it ends – we should be asking ‘what relevance has *this* part of the story to the *main* story?’

2 In particular: ‘Follow the camera angle’

A film director focuses the viewer's attention on particular shots to tell ‘his story’. In the same way each narrator in the Bible is selective about what to tell us. They leave out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what they are trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question, ‘Why is he telling me this and in this particular way?’

3 Warts and all

Human beings often get things wrong. The Bible narrative faithfully records errors, even by people who are elsewhere commended. For instance, Moses murdered a man, King David committed adultery, and Peter, who was praised for realising Jesus was the Christ, was minutes later roundly scolded when he tried to stop Jesus being the Christ through suffering! (Exodus 2:12; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 16:16-23)

So we can't treat every thought or action in a narrative as something to copy, just because ‘it's in the Bible’. We must ask the Holy Spirit to use the rest of Scripture to discern good examples to follow, and bad ones to avoid.

Background to Luke's Gospel

The Author

Luke was a doctor and friend of the apostle Paul, who calls him 'the beloved physician' and 'fellow worker' (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24). He began to travel with Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10). He was close to Paul near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11).

He may have come from Antioch in Syria, or Troas, or Philippi in Macedonia. He was a Gentile (i.e. not a Jew). Indeed he is the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament.

He had carried out careful research (see Luke 1:3, 2:51). He also wrote the story of the early church in the 5th book of the New Testament, whose full title is: 'The Acts of the Apostles'. It takes us up to Paul's imprisonment in Rome but not his trial, suggesting Luke finished writing it before that event

The Date of writing

Luke wrote his gospel before he wrote Acts (see Acts 1:1), probably before 63AD.

The structure

A	The introduction	(1: 1 - 4)
B	The birth of Jesus	(1:5 - 2:52)
C	The start of Jesus' ministry	(3:1 - 4:13)
D	Jesus in Galilee	(4:14 - 9:50)
E	From Galilee to Jerusalem	(9:51 - 19:44)
F	Jesus in Jerusalem	(19:45 - 21:38)
G	The death of Jesus	(22:1 - 23:56)
H	The resurrection of Jesus	(24:1 - 53)

Its purpose

Matthew and Mark probably wrote their gospels before Luke. Unlike them Luke had not himself witnessed Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, but he had personal contact with many eyewitnesses who had. He addresses both his Gospel and Acts to someone called 'Theophilus'. This may have been a real individual: could he have been an official in Roman government?... Someone who wanted details of Christianity before Paul's trial in Rome?... Someone who paid Luke's expenses while writing? Actually, the name means, 'friend of God', so it might refer to anyone, in any time or place, who *wanted to know the Gospel and be a friend of God*.

The Themes

Five themes keep re-occurring in Luke's Gospel:

1 Salvation

a) a historical event

Jesus Christ's coming to earth as a man is the centre point of history. Luke points out the exact time and situation of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2). Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem (9:51) where he completes his work, commits his Spirit to the Father, and dies (23:46). On the third day he rises from death. Forty days later, having promised to return, he ascends to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Meantime, the Good News of this salvation is offered to all by the power of the Spirit (Acts 2:38,39).

b) for all mankind

From the announcement by the angels of 'good news ... for all people' (2:10) to the genealogy of Jesus stretching back to Adam (3:38), it is clear the non-Jews are included too. This does not deny the importance of Israel. Luke begins and ends his Gospel with people in Jerusalem and shows it to be the ultimate destination of Jesus' earthly ministry (1:8; 2:22, 36; 9:51-53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28).

2 The 'outsiders'

Luke shows that people seen as 'weak' are equally welcome in the Kingdom of God, by recording Jesus' interaction with them. This includes:

a) Women

Women are central to the story. At the beginning, the angelic announcement of His birth was to Mary (1:26-38) and at end, the truth of His resurrection was given first to the women at the tomb (24:1-11). He ministered to women in various settings (7:11; 7:37; 13:11; 21:1-4) and it was women who helped finance Him and His apostles (8:2-3).

b) Children

The accounts of Jesus' birth show the importance and value of a child from the womb (1:41!). At various times he intervenes to heal the child of a distraught parent (7:12; 8:42; 9:38)

c) The poor

Jesus himself was from Nazareth (4:16) – a poor, insignificant town (John 1:46). His birth was to an unmarried girl and witnessed by the 'outcasts' of society, the shepherds (2:8-20). The offering at His birth was that of the poor (2:24; Leviticus 12:8) and the message he preached was for the poor (4:18; 7:22). He died with common criminals (23:32,41).

d) Gentiles

Luke, himself a Gentile, is writing to another Gentile, Theophilus (1:3). He records the faith of a Gentile Roman Centurion: Jesus says he had 'not found such great faith in Israel' (7:9). Possibly out of deference to his non-Jewish readership, Luke seldom quotes the Old Testament.

