

LUKE'S UNIVERSAL PORTRAIT OF JESUS' PEREA MINISTRY AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR CONTEMPORARY CHURCH MISSION

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Abstract

The paper focuses on Jesus' ministry in Perea as presented in Luke's Gospel. Using the historical and analytical methods, this paper historically and grammatically examined the ministry of Jesus in Perea as recorded by Luke and how he presents it as a universal Gospel. It showed that Jesus's ministry in Perea identified with the rest of the world in that it cuts across ethnicity, race, socio-economic background, gender or status. Luke's presentation of Jesus' Ministry in Perea signifies universal *euaggelion* and as such challenges the church of all ages to abhor tribal, racial, ethnic, social, gender and political discrimination.

Key Word: Ministry of Jesus, Perea, Gospel of Luke, Salvation, Jesus, Church Mission.

Introduction

Today's church is filled with ethnic, racial, socio-economic, gender and political discriminations. This has played out in so many forms. Although, the early church community was not free from this issue, Jesus attitude towards the Gentiles shows that He does not discriminate against any one or race. This what Luke intended to show to his readers when he captured Jesus 's ministry in Gentile regions like Perea.

When or under what attendant circumstances Jesus departed from Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles, in the last autumn of His earthly life, we are not told. The evangelists who wrote the synoptic Gospels have recorded numerous discourses, parables, and miracles, as incidents of a journey toward Jerusalem, in the course of which, Jesus, accompanied by the apostles, traversed parts of Samaria and Perea, and the outlying sections of Judea.ⁱ We read of Christ's presence in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, (a) between two and three months after the Feast of Tabernacles; and it is probable that some of the events now to be considered occurred during that interval. (b) That Jesus left Jerusalem soon after the Feast of Tabernacles is certain; whether He returned to Galilee, or went only into Perea, possibly with a short detour

across the border into Samaria, is not conclusively stated.ⁱⁱ All of these have raised arguments as to whether Jesus did ministry in Perea or not.

The focus of this paper is therefore on Luke's presentation of Jesus' ministry in Perea and environ. It also examines how Jesus' ministry signify universal evangelism, inclusive humanities and human relationships. Within this objective, the historical and analytical method will be used as a method. Within this method, Jesus' ministry in Perea as portrayed by Luke in his Gospel will be historically examined and grammatically analyzed. This raises two research questions. First, how does the ministry of Jesus in Perea present Luke as a universal Gospel? Second, what does it implies for contemporary church mission?

Conceptual Clarification

Soteria is a Greek word for salvation. This was the concept portrayed in Luke's Gospel. Thomas D'Sa who is a professor of Scripture at the St. Joseph's Regional Seminary, Allahabad has given a useful insight into the understanding of the term 'salvation.' In agreement with other similar scholars like F. Bovonⁱⁱⁱ and B.R. Gaventa^{iv} among others submit that the concept of Salvation in Luke's:

...has transcendental connotations that encompass the whole person. It may be considered negatively and positively. Negatively, it implies deliverance or freedom from evil and sin... and is a present historical fact. Positively, it refers to the blessings of the Kingdom, the obtaining of the Kingdom of God itself or the inheriting of eternal life, which is the result of deliverance from sin and evil. This Kingdom may be understood in two senses: (i) to imply the mission of Jesus, i.e., forgiveness of sins, healing, presence of the Spirit... in this sense it is already present: (ii) to imply the full actualization of the rule of God – in this sense, it refers to the future consummation at the *parousia* (17:23-37)...In our view, though there is an emphasis on the future aspect of salvation in Luke, both the present and the future aspects are synchronized.(8) While the Kingdom of God has begun to be realized in the healings and exorcisms (11:20; 17:21), there is a definite weight on the future aspect: the Beatitudes and Woes (6:20-26) and warnings about the future judgment (9:11:29-32) presuppose that the consummation of the Kingdom will be in the future. This future aspect has relevance for the present, because it prompts the listeners to govern their lives according to the teaching of Jesus here and now in the present (18:8) so that the Kingdom of God may begin to be realized them.^v

