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Joel B. Green

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The Gospel of Luke, often mined for information about the life of Jesus, is also one of the earlier Christian examples of narrative theology. Unlike some writers of New Testament books, Luke has engaged in the theological task by shaping a narrative representation of the coming and mission of Jesus. In doing so, he goes to great lengths to ground the work of Jesus in the continuing story of God's redemptive plan, especially witnessed in the Scriptures, and he also emphasizes the ongoing character of that story, with the result that Luke's audience is challenged to discern the purpose of God in order that they may embrace it and order their lives around it. This exploration of the way in which Luke accomplishes his theological task in the first century is both informative and illuminating for contemporary readers seeking approaches to cultural criticism and constructive theology today.

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NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

General Editor: James D. G. Dunn,  
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This series provides a programmatic survey of the individual writings of the New Testament. It aims to remedy the deficiency of available published material, which has tended to concentrate on historical, textual, grammatical, and literary issues at the expense of the theology, or to lose distinctive emphases of individual writings in systematized studies of 'The Theology of Paul' and the like. New Testament specialists here write at greater length than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of other New Testament theologies, and explore the theological themes and issues of their chosen books without being tied to a commentary format, or to a thematic structure drawn from elsewhere. When complete, the series will cover all the New Testament writings, and will thus provide an attractive, and timely, range of texts around which courses can be developed.

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# THE THEOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

JOEL B. GREEN

*Associate Professor of New Testament  
American Baptist Seminary of the West and  
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California*



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## *Editor's preface*

Although the New Testament is usually taught within Departments or Schools or Faculties of Theology/Divinity/Religion, theological study of the individual New Testament writings is often minimal or at best patchy. The reasons for this are not hard to discern.

For one thing, the traditional style of studying a New Testament document is by means of straight exegesis, often verse by verse. Theological concerns jostle with interesting historical, textual, grammatical and literary issues, often at the cost of the theological. Such exegesis is usually very time-consuming, so that only one or two key writings can be treated in any depth within a crowded three-year syllabus.

For another, there is a marked lack of suitable textbooks round which courses could be developed. Commentaries are likely to lose theological comment within a mass of other detail in the same way as exegetical lectures. The section on the theology of a document in the Introduction to a commentary is often very brief and may do little more than pick out elements within the writing under a sequence of headings drawn from systematic theology. Excursuses usually deal with only one or two selected topics. Likewise larger works on New Testament Theology usually treat Paul's letters as a whole and, having devoted the great bulk of their space to Jesus, Paul, and John, can spare only a few pages for others.

In consequence, there is little incentive on the part of teacher or student to engage with a particular New Testament document, and students have to be content with a general overview, at best complemented by in-depth study of (parts of)

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two or three New Testament writings. A serious corollary to this is the degree to which students are thereby incapacitated in the task of integrating their New Testament study with the rest of their Theology or Religion courses, since often they are capable only of drawing on the general overview or on a sequence of particular verses treated atomistically. The growing importance of a literary-critical approach to individual documents simply highlights the present deficiencies even more. Having been given little experience in handling individual New Testament writings as such at a theological level, most students are very ill-prepared to develop a properly integrated literary and theological response to particular texts. Ordinands too need more help than they currently receive from textbooks, so that their preaching from particular passages may be better informed theologically.

There is need therefore for a series to bridge the gap between too brief an introduction and too full a commentary where theological discussion is lost among too many other concerns. It is our aim to provide such a series. That is, a series where New Testament specialists are able to write at a greater length on the theology of individual writings than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of New Testament Theologies, and to explore the theological themes and issues of these writings without being tied to a commentary format or to a thematic structure provided from elsewhere. The volumes seek both to describe each document's theology, and to engage theologically with it, noting also its canonical context and any specific influence it may have had on the history of Christian faith and life. They are directed at those who already have one or two years of full-time New Testament and theological study behind them.

*University of Durham*

JAMES D. G. DUNN



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## *Preface*

It will surprise many readers to discover that Luke is responsible for more material, measured in sheer words, than any other New Testament writer. This is surprising because his influence as a theologian has not often been felt in such explicit ways when compared with Paul or John. Indeed, it is only in recent decades that the expression “Luke *the theologian*” has become a commonplace, and it is personally satisfying to be able to participate in this way in the recovery of Lukan theology for the church.

My own appreciation for Luke has developed in conversation with my students, former and present – first at New College Berkeley, and now at the American Baptist Seminary of the West and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. In particular, I have benefited from interactions with Meagan Howland and Michael McKeever, both of whom have served in varying capacities as research assistants and conversation partners. I am grateful to them; to the Graduate Theological Union, who awarded Michael and me a Henry Mayo Newhall Fellowship for Student–Faculty Partnership for work on “Luke–Acts and the Jewish People”; and to the Catholic Biblical Association, who awarded me a Young Scholar’s Fellowship for work on the application of discourse theory to the Gospel of Luke. I am also indebted to the Friday Night Fellowship of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Richmond, California; together we have been working through the Gospel of Luke and its implications for faithful discipleship for almost two years – with no end yet in sight!

## *Abbreviations*

<b>AB</b>	Anchor Bible
<b>ABD</b>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Edited by David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
<b>AMTBBB</b>	Athenäum <sup>s</sup> Monografien: Theologie; Bonner Biblische Beiträge
<b>AnBib</b>	Analecta Biblica
<b>ANRW</b>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der Neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
<b>AS</b>	Advances in Semiotics
<b>AUS</b>	American University Studies
<b>BBR</b>	<i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i>
<b>BETL</b>	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
<b>Bib</b>	<i>Biblica</i>
<b>BJS</b>	Brown Judaic Studies
<b>ConBNT</b>	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
<b>CBQ</b>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<b>CTL</b>	Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics
<b>DJG</b>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> . Edited by Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove, Illinois; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1992
<b>EDNT</b>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 3 vols. Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1990–93

*List of abbreviations*

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EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FF	Foundations and Facets
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GP	Gospel Perspectives
HCPE	Health Care Policy and Ethics
IBRB	Institute for Biblical Research Bibliography
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . 4 vols. Edited by George Arthur Buttrick. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LS	Language in Society
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . 3 vols. Edited by Colin Brown. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975–78.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTKNT	Okumenischer Taschenbuch-kommentar zum Neuen Testament
PRCS	Parallax Re-visions of Culture and Society
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series

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*List of abbreviations*

<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RST	Regensburger Studien zur Theologie
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SCL	Sather Classical Lectures
SHM	Studies in the History of Missions
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
SS	Studies in Scripture
SSG	Studies in the Synoptic Gospels
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 10 vols. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964–76.
TEV	Today's English Version
TI	Theological Inquiries
TPINTC	Trinity Press International New Testament Commentary
TR	Theology and Religion
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBS <sup>3</sup>	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> . 3rd ed. Edited by Kurt Aland, <i>et al.</i> London: United Bible Societies, 1975
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WS	Walberberger Studien
WSPL	Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Language
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZSNT	Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament