

So Luke continues in chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 8 about Jesus' teaching and about happenings in his ministry generally. But what do we make of them?

John the Baptist was asking the same questions 7:18-23 – so it wasn't obvious to John what was going on here. I'm sure John had expected the one to whom he was the forerunner to bring judgement, wrath, destruction and fire – even John's arrest by Herod had brought no answer from God. Jesus says that he's coming not as judge but as saviour.

We saw when Jesus preached at the synagogue in Nazareth he announced the year of the Lord's favour from Isaiah 61:1-2

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,” (Isa 61:1-2 NIV)

- but he hadn't yet got around to the second part of that quotation about the “day of vengeance of God” – it's not yet time for him to complete the quotation. Jesus gave the tree of Judaism a few more years to prove it wasn't barren, but it didn't do that – it proved to be barren.

Read 24:35

John was a very great man indeed (7:26–28a), the greatest man of his age. But that age has come to an end with the coming of the kingdom of God. A new thing has arisen with the advent of King Jesus. And the humblest person who knows the kingly rule of Jesus in his life has entered a greater experience than even John ever knew (7:28b). ‘Turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to set what you see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” ’ (10:23–24).

The news was new also with respect to the Jews of that time, who had heard the messages of both John and Jesus.

Jesus brings good news about his kingdom

First Luke tells of Jesus' encounter with a Roman centurion at Capernaum (7:1–10). The officer's slave ‘was sick and at the point of death’ (7:2); but Jesus performs a miracle at a distance, and at the end of the story we find ‘the slave well’ (7:10).

Then we read of the raising of the widow's son at Nain (7:11–17). Jesus halts the tragic procession to the grave (what a wealth of symbolism there is in that picture) and again by his word of power a miracle takes place. The ‘man who had died’ (7:12) thereupon ‘sat up, and began to speak’ (7:15). Of the three recorded instances of Jesus' raising the dead, John has the story of Lazarus, while the other three Gospels all have the story of Jairus' daughter. Only Luke adds this extra one, putting it here in chapter 7 as if to illustrate just how good the good news is—it brings salvation not only into the realm of disease but into that of death itself.

To the next eighteen verses, chiefly concerned with Jesus' teaching, we have referred already and shall return shortly. They are followed by the incident in the home of Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), in which Jesus' power deals with the profoundest need of all. In telling us of the woman who intrudes into Simon's dinner party, Luke says three times over that she is a sinner (7:37, 39, 47), and three times over that Jesus is the forgiver of sins (7:47, 48, 49). The tiny parable about the two debtors (7:41–42) is so much a part of the incident that its

meaning, unlike that of some parables, is unmistakable. The woman's love and gratitude is evidence of how great her 'debt' has been, and how correspondingly great the Lord's forgiveness is. The formal religion of the Pharisees had no real answer to the problem of sin, and could only respond with disapproval and condemnation. But Jesus could actually do away with sin, and in this deepest sense bring salvation and peace (7:50).

Parable of the Seed amongst the different soils
Seed is the word of God