The concept of Salvation in Luke's Gospel is conotational but all embracing in human and societal experience. By implication, it is both spiritual and physical, negative and positive. Negative because it deals with human deliverance from the devil and sin and it is positive because it tells of the blessing the kingdom of God has added to human and cosmic environment. Christopher L. Scott states that Salvation is a major theme in the book of Luke^{vi} to the extent that Luke made reference to it more than other gospel writers. In Luke 18:24-26,

“entering the reign of God” and “being saved” are treated as synonyms. Participation in the reign of God is a present possibility, that involves liberation from anything that prevents one from living life as God intends (cf. Luke 4:18-19).^{vii} Salvation in Luke’s Gospel means deliverance which is administered to humanity especially those who are perishing in sin and those in physical or cosmic bondage. Clearly presented in Luke’s Gospel is the idea or the understanding that God the heavenly Father is a just God and a Saviour (Isa. 45:21), and that there is no other saviour beside Him (43:11), and that God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23) and as such the Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the agent through whom God extends salvation to perishing man.^{viii}

The other idea that needs clarification here is the concept of Church mission. The mission of the church is much more than meeting the needs of Christians and much more than simply evangelism. The mission of the church is to be Jesus, to represent Christ, to image Him to a world looking for saviors. To show Him in all we do, in all we are- to show them the King and point them towards the Kingdom.^{ix} It is further understood by Platt that missioner church forms the identity of and align all of the program, function and activities of the church around the mission of God in the world.^x According to the WCC, the Church, embodying in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of humanity, participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom 8:18-25) and as such, through its worship (*leitourgia*); service, which includes the stewardship of creation (*diakonia*); and proclamation (*kerygma*) the Church participates in and points to the reality of the Kingdom of God. In the power of the Holy Spirit the Church testifies to the divine mission in which the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.^{xi} W. Bentley viewing mission from Karl Barth’s point of view, understands that there is a relationship between God’s self-revelation and the Church’s ability to engage with the revealed Word.^{xii} Based on this understanding, church mission could be seen as a response to the work that God has done, that is, God revealing Himself to man, and so the revelation is received and appreciated by humanity in and through the power of the Spirit and, as a result, a community is established that continues the witness of those who have testified to God’s self-revelation as attested in Holy Scripture.^{xiii}

It is now clearer to us that there is a relationship between the term salvation, Gospel and church mission. These terminologies are well explained in this work. Luke’s Gospel is salvation centered and as such it is a recipe for contemporary church mission. By this understanding, the contemporary is saddled with the responsibility of reaching the world with the Good News of God’s self-revelation and Salvation through Jesus Christ who has to the world save humanity from sin and danger of evil.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study stands on the works of scholars who have done some scholarly work on Luke’s gospel. One major assumption in this framework is the assumption that Jesus’ Perea ministry is a recipe for modern church missions. Joseph E. Udo examines the concept of *soteria* in Luke’s Gospel and submitted that the Christian doctrine of *Sōtēria* (salvation) moves between two hermeneutical poles. The first is the universal human

need for deliverance, anchored in the split nature of human existence and the second is the appearance of the Saviour in history, who mediates the actual salvation human beings need.^{xiv} He explained that these two poles are captured prominently in the literary corpus of Luke. Thus, several notable New Testament scholars have indicated that —salvation lies at the centre of Luke's Gospel, and it represents the dominant idea of his message. The result of Udo's findings shows that Luke was more interested in the theme of salvation than all other Evangelists, hence, his frequent and distinctive use of the term *sōtēria* to underscore the salvific mission and ministry of Jesus and as such, the Lucan salvation idea is coherent, integral, broad and comprehensive.^{xv} Also, I.H Marshall revealed that Luke's purpose of writing was to present the Gospel of Salvation to his readers in order to lead them to faith of which this intention is not farfetched when he addressed it to Theophilus a Roman official.^{xvi} E.M.B. Green agrees with Marshall that salvation is the central purpose of Luke's work. He also observed that in view of the frequency with which Luke uses salvation terminology, more corresponding attention has not been paid to it.^{xvii}