3 The Holy Spirit

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is explicit throughout the Gospel, in:

a) the birth of John the Baptist (1:15,41,57) **b)** the conception of Jesus (1:35) **c)** the prophecy about Jesus by Simeon (2:25-27) **d)** John's promise that Jesus would 'baptise with the Holy Spirit' (3:16) **e)** the baptism of Jesus (3:22) **f)** the temptations of Jesus (4:1) **g)** the power of Jesus' ministry (4:18) **h)** the joy of the Spirit (10:21) **i)** the promise of the Spirit for His followers (11:13; 12:10-12; 24:49). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost, as Luke records in Acts 2.

4 The humanity of Jesus

There is no clearer way of demonstrating Jesus' humanity than noting his recourse to prayer. Through this he shows:

- a) his own dependence on the Father through prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46).
- b) his identification with his disciples, as He similarly instructs them in prayer through
 - i) parables - the friend at midnight (11:5-13) the unjust judge (18:1-8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:10-14)
 - ii) teaching on prayer (6:28; 11:2; 22:40, 46)

5 The deity of Jesus

Luke presents Jesus as God in an *oblique* way. This fact was not acknowledged at that time. This is the key theme of the first 5 chapters:

1:17 John prepares for the Lord	4:41 the Son of God
1:32 called Son of the Most High	5:8 the Holy presence
1:43 Mary mother of 'my Lord'	5:13 able to cleanse an individual
2:11 Saviour who is Christ the Lord	5:20 a forgiver of sin
2:49 in 'His Father's house'	5:32 (righteous one) calling sinners to repentance
3:22 God says 'you are my Son';	5:34 the bridegroom
4:34 The Holy one of God	

Jesus drives out an evil spirit

Background information

From 4:14 to 9:50, Luke gives us an account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Much of this information is also given in Matthew and Mark. Luke begins his account of Jesus' mission with some miracles of healing and a preaching tour.

The expression "a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon" is nowhere explained. The Bible says little about demon possession before or after the incarnation, but much during Jesus' ministry. In Scripture then this phenomenon is part of the conflict between Jesus, who came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8), and evil.

Word List

31	<i>Galilee</i>	North Palestine; bordered on East by River Jordan and the Sea of Galilee
31	<i>Capernaum</i>	20 miles from Nazareth, down on NW shore of Sea of Galilee, near where river Jordan runs into it
	<i>Sabbath</i>	Seventh day, Jewish day of rest, running from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday
	<i>Synagogue</i>	Jewish place of meeting for worship in a locality- from a Greek verb meaning <i>to gather together</i>
33	<i>demon/evil spirit</i>	<i>evil</i> means <i>unclean</i> in the Greek
34	<i>Holy One of God</i>	Unusual title, stresses thought of consecration to God's service
35	<i>be quiet</i>	Literally "be muzzled"

Bible connections

	<i>see also</i>	Mark 1:21-28
32,36	<i>amazed at Jesus' teaching</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 7:28-29
33-34	<i>demon shouting 'I know who you are'</i>	<i>see</i> James 2:19
34,37	<i>Holy One of God</i>	<i>see</i> Mark 1:24; John 6:69
35	<i>Jesus' work is to destroy the works of the devil.</i>	<i>see</i> 1 John 3:8

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace?

c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus heals many

Background and

Jesus continues with miracles of healing and teaching the people. This is Luke's first mention of 'the kingdom of God', which was to become the favourite theme in Jesus' teaching. Preaching this good news is Jesus' priority.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 38 | <i>Simon</i> | one of the 12 disciples <i>see</i> 5:1-11; 6:13 |
| | <i>high fever</i> | a medical term |
| 41 | <i>Son of God</i> | expression of Jesus' unique relationship to Yahweh |
| | <i>Christ</i> | means Messiah - literally 'Anointed One' |
| 43 | <i>Kingdom of God</i> | same as the kingdom of heaven <i>c.f.</i> Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20 |
| 44 | <i>Judea</i> | or 'the land of the Jews' |

Bible Connections

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| | <i>see also</i> | Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-38 |
| 42 | <i>daybreak....solitary place</i> | <i>see also</i> Mark 1:35; 6:46; Matthew 14:13,23;
Luke 6:12; 9:28 |

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Calling of the first disciples

Background

The crowds are still following Jesus and he continues to teach them. Fishing on the Sea of Galilee was usually done at night in small boats using large drag-nets. During the day the fishermen would clean and repair their nets.

