

THE BIBLE PROJECT

Quarterly



ISSUE 005 — DIGITAL EDITION

The Upside-Down Kingdom

There are four apostolic accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in the New Testament. Each one offers a unique perspective that highlights different aspects of Jesus' life and teaching. Think of it as a beam of light shining through a crystal prism. The story of Jesus is too rich and dense to be captured entirely by any one account. We need to see Jesus in “multi-vision,” which is what we have in the four Gospels.

If you compare Luke's Gospel with the other three and identify all of the stories and teachings of Jesus that appear only in Luke, the unique colors and hues of his presentation are immediately clear. Luke wants us to see the radical social and economic upheaval that Jesus caused in his mission to announce the good news of God's Kingdom to the poor. **For short, let's call it Jesus' upside-down Kingdom.**

The Gospel of Luke forces us to confront our personal, communal, and political sensibilities. Luke wants us to know that Jesus was the embodiment of God's mercy and covenant love that opened a new way forward for all humanity, rich and poor together. It's the hope of new creation (Luke ch. 24).

This is a message that can spread into the world only through a new kind of family that's living in a new kind of way. Luke's sequel volume, the book of Acts, is precisely that story. It begins with Jesus telling his followers to announce his reign to the nations, and it concludes with Paul announcing God's Kingdom in Rome. Acts is a first-century case study, showing what happens when Jesus' followers actually live as if his upside-down Kingdom is the new right-side-up. And Luke never intended the story to end there. By writing this book, he invites each of us to consider our own context and imagine what in our lives and communities needs to be turned upside-down, so that it can become right-side-up in the power of Jesus' life and love.

TIM MACKIE

Contents

LETTER

PODCAST EXCERPT

PHOTO GALLERY

ARTIST FEATURE

STUDIO UPDATE

ART GALLERY

WORDSTUDY

ESSAY

COMMENT SECTION

LETTER

TIM AND JON

THE BIBLE PROJECT PODCAST

ALABASTER CO

WILL BEATTY

A NEW FINISH LINE IN SIGHT

LUKE-ACTS MINISERIES

ADVENT SERIES

NOT WHAT WE EXPECTED

LUKE-ACTS MINISERIES

THE QUARTERLY TEAM

CONTRIBUTORS

JON COLLINS, TIM MACKIE, ALLAN ROSENOW,
AMBER DILLON, MAKENZIE HALBERT-HOWEN,
MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN

ART DIRECTION

ROBERT PEREZ

PRODUCED BY

TORI WELLS

DESIGN

MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN
BREANA TREJO-QUIBELAN
DAN CLINTON PURVIS

ILLUSTRATION

KAYLA ROSE MAYER

COPYEDITOR

MAKENZIE HALBERT-HOWEN

The Quarterly is a publication exploring the work of The Bible Project. It's a gift to our supporters and is not intended for sale. The Bible Project Quarterly is printed in Portland, Oregon.

thebibleproject.com



Letter from Tim and Jon



On a Saturday in the early first century A.D., while the Jewish people were celebrating the weekly Sabbath, Jesus went to a local synagogue as he regularly did.

On this particular day, Jesus stood up in front of everyone to read from the Hebrew scriptures. He was handed the scroll of Isaiah, a long strip of parchment rolled up neatly. Jesus took the scroll, unrolled it, and found a section to read it aloud.

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the prisoners
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to liberate the oppressed,
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.**

LUKE 4:18-19, ISAIAH 61:1-2

This was Jesus' inaugural speech that kicked off his ministry. Jesus saw himself as the King that Isaiah had been anticipating, the one who would restore God's blessing to Israel and then to the whole world. And he would do it by serving first the poor.

The phrase "the poor" (pronounced in Hebrew, ah-nee) is used many times in the Hebrew scriptures, and it is sometimes translated as "the afflicted." The word isn't just talking about someone's financial circumstances. The poor can refer to anyone of low status who lives outside of the socially accepted framework. It could refer to those of a different ethnicity or to people with diseases or deformities. It could even refer to someone who was materially wealthy but was a social outcast due to their occupation, like a tax collector or prostitute. In the book of Psalms, David refers to himself as "the poor/afflicted one" as he describes times when he had to flee from his enemies (Psalm 25:16 or 35:10).

In other words, the poor are the outcasts. And Jesus claimed to be the God of Israel arriving in person to bring good news to these kinds of people. He began this mission in a synagogue on the Sabbath day, and it's why Luke contains so many stories of Jesus reaching out to the poor. Luke records Jesus healing a leper and a paralyzed man. Then he creates a group of disciples out of working-class fishermen, not from the pool of the religious elite. He heals a Roman centurion's son even though he would have been considered an enemy of the Jewish people. He forgives a prostitute, heals the blind and deaf, and restores a man's deformed hand. For Jesus, these people all represent the poor, and the Kingdom of God was being offered first to them.

Joel B. Green summarizes this as, "Jesus' mission is directed to the poor... in the holistic sense of those who are for any number of reasons relegated to positions outside the boundaries of God's people. Jesus refuses to recognize those socially determined boundaries, asserting instead that these 'outsiders' now can belong to God's family" (*The Gospel of Luke*, p.211).

The phrase we've begun to use to describe what is happening is "the upside-down Kingdom." A normal kingdom would be propped up by people with authority and power; a normal kingdom celebrates strength, but Jesus' Kingdom doesn't. Instead, he celebrates weakness.

One day as crowds formed around Jesus, he looked at everyone and said:

**"Happy are you who are poor,
because God's Kingdom is yours.
Happy are you who hunger now,
because you will be satisfied.
Happy are you who weep now,
because you will laugh."**

LUKE 6:20-21

This is a very backward way of looking at things. It came from Jesus' conviction that God's Kingdom would challenge and unravel the distorted social structures that people had created. But he also believed that God wanted to create a new kind of humanity, weaving together a society where the outsiders were now the guests of honor.

As you follow the narrative logic of the Gospel of Luke, you find that this thread, Jesus' good news to the outcast, was a large reason he was killed. He ate with sinners, he welcomed prostitutes into his inner circle, and he didn't conform to certain religious expectations, like strictly keeping the Sabbath the way it had been constructed. And when he marched into Jerusalem for Passover week, he explicitly critiqued the institutions of power and religion that, in his view, had corrupted Israel's worship of God.

And even during his arrest, trial, and death, Jesus' radical embrace of outsiders continued. Amidst all the pain and chaos, he made time to forgive a criminal dying next to him and to even forgive the soldiers orchestrating his brutal execution. What an upside-down way to behave. Or, the longer you think about it, perhaps not.

It turns out that death is not a threat to the way of Jesus and his upside-down Kingdom. And because of that, what seems weak and foolish is actually the beginning of a new reality more powerful than any human institution or culture. Jesus' death and resurrection opened up the door to a new creation and a different way of living together in God's new world.

During the last two years, The Bible Project has been producing a series of videos to show the themes that run through Luke's Gospel, as well as Luke's follow-up work, Acts of the Apostles. In this issue, we explore the art, process, and themes in our longest mini-series to date.

TIM & JON

Podcast Excerpt

Below is an excerpt from an episode in our eight-part Gospel series. Our podcast gives the listener a peek into the conversations Jon and Tim have before they write the scripts for our videos. These conversations can be hours long, so we record and edit them down into the most interesting parts. This is about ten minutes of a conversation about the first section of the book of Acts.



The Startup of Christianity

J O N One of the things that stood out to me was that Luke intentionally really slowed down the stories and puts you in there. And there was a lot of relational dynamics that are really important, and so it felt like an opportunity for us to slow down our storytelling and do Luke. And not just in one five-minute video, but we ended up doing five five-minute videos. So twenty-five minutes of Luke.

T I M Yeah, that's awesome.

J O N But then we started to realize. Oh, we should just do the same thing for Acts. Keep the same style.

T I M It was designed as a two-part work. If you compare the first sentences of Luke and the first sentences of Acts, they're both little notes from the author to the most likely the financial sponsor.

J O N Theophilus?

T I M The guy named Theophilus, who the author, likely Luke, writes to and says, “Hey, here’s why I’m doing this, and here’s how I made the book.” It’s awesome. He intended them to be read consecutively, so we thought let’s just turn it into a little miniseries. The Luke-Acts miniseries.

J O N The Luke-Acts miniseries. So we’re moving into Acts. The book of Acts.

T I M Yeah. I think there are three large movements in the book of Acts. Actually, the first sentences give you a map of the whole book. The opening scene gives you a map by geography and narrative movements. So we could slow down, but I think Acts can be grasped. You can get the basic thing. Three movements, so we’re shooting for three videos.

J O N Awesome.

T I M Perhaps, Jon Collins, you’d like to read the opening of Acts. The first eight verses of the book of Acts.

J O N I’d love to. “The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach...” This is Luke?

T I M Yeah.

J O N This seems unique. There’s no other book that starts this way in all Scripture.

T I M Well, that’s true. In terms of narrative works, Luke and Acts are the only narrative books that open up with a personal introduction.

J O N So this is Luke. “The first account I composed, being the Gospel of Luke, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen. To these he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days...” I didn’t realize forty was in this.

T I M Yeah, it is. There’s a crossover to Paul, his first letter to the Corinthians, where he talks about how he appeared to the apostles, “to Peter, to James, to me.” And then he talks about how there were appearances to hundreds of people at one time even. So Paul’s an independent witness to this season after the resurrection when Jesus was appearing to lots of people in small groups and in large groups. Here’s the narrative about a large group. Some of the large group appearances.

J O N He doesn’t call out in the Gospel that it was forty days.

T I M Correct. That little forty-day thing is just unique to the introduction to Acts.

J O N Unique to Acts. And you’ve mentioned forty days is about testing?

T I M Yeah. Many common motifs within forty-day scenes is testing. But what doesn’t—

J O N Why call out forty here?

T I M Yeah, exactly. I’m sure there’s a connection. I just don’t know what it is yet. I’d have to do some homework.

J O N “He appeared to them over forty days speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God.” Which is what he was doing before.

T I M That’s what the whole book of Luke was about. “The Kingdom of God is here.”

J O N He’s like, “Sorry about the death and resurrection thing. Let’s keep going about the Kingdom of God but with a new perspective.”

T I M Or that the Kingdom of God has truly been inaugurated now through the—

J O N Yeah. All that stuff we were talking about, it’s happened.

T I M It’s happened. The cross was his enthronement, and the resurrection was his exaltation.

J O N “Gathering them together, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ he said, ‘you heard of from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...’”

T I M “Not many days from now.” This is a good scroll technology here. When you’re writing a multivolume work with the technology of the scroll, a really common way is to hyperlink the ending of the scroll in the beginning of the next scroll. So he’s kind of overlapping that conversation at the ending of Luke, where Jesus says, “Wait here in Jerusalem until you receive power...”

J O N “From on high.” Is that how it says it in Luke?

T I M Well, let’s see. Yeah, power from on high. That’s right. Actually, I merged the ending of Luke and Acts in my head, so it’s kind of hard to tell them apart, which means that he did a good job because I’m mixing them in my head. “Wait here for power from on high, so that you can go out and announce repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all the nations.” That’s the ending of Luke. Now, here it’s picking up that theme and filling it out a little bit more. Namely, that the power is the personal presence of God himself, the Holy Spirit. He just called it power at the end of Luke. “Power will come upon you.”

J O N And now it’s the Holy Spirit?

T I M Yeah, now it develops that it’s the Holy Spirit.

J O N “So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.’”

T I M So epic. It’s good. It’s a great introduction. So two things. Well, no, probably many things. Acts begins from the vantage point of Luke writing to likely a well-to-do convert.

J O N A patron.

TIM A Patron. Somebody who has enough expendable resources to sponsor the writing and research of an apostolic scroll. That's a big deal. The point is, we're decades into the Jesus movement from the vantage point of the author. For me, this is helpful to think of the voice that I'm hearing narrate the story of Jesus. And then hear the story of the spreading of the Jesus movement is a voice that is already decades down the line, decades into the movement. So wherever the book ends in terms of narrative time, the narrative's voice is even later than that. This is somebody boiling down the last few decades of the movement into one work and trying to get us—even though Luke has been really careful and intentional, brilliant in crafting this work, it's the same principles that we had when talking about the Gospels. He's not just interested in telling us a history of the early movement because there are so many unanswered questions that he doesn't address about what, who, when, where, how. He has a mission to tell the story in a way that also just like the Gospel and helps us understand the meaning of the events.

JOHN We had a lengthy discussion about that in the Luke podcast about why that's a valid way of telling a story.

TIM Correct. The advantage that we had with Luke was that we have one of his sources available to us in the collection of the Gospels, namely, Mark. And there are some people...actually, Luke had Matthew and Mark...

JOHN To refer to?