The universality of Luke's gospel was predicated on his featuring of the outcasts and Gentiles (e.g. the Prodigal Son, the persistent widow, Zacchaeus). One of the scholars who argued on this point is L.T. Johnson. He presents the visitation of Jesus to all as a great reversal of the exclusive focus of salvation on the Jewish race. To him, Human security and complacency are challenged by the Gospel and those who are powerful, rich and aristocratic within society reject this reversal but are cast down or lowered at the end and cut off from the people.^{xviii} In contrast, those ordinarily deemed unworthy, lowly, marginal, or even outcast, are accepted by God and as such they are raised up and "become part of the restored people of God... human values are reversed by God not for the destruction of the wicked but for the saving of the lost. God's visitation is for their salvation."^{xix} In this same line of argument, Joel Green presupposes that Luke uses the language of Salvation more than any other New Testament writer, but employs that language in co-texts whose effect is to give Salvation broad meaning.^{xx} He asserts further that salvation is, preeminently, status reversal, and this includes not only the raising up of the lowly persons whom Jesus encounters in the Gospel, but also the people of Israel as a people, promised liberation from the oppressive hand of Rome.^{xxi}

Thomas D'Sa takes the argument to another dimension when he argued that Luke's Gospel should be seen not only from the view point of verbal *eugellion* but also from the perspective of the rich taking universal mission to the poor and the downtrodden in the church and society.^{xxii} He is suspicious of Luke giving a negative portrait of the rich in his Gospel. However, D'Sa gives two understandings of Luke's concept of salvation.^{xxiii} First, salvation from a general point of view which argues here that the rich do stand a good chance with regard to salvation, as Luke's Gospel is a Gospel of salvation par excellence. This is obvious from the way Luke makes use of the terms that refer to salvation. The main group-word that he used to express it is *sozo* and its derivatives. While Matthew and Mark use it 15 times each and John 6 times in the Gospel, Luke uses it 26 times in the Gospel and 27 times in the Acts. Besides this group-word, he also uses the traditional vocabulary for the salvific plan of God: eternal life (10:25; 18:18, 30), Kingdom of God (18:24, 25, 29) and redemption (21:28). Second is Luke's concept of the universality of salvation which argues that salvation is offered

to all (Jews, Gentiles, rich, poor, outcast, the sick, etc). Hence in Luke's genealogy (3:23-38), he goes back to Adam, the father of the 'human' race, whereas Matthew stops with Abraham, the father of the 'Jewish' race (Mt 1). While Matthew has only 57 names in his genealogy, Luke has 77 names. Universality in Luke is seen in the preaching of John the Baptist that "all flesh" shall see the salvation of God (Lk 3:6; cf. Acts 2:21). Though all the Synoptic have this quotation from Isaiah (40:3-4), it is Luke alone who prolongs it in order to include "all flesh" shall see the salvation of God" (Is 40:5). Moreover, the expression 'glory of the Lord' has been changed by Luke into 'salvation of God' in order to emphasize the possibility of salvation for all. In the prophecy of Simeon, salvation has been prepared in the presence of "all" peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles (Lk. 2:30-32). Here again we notice a modification: Luke changes the singular *laou* (cf Is 42:6; 49:6) into plural *laou* to include both the Jews (who were the people) and the Gentiles. Even when Jesus announces his social manifesto, he speaks in terms of universality: the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed (4:16-18). In the missionary command of Luke alone (10:1) the Lord appoints 70, a number which was used to refer to the whole Gentile world. Besides this general offer of salvation to all peoples, Luke offers salvation to many smaller groups of people: sinners, tax collectors, Samaritans, the poor, etc. In this vast complex of the Lucan plan of progressive realization in the history of the sovereign plan of God which offers salvation to all, we may question: is there an offer of salvation also to the rich? The above two views of salvation explained here were done by D'Sa even as he aggress with other scholars of the same view on the subject matter.^{xxiv}

The above scholars have formed for us a workable theoretical framework in the sense that their scholarly contributions have given insight into the subject matter. They have propounded that the concept of salvation in Luke's Gospel especially as it refers to Jesus ministry covering Gentile regions like Perea is presupposes a recipe for church mission. The theory remain universal salvation theory which says that Luke's presentation of as it relates to Gentile region implies universal salvation. That is, the Gospel is expected to cut across nations, ethnicity, genders, etc. This is theoretical framework on which this study is based.