Word List

- 1 *Lake of Gennesaret* also known as Sea of Galilee or Sea of Tiberias. 13 miles long by 7 miles wide and 680 feet below sea level. Gennesaret is also the name for a fertile plain on the west side of the lake.
 - Gennesaret* word derived from ‘harp’ (because the lake is roughly harp-shaped) or ‘garden of riches’.
 - 3 *sat down* the customary position for teaching
 - 5 *Master* term denoting anyone in authority
 - 8 *Lord* ‘*kurios*’ was a term Luke used of God (4:18)
 - 10 *don’t be afraid* ‘stop being fearful’ rather than ‘don’t get scared’
 - catch men* The greek verb *zograo* means ‘take alive’; it is usually used of taking a person prisoner in war so sparing their life. It can also mean ‘to restore to life and strength, revive’
- The tense shows a habitual practice is in mind.

Bible Connections

- see also* Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:40-42
- 1 *Word of God* *see* Mark 4:14; Hebrews 4:12
 - 5 *fishing all night and catching nothing-* *see also* John 21:3
 - 8 ‘*Go away...I am a sinful man.*’ *c.f.* Abraham, Job, Isaiah, Israel. Genesis 18:27; Job 42:6; Isaiah 6:5; Exodus 20:19

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2) What should I do?

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Healing a leper

Background

In Biblical times ‘leprosy’ was the name given to a number of skin diseases, some curable and some not. In its worst form it was disfiguring and fatal. The only defence against it was quarantine. Sufferers were forbidden to approach other people and had to call out ‘Unclean’ to prevent accidental contact. *see* Leviticus 13:45-46 The psychological effects were as serious as the physical.

Word List

12	<i>leprosy</i>	skin disease
	<i>covered with</i>	an advance state of the disease
	<i>make me clean</i>	heal me (Leprosy was a ‘dirty’ disease. It defiled.)
14	<i>go...priest</i>	The priest acted as a kind of health inspector.
	<i>sacrifices</i>	offered after priest was satisfied. <i>see</i> Leviticus 14:2-32
	<i>Moses commanded</i>	a way of referring to the Law
	<i>testimony to them</i>	proof that he had been healed

Bible Connections

	<i>see also</i>	Matthew 8:2-4 and Mark 1:40-44
13	<i>Jesus’ compassion</i>	Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; James 5:11
14	<i>‘Don’t tell anyone.’</i>	also said to demoniacs in 4:35,41
	<i>leprosy in Old Testament</i>	<i>see</i> Leviticus 14:2-32
16	<i>Jesus praying</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 3:21; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Luke 4:42; 6:12; 9:18,28; 11:1

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2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus heals a paralytic

Background and

This healing miracle is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus had quite a reputation by now; the Pharisees were coming from a distance, (Judea and Jerusalem) not just locally, to hear him. Jesus works the miracle and shows that he has authority on earth to forgive sins.

Word List

17	<i>Pharisees</i>	unofficial religious leaders of the day with great emphasis on keeping the law and their many human additions to it, allegedly to explain it.
	<i>Teachers of Law (scribes)</i>	those who studied, taught, interpreted the Law of Moses, the first five books of the Bible
	<i>Judea</i>	south of the country
	<i>Jerusalem</i>	capital city, with the Temple
18	<i>some men</i>	Mark tells us there were four.
19	<i>roof</i>	Palestinian houses then had flat roofs, often with external staircases.
20	<i>sins</i>	wrongdoing, violating God's law
21	<i>blasphemy</i>	disrespect for God, insulting his honour
24	<i>Son of Man</i>	a term Jesus often used of himself (c.f. Dan 7:13f)

Bible Connections

see also Matthew 9:2-8 and Mark 2:3-12

20	<i>faith of friends</i>	see Luke 7:9f; 1 Cor 7:14
21	<i>Who is this...?</i>	see also 7:49; 8:25; 9:9,18,20; 19:3
21	<i>Who forgives sins?</i>	see Isaiah 43:25
24	<i>Son of man</i>	see Daniel 7:13ff

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2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The calling of Levi

Background

The Romans taxed people by farming out the taxing rights to the highest bidder. Many charged more tax than was strictly necessary and pocketed the extra, so they were often rich men. Everyone heartily disliked tax collectors as collaborators with the Romans and as extortioners. Levi probably collected toll or customs duties rather than poll tax or the like.