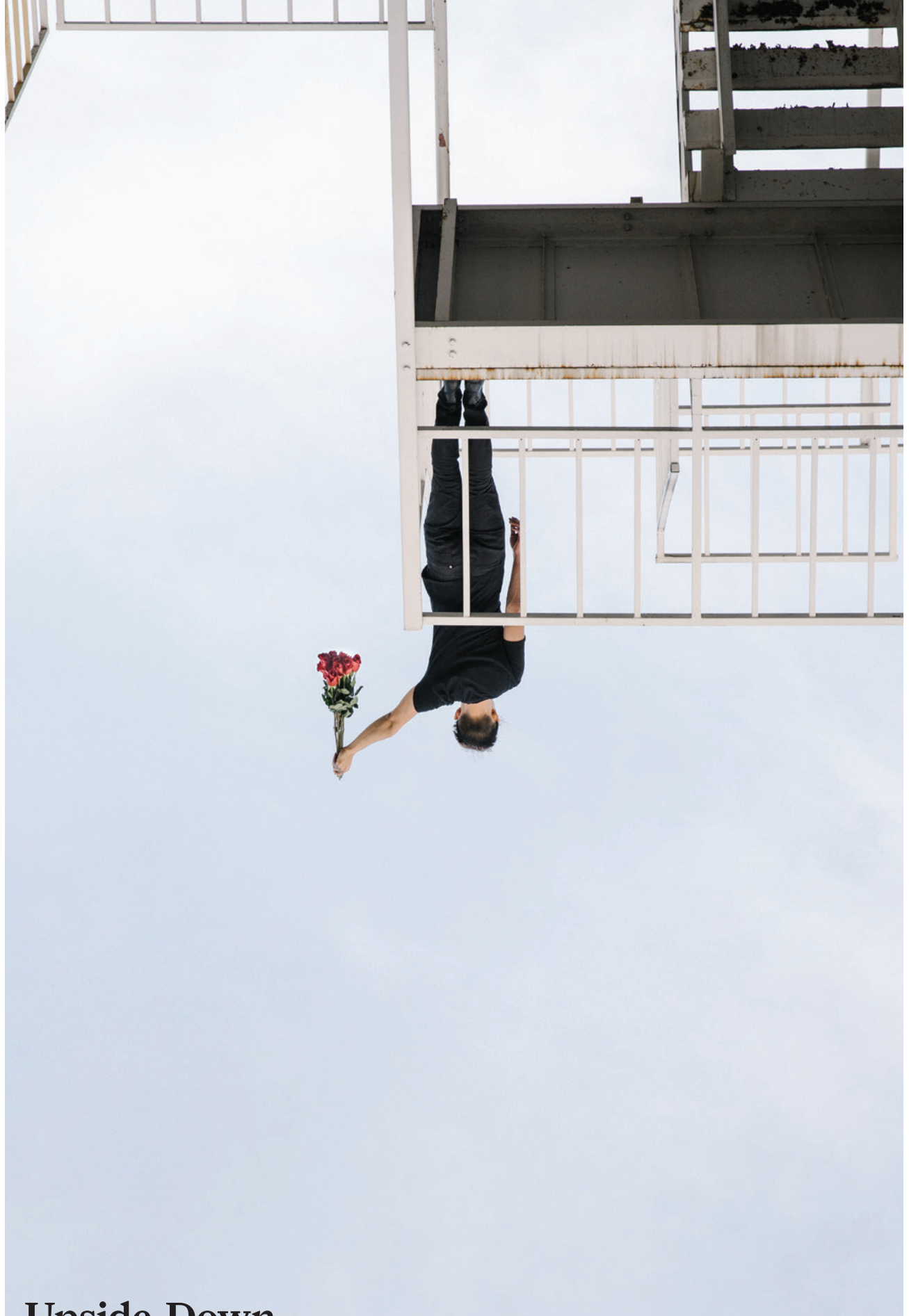
TIM ...in front of him. That's kind of a minority view on the composition of the Gospels, but it's growing. It's kind of having a renewal movement in scholarship. Either way, we had the advantage of seeing some of Luke's source material to know how he reordered events, maybe reshaped wording. But once we get into Acts...

JOHN We have no idea.

TIM We don't know what his sources were. But we learned about his main themes from the Gospel account. Namely, that he was interested in showing the socio-economic implications of Jesus's Kingdom message. Remember, Luke turned up the volume on the upside-down value system on the inclusion of the poor, the outcast, stranger, more teaching about wealth and resources than any of the other Gospels. So we should expect to find the same types of themes here. As he narrates the story of the early Jesus movement, he's going to highlight stories of socio-economic disturbance in the force of Jesus as a King, but with a totally different kind of value system of the most important people are the people that suffer and give up the most. That kind of thing. And the role of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke more than in Mark, or Matthew, or John.

Hear the full episode now. Look for the episode called "The Start-up of Christianity." Listen on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, thebibleproject.com, Spotify, or just about anywhere you can find podcasts. Search for The Bible Project.

[THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/PODCAST](https://thebibleproject.com/podcast)



Upside-Down

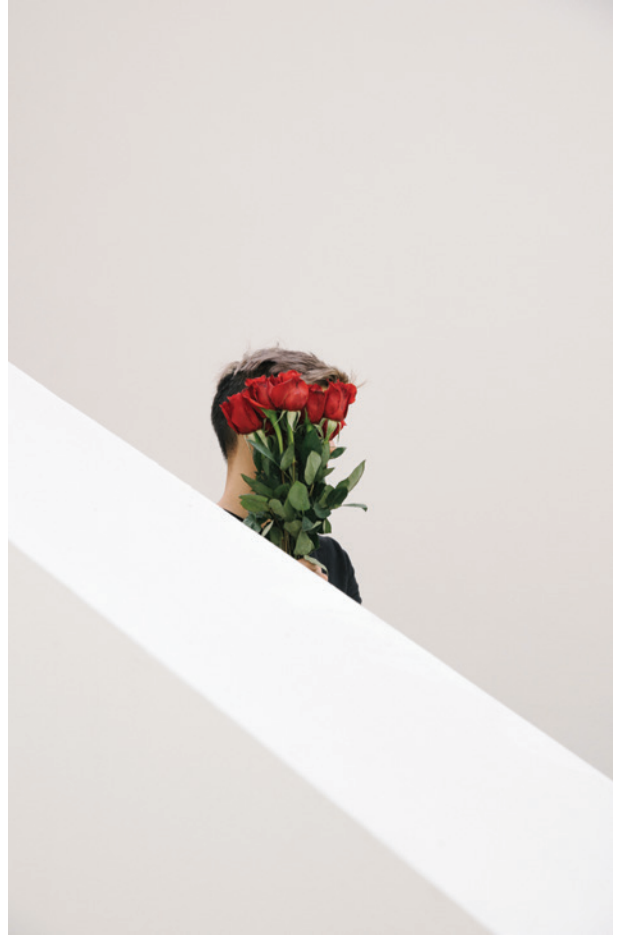
ALABASTER CO











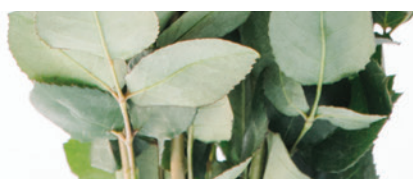


ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The Upside-Down series explores ways of depicting the upside-down Kingdom of God as distinct from cultural norms. We use the rose as a motif for the Kingdom of God and place it in relation with various visual landscapes: ramps, stairs, arrows, etc. These visual cues are intended to symbolize societal conventions of “getting ahead,” “reaching the top,” or “climbing the success ladder.” This contradicts the upside-down Kingdom, a place of servanthood and “moving downward.”

Alabaster Co is a Los Angeles based company exploring the intersection of creativity, beauty, and faith. It integrates visual imagery and thoughtful design within different books of the Bible—for a beautiful reading experience.

www.alabasterco.com IG: [@alabaster_co](https://www.instagram.com/alabaster_co)





I sat down with our video producer Will Beatty to talk about his role at TBP, what he was doing before, and what he enjoys most about being a part of the team.

You're pretty new to the team here. M H H

How long have you been at The Bible Project?