The Ministry of Jesus in Perea and Environ (Luke 13:22, -19:27)

Perea is the Greek term for the Transjordan. The name Perea does not occur in the New Testament (except in a variant reading of Luke 6:17), but it is used regularly by the Jewish historian Josephus to describe the area east of the Jordan River.^{xxv} The New Testament refers to this area by using the phrase "beyond the Jordan" (Matt. 25; Mk. 3:8). Josephus described Perea as the region between the "Jabbok and the Arnon rivers, east of the Jordan."^{xxvi} The ministry of Jesus in Perea was His threefold Ministries vis-à-vis; preaching, teaching and healing ministries. For example,

The mission of the seventy disciples probably took place in the most part of Perea (Southern Transjordan) rather than in Judea. The number seventy may correspond to the rabbinic reckoning of the gentile nations as seventy in number. If so, this mission previewed in latter worldwide mission of the church to the Gentiles.^{xxvii}

Jesus sent out the seventy disciples to all nations. Although, the region suggests Gentile nations, universality is implied in the instruction. The phrase: “every city (πᾶς πόλις-every city) and place (πᾶς τόπος-every place)” refers to all people, all nations. By implication, any group of people found in the city whether a Jew or Gentile should be preached to. However, the disciples were given authority to heal and cast out demons whether in Perea region or its environs (Luke 10:1-21). Jesus’ message was the message of repentance and the Kingdom of God (βασιλεία θεός). He healed the sick and the demons possessed and thought them many lessons. An outline of the primary texts of Jesus’s life in later Judean and Perea ministry is as follows^{xxviii}:

- a. Second Prediction of Suffering (Matthew 17:22-23, Mark 9:30-32, Luke 9:43-45);
- b. Final Days in Capernaum (Matthew 17:22-18:35, Mark 9:30-48, Luke 9:46-50, John 7:1-9);
- c. Departure and Sending of Seventy Messengers (Luke 9:51-10:24);
- d. Loving Neighbor (Luke 10:25-37);
- e. Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42);
- f. Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:10-10:21);
- g. Teaching on Prayer (Luke 11:1-13);
- h. Judgment on His Generation (Luke 11:29-32);
- i. Meal with Pharisees & Woes (Luke 11:37-54);
- j. Vigilance in the End-Times (Luke 12:1-13:9);
- k. Healing of Woman on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17);
- l. The Narrow Gate (Luke 13:22-30);
- m. Healing of Man on the Sabbath and Meal with Pharisees (Luke 14:1-24);
- n. Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39);
- o. Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25-35);
- p. Teaching through Parables (Luke 15:1-17:10);
- q. Healing of Ten Lepers (Luke 17:11-19); and
- r. Eschatological Discourse and Teaching on Persistent Prayer (Luke 17:22-18:8).

Here some of the preaching events that happened around the region of Perea will be presented. One of them is the sending out of the seventy two in Luke’s records.

Luke as Universal Gospel

Luke differs from Matthew. While Matthew says that Jesus sent out the disciples with specific instruction to go to Jews, Luke says that Jesus did not restrict the disciples. Jesus told them to preach and heal anyone who needs healing and deliverance. The outstanding characteristic of Luke is that of the universal gospel of Jesus Christ. All the barriers are down; Jesus Christ is for all people without distinction. Luke showed in his gospel the following universal characteristics.

- i. The Kingdom of God is not shut to the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56) Luke alone tells of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). The one grateful Leper is a Samaritan (Luke 17:11-19).^{xxix} This shows that the door of the Kingdom of God is opened to everyone who believe.

- ii. Luke shows Jesus speaking with approval of gentiles whom the orthodox Jews would have considered unclean.^{xxx}
- iii. Luke shows Jesus as the friend of outcast and sinners.^{xxxi} He could relate with Lepers, Women, tax collectors and sinners.
- iv. Luke shows the love of Jesus for all mankind.

Literary Style and Structure

Luke's use of the *Koine* Greek and literary styles shows his competence in writing. His ability of an accurate narrative of the events that took place and Jesus' ministry also shows his readers of how he was in historical articulation. No wonder he is being referred to scholars as a historian. He looks more of a historian than a physician in his writing approach. Along with the Epistle to the Hebrews, Luke-Acts is of the best Greek in the New Testament. The exordium (1:1-4), which demonstrates a pure Lukan style, is often looked at as more sophisticated and excellent a portion of Greek than of any other New Testament writing. On the other hand, there are parts of Luke's Gospel where he decides to follow some of the Hebraisms of Mark and of the LXX. Regarding this, Ellis said that Luke 1-2 and Acts 1-12 contain "a pervasive Semitic colouring."^{xxxii}

The structure of Luke's Gospel begins with the exordium (1:1-4), followed by the births of John the Baptist and Jesus (1:3-2:52). Luke then covers John's ministry and the preparation of Jesus' ministry (3:1-4:13). He then gives account of Jesus' Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50), and his journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27). Jesus' time in Jerusalem (19:28-24:53) can be divided up into his ministry (19:28-21:38), the passion (22:1-23:56), and his resurrection and ascension (24:1-53).^{xxxiii} From the birth to the ascension, Luke gave a sequence of Jesus' life and ministry in one whole called Luke-Acts narrative.

The Man called Luke

Luke according to tradition, records was said to be a native of Antioch in Syria. This is possible, because Antioch played a significant role in the early Gentile mission which Luke described in Acts (11, 13, 14, 15 & 18).^{xxxiv} Luke was a gentile. William Barclay suggests that, he was a native of Macedonia because in this place women held a more emancipated position than anywhere else.^{xxxv} The way Luke gave credence to women shows the Macedonian culture. He was also identified with Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1).^{xxxvi} He was probably a Hellenistic Jew.^{xxxvii}

He may have been converted by Paul possibly at Tarsus, where he could have studied medicine. Luke was a medical doctor by profession. He joined Paul in his second missionary journey at Troas.^{xxxviii} He may have attended to Paul in his illness. Luke was possibly of servile origin; his name, which seems to be an abbreviation of Lucanus, Lucilius, or Lucianus, may well have been a slave's name and physicians were often slaves.^{xxxix} Luke is best known for his universal gospel called the gospel of Luke. His Gentile backgrounds must have given him a wider picture of the human race and how to relate with all. The name Luke is only mentioned three times in the New Testament. From these three occurrences, it is evident that Luke was a physician (Col 4:14) and a companion of Paul (2 Tim 4:11; Philem 1:24). It is more than likely

that Luke was a Gentile, but he was not necessarily a Greek. It also seems as if Luke had some degree of association with Judaism because of his knowledge of the Septuagint (LXX)-the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Not only did Luke compose the longest Gospel, but he also wrote more than any other New Testament writer. This is remarkable considering the amount of attention he gets in comparison to John and Paul.^{xi} In a nutshell, Luke was a physician and one who may have accompanied Paul. This means that Luke is familiar the Gentile as well and the Jewish milieus. He knew the barriers and such probably has a preference for the Gentiles.

Jesus's Ministry in Perea as a Universal Gospel (Luke 13:22-19, 27)

Perea was a Gentile Region

Somewhere between the events of Luke 11:1 and 13:21 Jesus left Judea and began his work in and around Perea, which is recorded in Luke. 13:22-19;27;Mt. 19:1-20; 28: Mk. 10:40-42. During the last part of the Perea ministry, it appears that he went north to Galilee and then travelled South and again through Perea to Jericho and to Jerusalem. Some of Jesus' sayings that Luke attributed to the period of ministry in Perea are found in different settings in Mt. 7:13-14, 22-23.^{xli} For Luke to present Perea which is a Gentile region shows that his gospel was universal. Luke clearly wrote for the Gentiles^{xlii} therefore, it is not out of place to write of Jesus ministry in Perea.

Jesus' Answer to the Question of the Extent of Salvation (Luke 13:23,29)

Although Jesus answered this question indirectly, but the universal of salvation was made clear in Luke 13:29 the people will enter the Kingdom. From east, west, north and south. This shows that all people including Gentiles are to receive salvation. The fact here is that both Jews and Gentiles alike are to struggle to enter through the narrow door. To begin with salvation is not easy; the sinner must enter a narrow gate and walk a narrow way (Luke 13:24).^{xliii}

Jesus' Mingled With Both Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and Outcast in Perea and Environs (Luke 14:1-4, 15:2, 17:15-18, 19:1-7)

In these passages, Jesus was presented by Luke as somebody who co-equally associated himself with the Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and the Outcast such as Lepers in his ministry in Perea. This signifies that, he came for all nations in the world.