Word List

- 27 *Levi* also known as Matthew see Matthew 9:9
(*Matthew* means: 'Gift of God /Yahweh')
- tax collector* not allowed in local synagogue or Temple; classed with robbers and murderers.
- Levites 'Tribe set apart to serve in the Temple
(Numbers 18:21ff; Deuteronomy 18:1-4)
- 30 'sinners' In the Pharisee's eyes, anyone who was ceremonially unclean was a sinner.
- 32 *repentance* 'The Greek verb *metanoeo* used to mean: to perceive afterwards; to change one's purpose or conviction; to regret; to repent. But NT usage is heavily influenced by the OT: not just feeling sorry, but a total change of the motivation and direction of one's life; to turn round, to convert. The related noun *metanoia* is not just a change of mind on reflection, repentance, but conversion.

Bible Connections

see also Matthew 9:9-13 and Mark 2:14-17

- 27 'Follow me' see Matthew 4:19
- 29 *banquet* for Luke's dinner scenes, see also 7:36; 9:12ff; 10:38ff; 11:37; 14:1; 24:30,41ff
- 32 *repentance* Luke develops this theme more fully than Matthew or Mark. see Luke 3:3,8; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3,5; 15:7,10; 16:30; 17:3,4; 24:47
see also John 3:17

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Jesus questioned about fasting

Background

The Law prescribed only one fast - on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-34) but fasting was practised by John the Baptist's followers and by the followers of the Pharisees. Jesus' disciples were too cheerful for the Pharisees!

Word List

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--|
| 33 | <i>pray</i> | It probably refers to set prayers at fixed hours |
| 34 | <i>taken from them</i> | (Greek = <i>aparthē</i>) suggests violent separation. It refers to Jesus' death on the cross? |
| 36 | <i>parable</i> | story or short, pithy saying, making a point in a round-about way |
| 37 | <i>wineskins</i> | usually goatskin, flesh and bones removed and skin left intact. When new, the supple, elastic skin could expand as the new wine fermented, but as it aged it became dry, hard and rigid; everyone knew it could still be re-used to hold water, but new wine would burst it. |
| 39 | <i>old is better</i> | or 'the old is good' i.e. unwilling to consider the new |

Bible Connections

see also Matthew 9:14-17 and Mark 2:18-22

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|----------------------|
| 35 | <i>taken from them</i> | <i>see</i> Luke 9:22 |
|----|------------------------|----------------------|

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Jesus and the Sabbath

Background information

Opposition to Jesus was mounting up and the Pharisees and the scribes were coming out into the open with their objections. The Pharisees listed thousands of acts prohibited on the Sabbath, in thirty nine categories, of which four were reaping, winnowing, threshing and preparing a meal. Jesus confronted them head on and showed that he is 'Lord of the Sabbath'.

Word List 1	<i>Sabbath</i> seventh day of Jewish week; a holy day, day of rest Hebrew root word 'sabat' means 'to cease'. After 6 'days' of creation, God 'rested' on the 7th 'day'.
2 <i>Pharisees</i>	unofficial religious leaders of the day who put great emphasis on keeping the law, plus their thousands of petty additions to it, allegedly to explain it
3 <i>David</i>	the second King of Israel
4 <i>consecrated bread</i>	also known as <i>the shewbread</i> , or the ' <i>bread of the Presence</i> '; made in a special way; on display for one week in the Temple, then eaten, but only by priests.
5 <i>Son of Man</i>	a title Jesus used of himself (c.f. Daniel 7:13f)
6 <i>synagogue</i>	Jewish place of worship
7 <i>shrivelled</i>	Some form of muscular atrophy

Bible Connections

See also Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6

1 <i>Sabbath</i>	Fourth commandment tells us to keep it holy and a day of rest Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15
<i>picking corn</i>	Wayfarers allowed to do this to satisfy their hunger, but only by hand: no sickle. Deuteronomy 23:25
2 <i>unlawful</i>	Pharisees defined reaping, threshing, winnowing and preparing food as work, so forbidden.
4 <i>consecrated</i>	only to be eaten by priests (Leviticus 24:5-9) but given to David and his men when they were on the run from King Saul 1 Samuel 21:3-6.
7 <i>healing on Sabbath</i> :	Pharisees only allowed it if there was danger to life.

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

b) His grace?

c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Sharing the Word

Use

Hearing the Word can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. *

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

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