W B About seven months. I came on in May 2018.

What were you doing prior to work at TBP? M H H

W B I had my own production company, and I still do, but that's more of a side project now. That includes things like making commercials for national broadcast, a lot of short films for the purpose of submitting to festivals like Sundance. I've done a lot of other random campaigns with various clients like Nike, Timbuk2, Old Trapper Beef Jerky, Young Life, all sorts of different companies.

*Wow, that's awesome. I've seen the
Old Trapper commercials you did.
They're pretty awesome.* M H H

W B Yeah, and then I was also working for Multnomah University. Multnomah was one of my biggest clients. That's where I went to school. (And where Jon and Tim went to school and some other team members!)

*So I'm curious. You were running this production company,
working for all types of clients, why come on the team here?
What has that shift been like?* M H H

W B Well, some backstory. My company is called M25 Productions (after Matthew 25). It's the parable of the talents. I didn't go to school for film, but people in my life helped me realize that the Lord had given me a talent. My goal from early on was always to use video for ministry because it has such a huge reach. So I wanted to exclusively help nonprofits with video production, but what I learned pretty early on is that that's not sustainable. So then I started work on more commercial stuff to pay the bills, so that I could support ministries. And now I do the work that pays the bills about 80% of the time, and then 20% of my time I give away.

So when I started talking with TBP, it seemed like a no-brainer. It was a way for me to merge my work with my values and do what I had always intended to do. It's just a perfect fit for me.

What's the most exciting project you've worked on so far? M H H

W B Definitely Classroom. It's a much deeper dive into biblical knowledge, all taught by Tim in a classroom-type setting. There are students here in our studio in the class, and then eventually it will be available online for a much larger group. What's really exciting for me is that I see it as disrupting traditional biblical education. It's making this quality content available outside of the context of a seminary. It doesn't totally replace a college degree, but it's free, valuable content, and the quality is right there with a traditional theology class.

And the great thing about this is that it's not limited geographically. Soon anyone will be able to access it.



*So what specifically have you worked on
to get Classroom off the ground?* M H H

W B The concept for it was already done and formed when I got hired, so it was my job to get it functional. I designed the space, ordered all the equipment, and got it all functioning, lit, and set up. Then I will also do all the editing, so I'm in charge of the tech end of it. The idea is to make it feel pretty natural for Tim even though there's a lot happening around him while he's teaching.

*Do you have any big dreams or goals for your role here,
ways in which you'd like to see it develop or change?* M H H

W B Definitely. I'd love to see TBP move more into video. Our animation is awesome and what we're known for, but video is also a really effective tool. I would love to make stories that compliment our animated videos. The animated videos are great at getting across big concepts that are pretty cerebral. But there are other concepts that we've yet to dig into that video could be amazing for.





We get to create for our audience specifically, and it's a totally different feel. It's rare, but it's awesome.

*What makes working at TBP different
than other places you've worked?* M H H

W B The main difference is not having clients. It's been really freeing for me, creatively speaking. A lot of times with commercials or ads, there's strict deadlines, quick turnarounds, and a lot of creativity gets stifled in the name of the bottom line. We have to impress the person who's paying the bills, not the viewer. Whereas here, we get to create for our audience specifically, and it's a totally different feel. It's rare, but it's awesome.

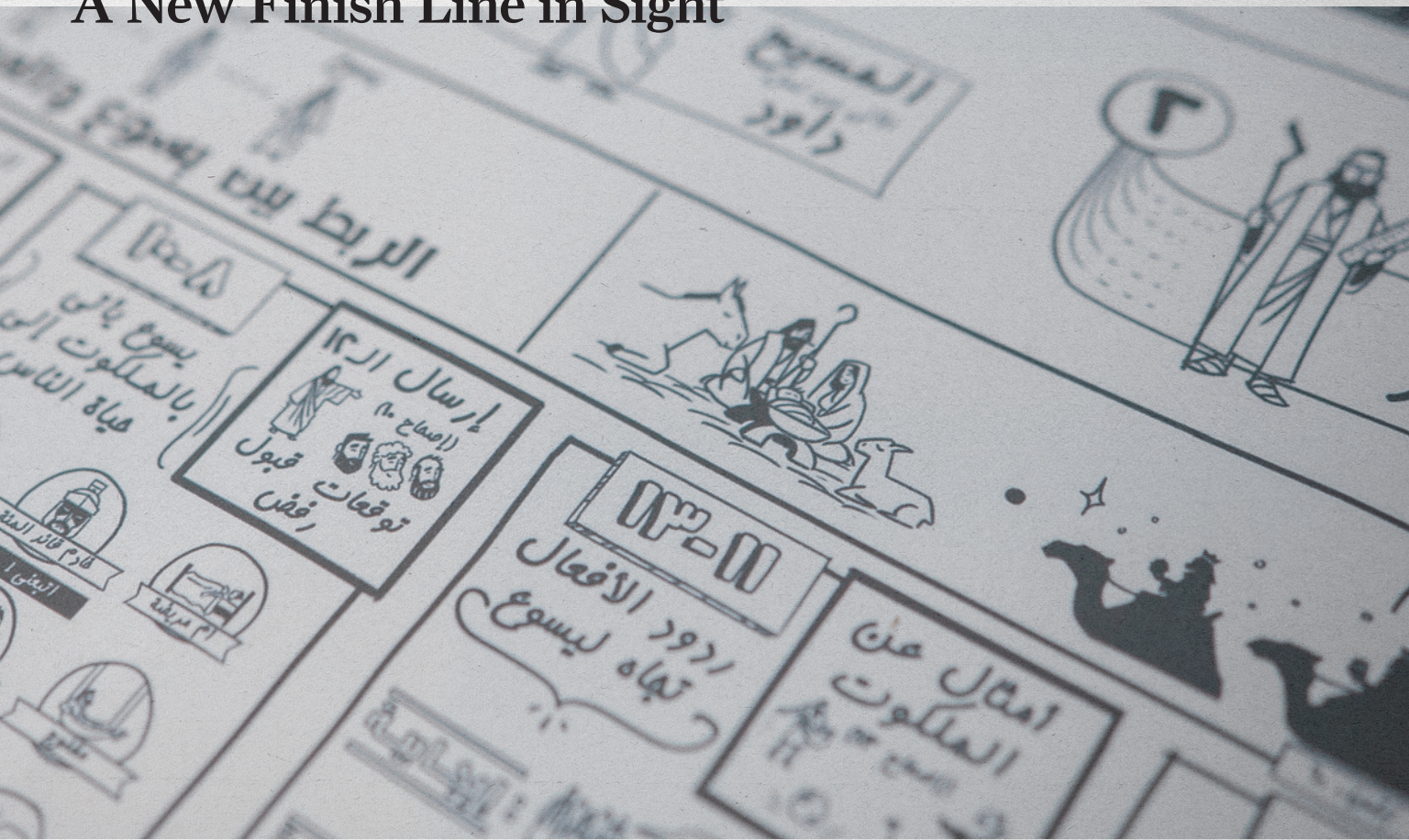
*What's it like working on a team of artists
here at TBP compared to your past work that
seemed to be much more independent?* M H H

W B Here, practically everyone's an artist. I don't spend much time explaining why I want to do what I want to do. My coworkers here inherently understand the value of art. It's an awesome place to work.

I had a great conversation with Will, and we're all excited to have him aboard. Keep an eye out for more news about Classroom and the other exciting projects we have coming up.

MAKENZIE HALBERT-HOWEN

A New Finish Line in Sight



The Gospel of Matthew Read
Scripture poster in Arabic

As our library of video content continues to grow, a relatively new term has entered our vocabulary for each and every video: English.

Naively, we thought that once we were done with the English version, we were done with that video. We were excited to get these unique resources available to help reveal the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. And while the English versions are a good start, it has become increasingly clear that the English version can no longer be the finish line. But before we jump into another ambitious project of translations, how do we know this is actually necessary?



At the time of writing this article, our videos have been watched in 205 out of the 206 sovereign states that YouTube tracks. Holistically, over 40% of our video views come from locations outside of the United States.

Global Statistics

One of the benefits of utilizing YouTube's platform is the analytics they provide at no cost to us. It allows us to track many elements, including where people are watching the videos. At the time of writing this article, our videos have been watched in 205 out of the 206 sovereign states that YouTube tracks. Holistically, over 40% of our video views come from locations outside of the United States. Our subtitles within these English videos also continue to grow. Subtitles happen within YouTube by the crowd of users. Through a series of checks and balances, YouTube's impassioned audience has provided 40+ language options on most of our videos.

Subtitles vs. a Localized Video

YouTube makes it very easy for volunteers to add foreign language subtitles to our English language videos. So why do we spend so much time and effort translating (or localizing) them? First, we simply can't assume all of our viewers can read. Second, we write our scripts to be heard, and that conversational tone doesn't always transfer completely in written form. It's like when you see a movie in a language you don't speak. You can gain understanding from the subtitles, but you know you're missing some of the meaning that's wrapped up in the emphasis the actors choose to use. We lavish attention on both the audio and the video experience of our English efforts. We are dedicated to bringing the same level of care to our localized videos.



YouVersion

Unique Distribution Opportunity

Other than YouTube, our most significant distribution partner over the last three years has been YouVersion. YouVersion's Holy Bible App on iOS and Android has been downloaded over 345 million times worldwide. YouVersion's inclusion of our videos alongside reading plans and resources has given us incredible exposure. With their app available in over 54 languages, they have committed to showcasing all of our localized videos within their platform.

Relentless Demand

When we look back at the emails we received at the beginning of this project in 2014, we were consistently receiving emails inquiring about translations of our resources. At the time, our small team was so overwhelmed by the idea of simply finishing the Read Scripture series in time to complete the online reading plans that we did not have the capacity to tackle translations. The letters came from people, churches, organizations, and translators around the globe. While we gave many people permission to translate our videos, the daunting size of our video library, as well as the unique challenges of translating audio and text on screen, became more than what most groups could do without significant organization and support. We quickly knew that until we were able to support these efforts, we could not place the burden on others.

“As God continues to expand the Bible App’s reach across nations and non-English-speaking audiences, The Bible Project’s team’s plan to localize their content into multiple languages makes our partnership even more exciting.”

Brian Russel
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
YOUVERSION

Our Spanish channel now has over 2,915,814 views and 98,497 subscribers! To give perspective, our English channel took over two years to gain this many subscribers.

But would it work?

Over the past few years, with incredible help from multiple partners around the globe, there have been significant efforts to translate our Read Scripture series into a handful of key languages. Cantonese, Mandarin, German, Indonesian, and Spanish versions have been significantly underway for some time. Despite limited resources and limited support from The Bible Project, these languages now boast a nearly completed library of our Read Scriptures series. While we launched The Bible Project Spanish YouTube Channel in 2016, it was only recently that we began uploading a significant number of our newly completed videos.

To our excitement, the traction over the past few months has been incredible! As of the day we wrote this article, our Spanish channel now has over 2,915,814 views and 98,497 subscribers! To give perspective, our English channel took over two years to gain this many subscribers, and this was all done without significant effort in promotion.

Our Commitment

Now that our team has seen both the opportunity and need globally for translations, we have made a commitment to complete full localizations of 80% of our current video library in the 54 priority languages that YouVersion has translations. And while the number of languages will almost certainly increase, the key is to know that translations are a priority! We are committed to finding the partners, funding, and network to work with teams across the globe to achieve this commitment.

OUR GOAL:

**Localizations for 80%
of our video library in
54 priority languages**

You're Invited

As many know, end-of-year gifts are incredibly impactful to our organization. This year, we invite you to join us in this ambitious endeavor. Both to drive awareness of our translation commitment and to rally momentum toward resourcing these efforts, each new financial gift received after November 23rd and until December 31st will be allocated specifically toward translations! You can go to thebibleproject.com/donate to learn more about specific languages and see the content that has already been completed on YouTube.

International organizations interested in partnering or illustration/animation studios interested in applying translations to our videos are invited to reach out to us at translations@jointhebibleproject.com.

Art from the Luke-Acts Miniseries

ALLAN ROSENOW

Introduction

For the last two years, my team has worked on this cinematic miniseries telling an ongoing story that spans decades. Luke and Acts are packed with deep themes, recurring characters, drama, emotion, and locations across two continents. To bring this epic story to life we had to spend a lot of time on the visual strategy, not just for consistency in the style, but to focus on visual techniques that would support the narrative from Jon and Tim and tie everything together over the course of eight videos.

Cinematography

The art of visual storytelling is all about communicating a narrative with images. There is no dialogue in this style, so characters don't speak. Tim and Jon provide a lot of information in their narration, but that's only part of the story. A great deal of information has to be conveyed visually, and that's where cinematography comes in. For a style this cinematic, I approached storyboarding more like a director of photography than an illustrator, carefully framing each shot in a way that told a story. We used cinematography to enhance the narrative, show what characters were thinking and feeling, or to drive home the significance of a moment.

1. Composition

The composition of a shot can communicate a lot. I used the placement and size of characters to convey power or weakness, camera movement to guide the eye or add meaning, and camera shots and angles to show what a character was feeling or set the mood for a scene.



This shot is all about isolation. Paul is very small, framed beneath a dominant sky to make him feel even more alone.



The soldiers in the foreground are large, towering over Jesus to show their menace and power over him in this moment.



Here, the power dynamic is reversed. Now Jesus is large and at the top of the frame as he pardons sin and intercedes for his enemy. Even in death, we see Jesus' true authority.



This climactic moment is set as the sun goes down, bookending the dawn resurrection and signaling the end of a major chapter in the story.



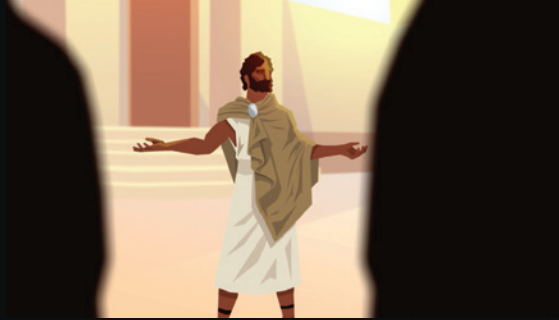
We used the soft pastels of sunrise to paint a calm-before-the-storm.



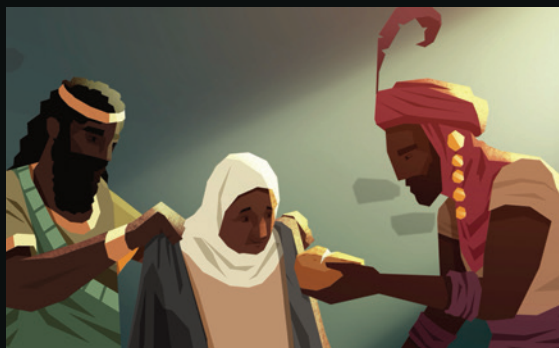
The red sky in this shot mirrors the violence of the mob.

2. Weather

Our minds naturally associate types of weather with certain emotions; rain is sad, sunsets are dramatic, sunrises are peaceful, the wind is conflicted. I set the weather in a scene to help enhance what was happening in the story.



Steven preaches in the temple, following in the footsteps of Jesus.



The new Christians in Acts are following the ways of Jesus, and we mirrored his actions in their scenes.



Paul undergoes a dramatic conversion from persecutor to persecuted. We used this moment to highlight just how much things have changed.



3. Mirror Shots

For moments that referenced previous characters or actions in the series, we would often match the composition of the shot to make a connection—even a subconscious one—between those two scenes.

Symbolism

When a theme or idea became difficult to show literally, we would turn to symbolism to help communicate more abstract elements of the story. A line on a map can show a long journey, and images on a tapestry can tell a backstory. Some of these metaphors became repeating narrative threads that appear all throughout the series.





1. Upside-Down

This was one of the most important symbols in the series. The Kingdom Jesus brings is subversive and hard to understand without changing your view of the world. This was conveyed visually by turning objects upside-down or literally flipping the shot on its head.



2. Scrolls

Throughout the story, there are frequent references to Old Testament passages or prophecies. These callback scenes were projected onto parchment scrolls to feel old and help suggest the past.



3. Light and Shadow

One of the metaphors we relied on frequently was light. Stars, sunbeams, and moonlight could communicate the presence of God or his influence in the story. White flames were a sign of the spirit at work. And shadows or darkness showed struggle or temptation.





Word Study: The Advent Series

Throughout the Bible, God promised the advent, or coming, of his son, Jesus. This is one of the most important events in all of human history—the almighty, eternal Creator of the universe becoming human, living among us, and suffering on our behalf in order to give us life.

Shalom: Peace

Shalom—biblical peace—is not just the absence of conflict, which is the way we tend to think of peace. The lack of shalom refers to something out of alignment, a stone with cracks, a wall with gaps, or a person conflicted, something that is no longer whole that needs to be restored.

Jesus' birth was called the arrival of peace. He restored to wholeness the broken relationship between humans and their Creator, and he is the whole human that we were created to be. He reconciled all things in Heaven on Earth through his death and resurrection.

As followers of Jesus, we're called to create peace. To bring peace in the world, to bring shalom, means to stop fighting and start working for each other's benefit, to make right all wrongs and heal what's been broken whether it's in our lives, our relationships, or in our world.



Yakhal: Hope


In the Bible, hope is about waiting or expectation. The prophets of the Old Testament put their hope in the person of God as they waited for him to deliver Israel from their sin and self-destruction, just as he did before.

Biblical hope is based on a person, which makes it different from optimism. Hope is not focused on circumstance. In fact, hopeful people often recognize that things probably won't get better, but we choose hope anyways.

Jesus' earliest followers cultivated a similar habit of hope. They believed that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was

God's surprising response to our slavery to evil and death. The empty tomb opened up a new door of hope.

So Christian hope is bold; it's about waiting for humanity and the whole universe to be rescued from evil and death. It's a choice to wait for God to bring about a future that is as surprising as a crucified man rising from the dead. We look back to the risen Jesus in order to look forward. And so we wait.



And now, O Lord what else can I
QAVAH for? You are my YAKHAL.

Psalms 39:7

YAKHAL

HOPE

QAVAH

REBORN into
NEW and
DIFFERENT
KINDS OF HUMANS

At this moment, the Lord



Chara: Joy

Joy is a key theme that runs through the whole story of the Bible. God's people find joy in creation, a good bottle of wine, at a wedding, or in their children. But the biblical story shows that we live in a world that's been corrupted and marked by sin and death.

So biblical joy is not simply happiness. It's an attitude God's people adopt, not because of happy circumstance, but because of their hope in God's love and promise.

When Jesus of Nazareth was born, it was announced as good news that brings great joy. He rejoiced as he announced the coming of God's Kingdom, and he taught his followers to practice the same "joy in the wilderness" that their ancestors had practiced.

When you believe that Jesus' love has overcome death itself, joy becomes reasonable in the darkest of circumstances. Christian joy is a profound decision of faith and hope in the power of Jesus' own life and love.



Not What We Expected

AMBER DILLON

Each of the four Gospels is unique in how the writers portray the teachings and actions of Jesus. As we read and become familiar with the Gospel of Luke, a theme begins to stick out from the first pages to the end: good news for the poor. For the original audience, this would have been a revolutionary idea. Jesus came to bring an upside-down Kingdom and rule as an upside-down King—he was not what the people expected.

This idea of “poor” is deeper than simple economic status. The poor were anyone the Jews considered socially unacceptable, which was just about anyone who wasn’t a part of the Jewish upper-class.

At just the right time, Jesus came onto the scene and brought his upside-down Kingdom that rattled everyone’s expectations.



His Background

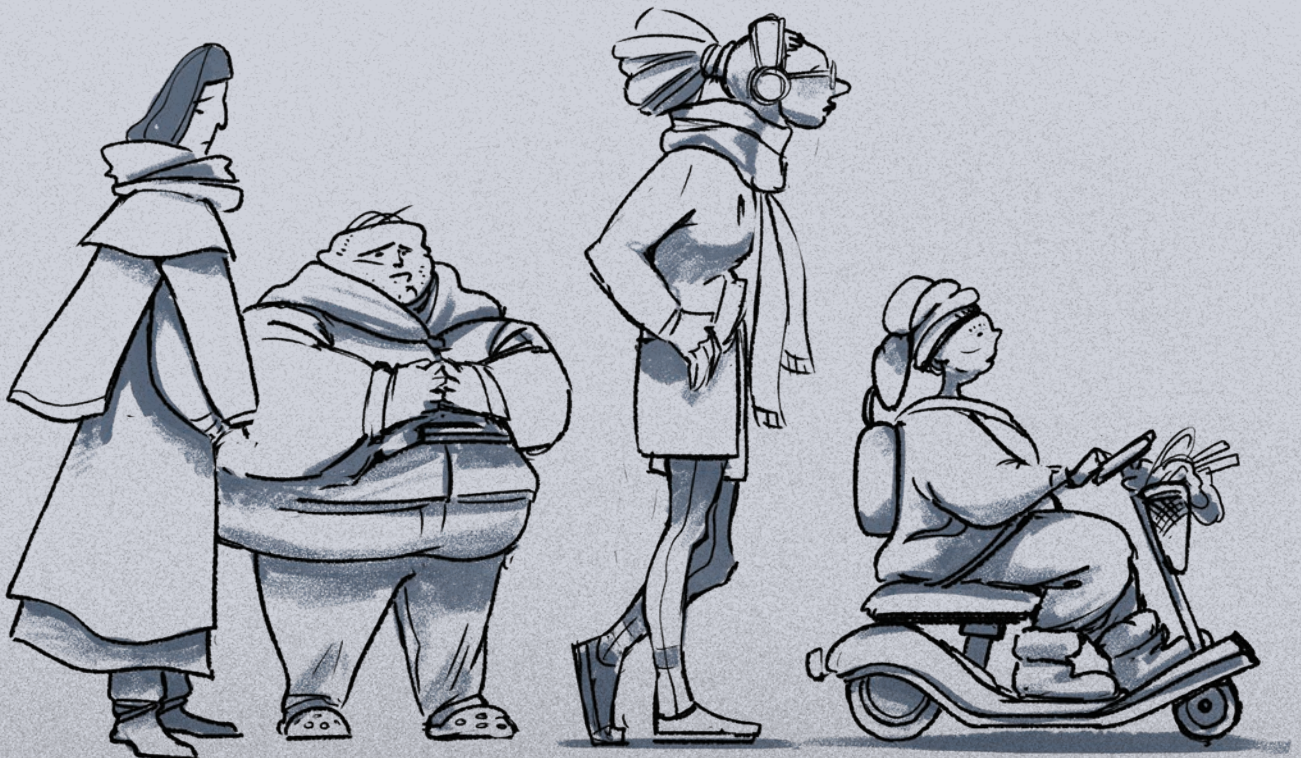
Luke's Gospel opens with an extensive description of Jesus' birth. Surprisingly, the arrival of Jesus is celebrated by shepherds—the run-of-the-mill, lowly people of society (Luke 2:8-20). Then Luke gives us a glimpse into Mary and Joseph's economic status. When they took Jesus to be dedicated at the temple (Luke 2:22-38), they brought doves as their sacrifice. Leviticus tells us that this means they could not afford the normal sacrifices (cf. Lev. 12:8). Jesus grew up in a town called Nazareth. In John 1:46, a soon-to-be disciple asks, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Jesus grew up in a no-name town to a lower-class family. The long-awaited Messiah was on the fringes of society from birth.

Not only does Luke portray Jesus himself as unexpected, Jesus' words and actions also show us that he came to bring good news to the outcasts.

His Words

Luke is the only Gospel that records Jesus reading the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth, declaring that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach good news to the poor (Luke 4:16-22). His parables that followed were filled with examples of who his ministry was for. Luke made it a point to express Jesus' concern for the lowly.

Many of the parables in Luke contrast those who are exalted by God and those who God humbles. In the parable of the rich man and the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus paints a vivid picture of the consolation that comes to the lowly. Likewise, Jesus compares a tax collector who humbly knows his place before God with a Pharisee who has a high view of himself (Luke 18:9-14). In both stories, Jesus teaches that the poor and outsider will be comforted; they will inherit the Kingdom (Luke 5:31).



One of Jesus' most famous teachings is his parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). A lawyer tries to trick Jesus, but Jesus says that the way to inherit eternal life is to love your neighbor. When he describes what loving your neighbor looks like, he makes the Samaritan the model neighbor. The Samaritans and the Jews had a long complex history, and the Jewish people considered Samaritans impure. He shocks the high-class lawyer by telling him that the "lowly" and compassionate Samaritan of the parable would inherit the Kingdom.

"Go and do likewise..."

LUKE 10:37

His Actions

When we look at Jesus' ministry, we see that the people he recruited for his Kingdom weren't what anyone expected—they were a ragtag group of people of low status. Their humble posture made them perfect candidates for the Kingdom Jesus was bringing.



Jesus began his ministry by calling a tax collector to follow him (Luke 5:27-31). Tax collectors were despised by Jews, as it was their job to collect taxes on behalf of the oppressive Romans. Tax collectors not only cooperated with the enemy, they often extorted money from their fellow Jews to gain wealth. Yet none of this stopped Jesus from welcoming them into the fold of his Kingdom people.

In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus crosses social boundaries to bring acceptance, grace, and love into the life of someone lowly in society. As a Jewish man working for the Roman government, Zacchaeus was not expected to be someone that a Jewish Rabbi such as Jesus would give any attention to, let alone spend time with. Jesus' radical invitation into the Kingdom prompted repentance and a change of heart in Zacchaeus.

Jesus was gracious and loving towards those that society had rejected. Women were particularly important to him, as they traveled with Jesus and the other disciples while still being considered second-class citizens in their culture (Luke 8:1-3). A sinful woman approached Jesus while he was eating with a Pharisee. She poured expensive oil on his feet while washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair. The Pharisee was critical of this woman, but Jesus not only advocated for her, he also forgave her and let her go in peace (Luke 7:36-50). Jesus had an eye for the needy and broken, and he cared for them.

These are just a few examples of the "poor" people Jesus recruited for his Kingdom crew. Tax collectors, lepers, women, the vulnerable, and best of all "sinners." These were not who people expected to find around the true King of Israel, but time and time again these were exactly the people Jesus surrounded himself with and extended love towards.

His Death

Ultimately, Jesus' death was the greatest example of his message of good news for the poor. Before he was put upon the cross, the soldiers mocked Jesus, dressing him up as a king (Matthew 27:27-30) and inscribing a sign above his head that read, "This is the King of the Jews" (Luke 23:36-38). He was being humiliated. How could this be the long-awaited Messiah?

But Luke doesn't end the story there! Three days after, women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, and his body wasn't there. Jesus had risen! Later on, Paul goes on to say that it is Christ crucified that is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:21-25). This was a difficult reality for Jesus' followers to understand. Their King was mocked and killed, and it was the opposite of what they had expected from their Messiah. But Jesus' sacrificial death was truly the exaltation of the poor. He was brought low, but then he rose to rule with the Father (John 12:32-33).

Jesus' Kingdom people were the poor and lowly, those on the fringes of society. But when we look even closer at the story, we realize that we too are poor, for we all need the forgiveness and peace Jesus gave to the woman who washed his feet. Jesus, his life, and his actions were not what anyone expected, but he is everything we need.

