

▼ **Luke 14: Detecting a Divine Agenda**

Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday April 20, 2025

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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>

▼ **Opening Material**

▼ **Welcome!**

- Praise the Lord!
- Welcome to another Life Church sermon!

▼ **Transition**

- Welcome to another Sunday at Life Church.
- The QR code (also available on our song sheets) links to our Visitor Landing Page.
- Use it to access our notes, share your contact information, and access our giving page.
- Questions? If you took the time to visit us, you deserve to get answers!
- Email: Questions@LifeChurchBoston.ORG
- We are continuing through Luke 14.
- We will have Q&A / Discussion after the message, followed by our Easter meal.

▼ **Thoughts**

- **I didn't grow up in church . . .**

▼ **Overview**

▼ **In today's message we will do the following:**

- Watch a brief video explaining: "What is the Bible?"
- Examine Luke 14 - the scene of a banquet that Jesus attends.
- Examine one of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances in Luke 24.
- Introduce the concept called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD).
- Examine Jesus' Kingdom announcement in Luke 4.
- Watch a brief video explaining: "The Story of the Bible".
- Discover how to explore the life of Jesus on a daily basis.

▼ **Video**

- [Bible Project: What Is the Bible?](#) (00:05:48)

▼ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

▼ Origin

- Introduced in the 2005 book “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers” by the sociologist Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton.
- Result of the National Study of Youth and Religion.

▼ Principal Elements

- 1) A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- 2) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- 3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- 4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- 5) Good people go to heaven when they die.

▼ Comments

- Introduced in the 2005 book “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers” by the sociologist Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton.
- Result of the National Study of Youth and Religion.
- ▼ According to Kenda Creasy Dean, author of the 2010 book “Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church”:
 - “The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth what we really believe: namely, that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people . . .”

▼ Luke 14:1-14 (NIV) - Jesus at a Pharisee's House

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, **“Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?”** But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

Then he asked them, **“If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?”** And they had nothing to say.

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: **“When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But**

when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

- **Parallel / Related Passages**

- ▼ **Jesus at a Pharisee's House**

- ▶ Narrative

- ▶ Observations / Background

- ▶ Considerations

- ▼ Lessons

- Jesus is at a banquet - a common form of social interaction.
 - There were common social expectations associated with banquets.
 - Jesus challenges these common social expectations. Why? How?
 - Healing was not an expected banquet activity - especially on the Sabbath.
 - Jockeying for favorable seating to demonstrate your prestige and success was the norm.
 - Inviting people who make you comfortable and/or enhance your prestige was the norm.

- ▼ **Jesus and MTD**

- Most of the banquet guests probably met the conditions of MTD even though they adhered to a much, more strict understanding of God and what God wanted from them.
- ▼ In challenging their social norms, Jesus challenges those in our own culture who knowingly or unknowingly adhere to MTD.
 - Is being good, nice, and fair to each other all that God wants from us?
 - Should being happy and feeling good about ourselves be our central goal in life?
 - Jesus appears to be demanding more from his audience.
- Let's explore this further as we read the next passage.

- ▼ **Luke 14:12-24 (NIV) - The Parable of the Great Banquet**

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will

eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

▼ Parallel / Related Passages

- **Matthew 22:1-14 (NIV) - The Parable of the Wedding Banquet**

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

- **Isaiah 25:6-8 (NIV) - The Lord Almighty will prepare a feast . . .**

▼ The Parable of the Great Banquet

- ▶ Narrative

- ▶ Observations / Background

- ▶ Considerations

- ▼ Lessons

- A guest at the banquet declares that those who eat at the feast in the Kingdom of God will be blessed. This reflects what would have been a common expectation and aspiration.
- ▼ Jesus shares a parable in which:
 - the people originally invited to a banquet choose not to attend.
 - the host calls others who were not originally invited and they attend.
- This implies that simply pursuing a moral life, personal happiness, and success can result in us missing the “big prize”.

▼ What shall we do?

▼ Pay attention to Jesus

▼ Luke 4:14-21 (NIV) - The Lord's Spirit Is Upon Me

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

▼ Setting the Stage

- Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.
- Jesus teaches in their synagogues, everyone praises him, news spreads.

▼ Jesus attends Synagogue on the Sabbath

- He reads the Jubilee passage from Isaiah 61 and announces that it is now fulfilled.
- The people are amazed at the gracious words (words of grace) he is speaking. They cannot reconcile his present ministry with his previous identity - Jesus from around the way.
- This is the foundation for the rest of this gospel and thus for today's passage!

► Key Previous Lessons.

