

THEOLOGICAL ESSAY: **Luke 19:10** (NIV based)
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In the Book of Luke, the emphasis is on Jesus' concern for the "lost" people. This is summarized in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Jesus' mission as the eternal world ruler was to take redemptive initiative and go to those who were physically and socially neglected and despised and also spiritually lost, so that He could redeem all men through His suffering and death on the cross.

Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man" in Luke 19:10. He uses this title twenty-five times to refer to Himself, as recorded in the Book of Luke. In order to fully understand the meaning of "the Son of Man", Daniel chapter 7 must be looked at and understood. This passage holds the meaning and background that Jesus refers to in His title. In the first eight verses of Daniel chapter 7, Daniel sees the present and future human kingdoms that would reign over the earth. His vision turns in verses 9 through 12 to the Father who defeats the final kingdom and gains reign. The Son of Man appears in verses 13 and 14 before the Father and He "was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14). Jesus uses "the Son of Man" to refer to Himself as "someone who had heavenly origin and who was given eternal rule over the whole world" (Grudem 546). It is incredible that Jesus, the heavenly ruler, chose to seek out and save the lost.

The "lost" Jesus came to seek out are sinners who have turned away from God, and specifically in the perspective of the Book of Luke, the downtrodden and despised in the Jewish community. In Luke 5:30, Jesus is asked by the Pharisees why He eats with sinners. He responds, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). Jesus' focus on earth was not on the so-called "righteous" who thought they were in right-standing with God. He consistently ministered to tax collectors (Luke 5:27-30), women with sin (vv.7:36-49), people afflicted with demons (vv.8:22-25), and many others. He came for sinners who needed God. In the Book of Luke, the emphasis is on the universal nature of Jesus' ministry and salvation. The list of people above are all those that "righteous" Jews looked down upon. Jesus sought out the people that were rejected by the culture. He had a heart for the poor, the sick, the Gentiles, and those controlled by demons. His ministry was not limited to the rich or those who were in high position; rather, He came for Gentiles, sinners, and the socially downtrodden.

It needs to be elucidated that even though in the Book of Luke there is heavy emphasis on Jesus' ministry to the socially downtrodden, He still includes His ministry to Jews and other people. In Luke 1:16, Gabriel told Zechariah that his son, John the Baptist, will "bring back to the Lord their God" "many of the people of Israel". The Book of Luke begins with "the people of Israel and is concerned with the renewal of a people of Israel back to their God" (Marshall 142). Jesus did not ignore the Jews or those who were not socially outcast. He took deliberate action to preach and teach in the synagogues in whatever town He went (Luke 4:44). It is important to keep in mind that Jesus had a universal mission. He did not come to seek and save solely the Jews who

believed in Yahweh, and He did not come to seek and save solely the Gentiles and socially downtrodden. He came so that “all mankind will see God's salvation” (Luke 3:6).

A theme important to the Book of Luke is that Jesus sought out the lost. In Luke chapter 15 is included three parables of Jesus that pertain to seeking out the lost: Parable of the Lost Sheep, Parable of the Lost Coin, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The parable of the Lost Sheep (vv.15:1-7) and the Lost Coin (vv.15:1-10) are almost identical in plot. Something of great value, a sheep or a coin, is lost and the shepherd, or woman, searches unceasingly until they find the lost item, which results in great joy. This joy is emphasized in the Parable of the Prodigal Son when the Father throws a great banquet for the son who returned. These parables emphasize the idea that “God is not a God of the few, a God of the wise, or a God only of those who think they pursue God. He is a God who searches, finds and cares for the sinner” (Bock 1295). Jesus searches out the lost diligently and then has great joy when they accept Him.

Jesus' use of seeking out the lost in Luke 19:10 is anchored in the image of a shepherd seeking out lost sheep, described in Ezekiel chapter 34 (Marshall 698). In this chapter, God rails against the “shepherds of Israel” (v.34:2), or the spiritual leaders, who have failed in protecting the flock and searching for those who have been lost. He then declares in verse 11 that He will “search for my sheep and look after them”. In consideration of this, it is clear why Jesus disapproves of the Pharisees. It was their responsibility to care for Israel and God's flock; however, they failed. The true Shepherd has come to seek out those who are lost and bring them into the flock of God.

The Book of Luke has a unique view of the saving work of Jesus Christ. The emphasis is on the suffering that Jesus Christ goes through to bring salvation to the lost. In Luke 9:20, Peter confessed that he believed Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus told him, ““The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life”” (Luke 9:22). Jesus' statement reveals the emphasis in the Book of Luke on the suffering Messiah. In Luke is introduced the “explicit narrative regarding His execution and resurrection, and to presage the proclamation of the ‘suffering Messiah in the apostolic ministry of Acts’” (Green 370). Jesus corrects the misunderstanding about His mission. Rather than conquering Roman rule through a military conquest, His mission was to save all of mankind through His suffering and death on a cross.

In Luke 19:10 is distinctly revealed and declared the mission of Jesus Christ, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost”. Jesus the Almighty Ruler came to seek out those who are lost, in the same way that a shepherd searches for his lost sheep. He did not come to just find the lost. He came to save them from the punishment of their sins by suffering and dying on the cross. The Book of Luke is invaluable in order to understand the purpose and ministry of Jesus.

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