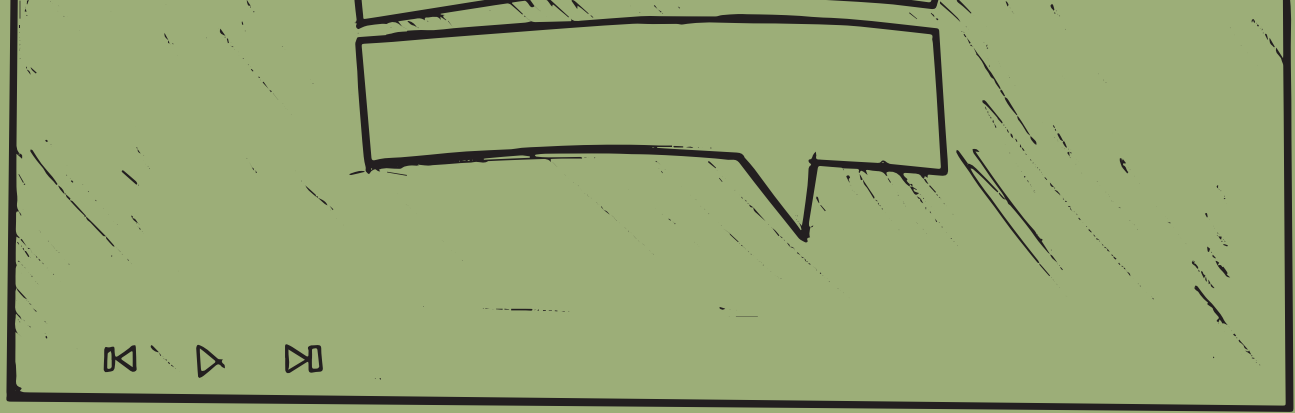
"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God."

LUKE 6:20



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. "Samaritans." Baker encyclopedia of the Bible 1988 : 1886–1888. Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. "Trades and Occupations." Baker encyclopedia of the Bible 1988 : 2083–2093. Harrop, J. H. "Tax Collector." Ed. D. R. W. Wood et al. New Bible dictionary 1996 : 1155. Maier, Brian. "Samaritans." Ed. John D. Barry et al. The Lexham Bible Dictionary 2016 : n. pag. Marshall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978. Print. New International Greek Testament Commentary.



Comments Section

LUKE - ACTS MINISERIES

The comments section is usually a contentious place, but most of the feedback on our videos is really encouraging. We thought we'd share a few of our favorite comments from our fans on YouTube.

Paul-Mike

Watching these videos as a Christian makes me feel like I'm a part of something grand and important. They're a refreshing reminder of the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection and the ultimate destiny I have in Christ Jesus.

Castille

Wow! I never saw the symbolism in the release of Barabbas before. Substitutionary atonement!

Shiiva

Love you guys from India. You are spreading knowledge in an attractive and easily accessible way. THANK YOU.

Zachariah

I love the ending. You feel the weight of hopelessness the disciples must have felt. Thank you guys for your amazing work!

Spiritual Coconut

Yo. You made Jesus look like a Jedi.



Mary

When your channel came up one day when I needed to read the scriptures the most, they encouraged me, they stirred up my passion for the word, and it's by God's grace that I'm saved physically (I had stage 3 cancer) and spiritually (third month of reading the bible with Read Scripture reading plan). And you guys have a vital role in all of this. Can't repay you in enough words or donations, but my Father in heaven can and I'll pray that he blesses each and every one of you abundantly.



Lora

I cried. Whew! Something about that Jesus hey? Just gets me!



Dylan

Add on, thank you everyone behind The Bible Project for making these videos possible. You all are awesome! Also, thanks for making the world a better place and enlightening millions and billions of people to follow the path of Jesus and live a better life through these meaningful videos!!



Tom

I'm a Muslim, but I watch your videos daily because it's quite interesting and deeply informative. God bless you <3



Monica

Really good job, Bible Project Team! Very good. The art was amazing and the narration as well. I hope that as many people as possible would find the truth in God's Word that you guys are talking about. It's helped me a lot in understanding the real and ideal meaning and teaching of the Bible. I love listening to your podcast as well—good job on that too—is great. I thank God for the fact that I found The Bible Project. I pray for your beautiful team.



Ramona

Thank you for giving me new insights into what is already my favorite story.



You can find all our videos and comment on them at

[YOUTUBE.COM/THEBIBLEPROJECT](https://www.youtube.com/TheBibleProject)



Letter from the Quarterly Team

About a year ago, Jon came to me with the idea of making a magazine type newsletter that we could send to our supporters. I was immediately on board. I'm a designer in 2018, so you can imagine that I'm surrounded by screens all day at work (and most of the time at home for that matter). It's tiring—both physically and mentally. While mailing out thousands of physical Quarterlies takes a bit more coordination than an email, knowing that our supporters will hold it in their hands, leave it out on the table, and read it as a break from their screens is really satisfying.

More than just being nice to hold, our hope is that The Quarterly is the most thoughtful and beautiful newsletter you'll ever get. We thought long and hard about how to properly thank the people who continually make this work possible, and this was our best idea. I hope The Quarterly helps you see what you're contributing to here at The Bible Project. Our work as a studio wouldn't be possible without you, so it's our pleasure to share it with you in a thoughtful way.

There's a small team of writers, designers, and editors that put this all together. We love making it, and we hope you enjoy this issue. Issue 005 looks a bit different because it's our second year as a publication, and we wanted to update our aesthetic. We put a lot of ourselves into it, and we hope that comes through.

MATTHEW HALBERT-HOWEN



How to Get the Next Issue

We publish a new issue every quarter. New Quarterlies will be sent automatically to monthly supporters in the US and Canada who give \$10 or more per month. One-time donors of \$100 or more get the next four issues. If you liked this issue and want to make sure you keep getting more, go to our website and sign up to become a monthly supporter if you haven't already done so.

THEBIBLEPROJECT.COM/DONATE

Dive into the *God* series on The Bible Project Podcast

Dissecting a topic as deep and confounding as "God" was a daunting task. The team did a great job with paring down the script to fit vast ideas into an eight-minute video. However, Jon and Tim recorded over 20 hours of dialogue while discussing the topic of God. Their enlightening conversations, question and response episodes, and guest theologians helped unpack this incredibly dense topic. Listen to this series on Spotify, Google Podcasts, iTunes, our website, or your preferred podcast listening method.

EPISODE LIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1: God or gods? | 11: God's Word, Spirit, & Wisdom |
| 2: No Other God | 12: God, Abraham, Demons, & Giants Q+R |
| 3: Spiritual Warfare | 13: What is God's Name? Feat. Dr. Michael Heiser |
| 4: Origin of Spiritual Beings + Mini Q&R | 14: Who is the "Son of Man?" |
| 5: God Full Q+R 1 | 15: Is Jesus God? |
| 6: Experiencing God Through Humans | 16: Who Did Jesus Think He Was? |
| 7: God's Fusion With Humanity | 17: Q+R: Your Questions About Jesus' Identity |
| 8: God Series Live Q+R | 18: Who Did Paul Think Jesus Was? |
| 9: The Angel of the Lord | |
| 10: God's Name is a Character | |