▼ Know the story

- [Bible Project: The Story of the Bible](#) (00:05:38)
- [Bible Project: The Crucifixion of Jesus: Luke 19-23](#) (00:04:25)

► Luke 24:36-49 (NIV) - Jesus Appears to the Disciples

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

▼ Feed on the Life of Jesus

- Are you “worded up”?
- Eat his flesh; Drink his blood - John 6:53-59; 2 Samuel 23:13-17
- Does the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16 - KJV)?

▼ What if you read a Gospel every month - a chapter a day?

- The Gospel of John in April (4/1 - 4/21)
- The Gospel of Matthew in May (5/1 - 5/28)
- The Gospel of Mark in June (6/1 - 6/16)
- The Gospel of Luke in July (7/1 - 7/24)

▼ For April this means:

- Read John 19 on April 19 (yesterday).
- Read John 20 on April 20 (today).
- Read John 21 on April 21 (tomorrow).
- etc.

- As you read, write down any questions you have.

▼ Ask yourself the following questions:

- What did this chapter teach me about how Jesus viewed himself, his mission, his relationship to God, and his relationship to others?
- What would I like to better understand about this chapter?

- What did I find challenging about this chapter?
- What did I learn as I tried to apply this chapter to my life?
- Would an outsider who read this chapter recognize that I was trying to apply it to my life?

▼ Jesus explained his teaching to his disciples:

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. – Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)

- Did you grow up in church without getting your questions answered?
- Did you grow up apart from church wondering what all the fuss was about?
- Either way, don't be afraid to start from scratch or start over from scratch with someone who can walk you through the Bible so that you can understand God's Kingdom.
- Read and listen to God's Word in community!