Jesus' Statement of Looking for the Lost (Luke 15) and its Significance

Jesus made several parables about the lost in the account of Luke in Jesus' Perea ministry. In this region, many sinners came to him and he was even eating with them. This was to show to the Jews that his love for the Jews and gentiles (sinners) was on equal basis. The ninety-nine in the case of the parable of the lost sheep refers to the Jews who he came to save first and the parables of the lost coin and son and the one missing sheep referred to the Gentiles. In line with the above point W. W. Wiersbe Writes:

Three words summarize the message of this chapter: lost, found and rejoice. Jesus spoke these parables to answer the accusations of the Pharisees and scribes who were scandalizing His behaviour. It was bad enough that Jesus welcomed these outcasts and taught them, but went as far as to eating with them! The Jewish religious leaders did not yet understand that the son of man had come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).^{xliv}

As far as Luke was concerned there was no outcast in Jesus' ministry. The gospel must reach every nation. For Jesus to preach in Perea region, it signifies: universal εὐαγγέλιον (*euaggelion*).

The term εὐαγγέλιον refers to "good news." Its English equivalent is evangelism. Ottuh explained the word evangelism and also pointed out the meaning to be "good news."^{xlv} Here part of it will be analyzed. The English verb "evangelize" comes from the Greek verb *euaggelizo* which means to preach the good news, God's loving kindness, the messianic blessings and message of salvation.^{xlvi} From this we have the Greek noun *euaggelion* which means thanksgiving offering for good tidings^{xlvii} and it also means gospel (good news). In the Old Testament, the equivalent of *euaggelion* is the Hebrew word *besora* (plural) which means tidings especially tidings of victory (cf. 2 Sam.18:20,25,27; 2 Kings 7:9), that is, "good news". In 2 Samuel 4:10; 18:22, *besora* also has a specific religious and eschatological connotation.^{xlviii} The Hebrew verb *bissar* came to mean to proclaim the eschatological message of joy, and the noun *mebasser* (evangelism), means eschatological messenger of joy.^{xlix} In the religious context, *euaggelion* was used by the Greeks in connection with oracles and the cult of the Emperor.^l The news of the birth of a divine ruler, of his enthronement as well as his speeches, acts and decrees, were glad tidings; and the proclamation of the *euaggelion* brought about a new era of salvation and joy, in the case of Jesus.^{li} In consonance with its usage in the Old Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, Paul used the substantive *euaggelion* as a *nomen actionis*.^{lii} The term describes not only the content of what is preached but also the act, process and execution of the proclamation.^{liii} Thus, in 2 Corinthians 8:18, *euaggelion* denotes the action of preaching the gospel. Besides, the gospel itself is full of dynamism. With the Old Testament concept of *besora* and the ancient Greek understanding of *euaggelion*, the gospel of Christ effects what it signifies. Preaching the gospel means announcing to all nations the breaking in of the divine rule on earth, and above all, the Easter victory of Christ (Romans 1:6).^{liv} This proclamation stirs up faith and brings salvation (Roman 1:16; Philipians 1:27), it reveals God's righteousness. Preaching the gospel requires reaching the entire world as commanded by Jesus Christ. This what Luke is presenting to his church community – a community which is probably constituted by people of all nations and ethnicity. Universal *euaggelion* also portrays the message of boundless relationships among humans and God's inclusion of all humans in His salvation plan.

Soteria in Luke's Gospel and Its Implication for Contemporary Church Mission

In the New Testament including the Gospel of Luke, two Greek words are used: *sozo* and *soteria*. Both words are used in reference to being "saved" and "salvation". They are used throughout the New Testament, however they are used in regards to physical and non-physical things. These words both have the same primal etymology. *Sozo* is a verb, and *soteria* is a noun. *Sozo* is the act that produces the noun, *soteria*.^{lv} *Soteria* is a feminine of a derivative of *soter* as (properly, abstract) noun; rescue or safety (physically or morally): deliver, health, salvation, save, saving.^{lvi} *Sozo* and *soteria* denote the understanding of deliverance from a direct threat; to bring safe and sound out of a difficult situation.^{lvii} There are two dimensions to the understanding of *soteria*. The first is physical salvation which encompasses deliverance from illness, from death, from enemies (Luke 1:69, 71; Acts 7:25), etc. Second is spiritual salvation which encompasses deliverance from penalty of sin- justification, from power of sin- sanctification, and from future judgment to future glory.

The word "salvation" is used five times in the book of Luke (Luke 1:77; 2:30; 3:6; 19:9, 44). The clearest presentation of the word is used in Luke 19:44 where Jesus saw the city of Jerusalem began to weep.^{lviii} Scott opines further that salvation in the Gospel of Luke should be interpreted in light of the overall message of the Gospel which is about Jesus and how he, as the Son of God, performed miracles, died for those who followed Him, rose again, and ascended to heaven.^{lix} In chapter one of Luke, Jesus was pointed to as the one who would bring salvation through the forgiveness of sins (Luke 1:77). Then that message was affirmed by Simeon (Luke 2:30) and again by John the Baptist (Luke 3:6). Jesus himself claimed to be able to offer salvation when declaring that salvation had come to Zacchaeus' home (Luke 19:9).^{lx} Luke does not choose between these options, but presents Jesus as a Savior who is both Messiah and Lord (Luke 2:11; Acts 2:36). As Messiah, Jesus is the one who fulfills all of God's promises to Israel (Luke 4:16-21; 24:27-41); specifically, he is the prophet like Moses promised in Deut. 18:15-16, whose new exodus (Luke 9:31) establishes a new covenantal relationship between God and God's people (Acts 3:17-26; 7:37). As Lord, Jesus is the one through whom God's mercy is extended to all (Acts 2:21; 10:36); he meets and surpasses society's expectations of a Hellenistic "benefactor" by bestowing such divine gifts as healing, peace, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 4:9-10; 10:38).^{lxi}

What does this concept imply to church mission? One implication is universal *euangelion*. This has been discoursed above. That Jesus went into regions beyond Jewish environment to Perea shows the boundless nature of the Gospel. The church is expected to take the Good News of Christ's salvation to all nations in words and deed. Another implication is the de-emphasis of ethnicity, social class, gender and the likes in the church community and the target of mission. The present day church is filled with ethnic, social and gender bias. People are being discriminated against on the basis of the above bias. This is indeed a barrier to church mission. Jesus attitude of preaching and relating with saints and sinners, Jews and Gentiles alike, slaves and freeborn, man and woman, outcast and the downtrodden, the weak and the strong etc in the society. This attitude paved way for the successful mission he carried out in his time. This is also a model for contemporary church mission. Before the church can carry out successful missionary work, she must settle all of these biases within and without.

Discrimination, racism and slave trade almost hindered the church mission to Africa. Till date its negative impact is still affecting the church in Africa. The lesson is clear. The church must be pure and be ready to carry out the mission of spreading the Good News to all humans irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, social status and the likes.

The Gospel of Luke																
Focus	Appearance				Activity								Affliction			
Divisions	Childhood of the Son of Man		Companions of the Son of Man		Confrontations of the Son of Man		Conduct of the Son of Man		Comparisons by the Son of Man		Counsel from the Son of Man		Conflicts over the Son of Man		Crucifixion of the Son of Man	
	1	2	3	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24
Topics	Miracles								Parables				Plots			
	Seeking & Teaching												Suffering & Saving			
Place	Jerusalem				Galilee				Samaria & Perea				Jerusalem			
Time	5 B.C. - A.D. 33															
Author	Luke the Doctor															

Source: Swartzentrover.com | Book Chart - Charts of the Books of the Bible. www.swartzentrover.com

Conclusion

Indeed Luke presented Jesus' ministry in Perea as a ministry to the people. It people centered. While the Jews called the non-Jews Gentiles and outcasts, Luke presented them as God's children. But instead of Jesus regarding them as Gentiles or outcast, He included them in His plan of salvation, he mingled with them and looked for them all around the world of that time and brought them into the Kingdom of God. This is model for Christians of all ages.

The Church must understand that the Gospel is not a tool for segregation. The gospel should not be used to discriminate against people irrespective of ethnicity, social-economic-political background, race, gender or academic background. Humans must be treated with dignity and respect. Nobody should be seen as an outcaste or a lesser human being. This is also a challenge for the church to abhor worldliness and channel resources towards global evangelism especially those areas where refugees are being camped. They should be ministered to in physical and spiritual terms.

Endnote

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