► **Discussions, Q&A**



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Thoughts



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Overview

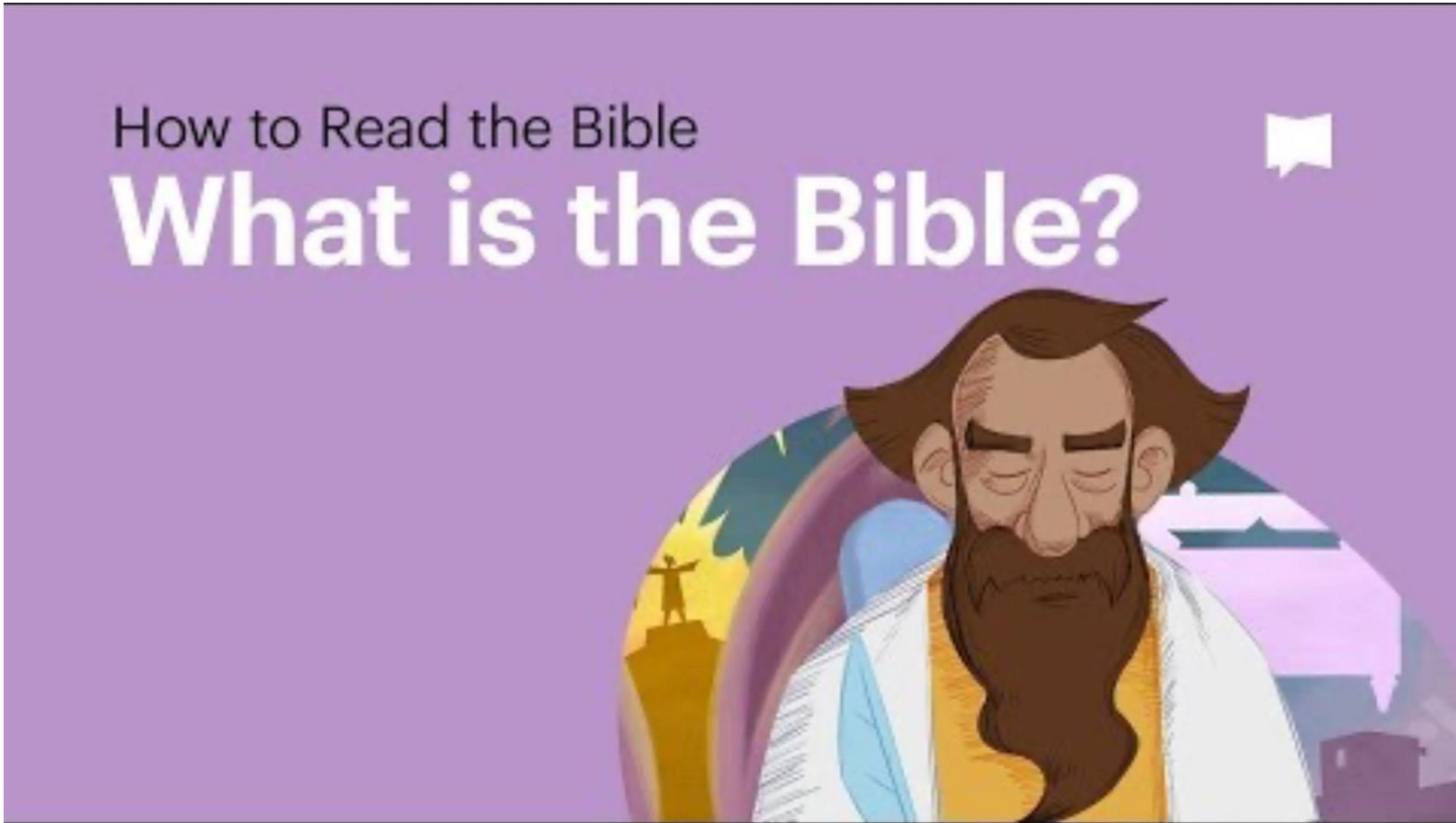


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What Is the Bible?





Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)

Principal Elements

1. A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
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Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD)

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Luke 14:1-14 (NIV) Pharisee's House

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Jesus at a Pharisee's House

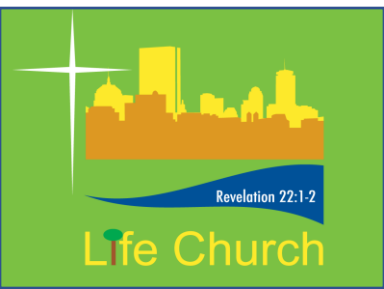
Lessons

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- Jesus challenges these common social expectations. Why? How?
- Healing was not an expected banquet activity - especially on the Sabbath.
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Jesus and MTD

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When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

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“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”



Matthew 22:1-14 (NIV) Wedding Banquet



Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

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“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”



Parable of the Great Banquet

Lessons

- A guest at the banquet declares that those who eat at the feast in the Kingdom of God will be blessed. This reflects what would have been a common expectation and aspiration.
- Jesus shares a parable in which:
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- This implies that simply pursuing a moral life, personal happiness, and success can result in us missing the “big prize”.



What Shall We Do?



- Pay attention to Jesus.
- Know the story.
- Feed on the Life of Jesus.



Luke 4:14-21 NIV – Jesus Sets The Stage

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
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The Lord's Spirit Is Upon Me

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- Jesus teaches in their synagogues, everyone praises him, news spreads.
- Jesus attends Synagogue on the Sabbath
 - He reads the Jubilee passage from Isaiah 61 and announces that it is now fulfilled.
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The Story of the Bible





Luke 24:36-49 NIV – Jesus Appears

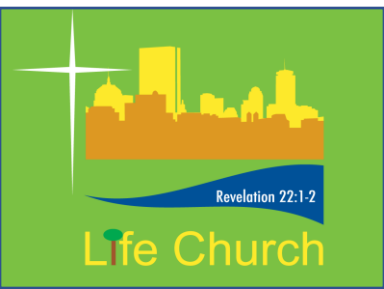
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Feeding on the Life of Jesus (1 of 2)

Are you “worded up”?

Eat his flesh; Drink his blood – John 6:53-59; 2 Samuel 23:13-17

Does the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16 - KJV)?

What if you read a Gospel every month - a chapter a day?

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- The Gospel of Luke in July (7/1 – 7/24)



Feeding on the Life of Jesus (2 of 2)

For April this means:

- Read John 19 on April 19 (yesterday).
- Read John 20 on April 20 (today).
- Read John 21 on April 21 (tomorrow).
- etc.



Feeding on the Life of Jesus (3 of 4)

As you read, write down any questions you have.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What did this chapter teach me about how Jesus viewed himself, his mission, his relationship to God, and his relationship to others?
- What would I like to better understand about this chapter?
- What did I find challenging about this chapter?
- What did I learn as I tried to apply this chapter to my life?
- Would an outsider who read this chapter recognize that I was trying to apply it to my life?



Feeding on the Life of Jesus (4 of 4)

Jesus explained his teaching to his disciples:

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. – Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)

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- Either way, don't be afraid to start from scratch or start over from scratch with someone who can walk you through the Bible so that you can understand God's Kingdom.
- Read and listen to God's Word in community!



Q&A / Discussion





Announcements



Visitor Page

- Sunday Service (Communion) April 6, 2025
- Sunday Connection April 6, 2025 12pm - 2pm
- Men's Bible Study Wed (4/9) 7pm - 8:30pm - via Zoom
- Palm Sunday Service April 13, 2025
- Men's Bible Study Wed (4/16) 7pm - 8:30pm - via Zoom
- Prayer Summit Maundy Thursday Service (4/17) 7:30pm
- BMA Good Friday Service (4/18) 12n - 3pm
- Easter Sunday Service April 20, 2025
- Men's Bible Study Wed (4/23) 7pm - 8:30pm - via Zoom
- Sunday Service April 27, 2025