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Gospel of Luke

Luke states his purpose right away: this book is meant to give believers an accurate, chronological understanding of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Luke investigated the events of Jesus' life by speaking with eyewitnesses, giving Theophilus (and us) a thorough record of the things Jesus did and said.

Author

As with the other 3 gospels, the title is derived from the author's name. According to tradition, Luke was a Gentile. The Apostle Paul seems to confirm this, distinguishing Luke from those who were "of the circumcision".

Colossians 4:11,

That would make Luke the **only Gentile to write any books of Scripture**. He is responsible for a significant portion of the New Testament, having written both this gospel and the book of Acts.

Very little is known about Luke. He almost never included personal details about himself, and nothing definite is known

about his background or his conversion. Both Eusebius and Jerome identified him as a native of Antioch (which may explain why so much of the book of Acts centres on Antioch.

Acts 11:19–27; 13:1–3; 14:26; 15:22, 23, 30–35; 18:22, 23.

Luke was a frequent companion of the Apostle Paul, at least from the time of Paul’s Macedonian vision right up to the time of Paul’s martyrdom.

**Acts 16:9-10,
2 Timothy 4:11,**

The Apostle Paul referred to Luke as a physician.

Colossians 4:14,

Luke’s interest in medical phenomena is evident in the high profile he gave to Jesus’ healing ministry.

Luke 4:38–40; 5:15–25; 6:17–19; 7:11–15; 8:43–47, 49–56; 9:2, 6, 11; 13:11–13; 14:2–4; 17:12–14; 22:50, 51.

In Luke’s day, physicians did not have a unique vocabulary of technical terminology. So, when Luke discusses healings and other medical issues, his language is not different from that of the other gospel writers.

Luke includes more miracles of physical healing than any of the other Gospels.

Luke 13

Matthew 12

Mark 11

John 2

The Gospel of Luke was likely written between A.D. 55 and 62.

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts clearly were written by the same individual. (**Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1**)

Luke and Acts appear to have been written at about the same time first Luke, then Acts. Combined, they make a 2-volume work addressed to “Theophilus”.

Complete history of the founding of Christianity, from the birth of Christ to Paul’s imprisonment under house arrest in Rome (**Acts 28:30-31**).

The book of Acts ends with Paul still in Rome, which leads to the conclusion that Luke wrote these books from Rome during Paul’s imprisonment there (A.D. 60–62).

Luke records Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in **A.D. 70 (Luke 19:42–44; 21:20–24)** but makes no mention of the fulfilment of that prophecy, either here or in Acts.

Luke made it a point to record such prophetic fulfilments.
Acts 11:28,

So, it is extremely unlikely he wrote these books after the Roman invasion of Jerusalem. Acts also includes no mention of the great persecution that began under Nero in A.D. 64.

In addition, many scholars set the date of James' martyrdom at A.D. 62, and if that was before Luke completed his history, he certainly would have mentioned it. So, the most likely date for this gospel is A.D. 60 or 61.

Recipients, Date and Place of Origin

Luke, like Mark, and in contrast to Matthew, appears to target a Gentile readership.

He identified locations that would have been familiar to all Jews (**Luke 4:31; 23:51; 24:13**), suggesting that his audience went beyond those who already had knowledge of Palestinian geography.

He usually preferred Greek terminology over Jewish language ("Calvary" instead of "Golgotha" in **Luke 23:33**).

The other gospels all use occasional Semitic terms such as "*Abba*" (**Mark 14:36**), "*Rabbi*" (**Matthew 23:7, 8; John 1:38, 49**), and "*Hosanna*" (**Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9, 10; John 12:13**)—but Luke either omitted them or used Greek equivalents.

Luke quoted the OT more sparingly than Matthew, and when citing OT passages, he nearly always employed the Septuagint (LXX, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures).

Furthermore, most of Luke's OT citations are allusions rather than direct quotations, and many of them appear in Jesus' words rather than Luke's narration (**Luke 2:23-24; 3:4-6; 4:4, 8, 10-12, 18-19; 7:27; 10:27; 18:20; 19:46; 20:17, 18, 37, 42-43; 22:37**).

Luke, more than any of the other gospel writers, highlighted the universal scope of the gospel invitation. He portrayed Jesus as the Son of Man, rejected by Israel, and then offered to the world.

Luke repeatedly related accounts of Gentiles, Samaritans, and other outcasts who found grace in Jesus' eyes. This emphasis is precisely what we would expect from a close companion of the "apostle of the Gentiles" (**Romans 11:13**).

The core theology of Paul's doctrine was justification by faith (**Romans 3:24**).

Luke also highlighted and illustrated justification by faith in many of the incidents and parables.

- Pharisee and the tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**)
- Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-32**)
- Simon's house incident (**Luke 7:36-50**)
- Salvation of Zacchaeus (**Luke 19:1-10**).

Background and Setting

Luke dedicated his works to “most excellent Theophilus” meaning “lover of God” (**Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1**). This designation, which may be a nickname or a pseudonym, is accompanied by a formal address (“most excellent”) possibly signifying that “Theophilus” was a well-known Roman dignitary, perhaps one of those who had turned to Christ in “Caesar’s household” (**Philippians 4:22**).

Luke envisioned a much broader audience for his work than this one man. The dedications at the outset of Luke and Acts are like the formal dedication in a modern book. They are not like the address of an epistle.

Luke expressly stated that his knowledge of the events recorded in his gospel came from the reports of those who were eyewitnesses.

Luke 1:1-2,

Implying that he himself was not an eyewitness. It is clear from his prologue that his aim was to give an ordered account of the events of Jesus’ life, but this does not mean he always followed a strict chronological order in all instances.

Luke’s research itself was orchestrated by divine Providence. Luke was moved by the Spirit of God (**2 Peter 1:21**). Therefore, his account is infallibly true.

Luke's interest in people is undeniable. Much of the material unique to Luke's gospel involves Jesus's interactions with individuals, many of them on the fringes of "acceptable" society—sinners, women, and children among them. Like Matthew and Mark, Luke recorded the incident of a woman coming to pour perfume on Jesus's feet. But Luke was the only gospel writer to point out the fact known to all present that she was an immoral woman (**Luke 7:37**).

In a similar way, we find in Luke alone the conversation between the robbers crucified alongside Jesus, one of them defending Jesus and receiving the promise of paradise. Luke's portrayal of Jesus reveals in our Lord a man come to minister and show compassion to all people, no matter their station in life.

Historical and Theological Themes

Luke's style is that of a scholarly, well-read author. He wrote as a meticulous historian, often giving details that helped identify the historical context of the events he described.

Luke 1:5,

Luke 2:1-2,

Luke 3:1- 2,

Luke 13:1–4,

His account of the nativity is the fullest in all the gospel records and (like the rest of Luke's work) more polished in its literary style.

Luke included in the birth narrative a series of praise psalms (**Luke 1:46–55; 1:68–79; 2:14; 2:29–32; 34, 35**).

Luke alone reported the unusual circumstances surrounding the birth of John the Baptist, the annunciation to Mary, the manger, the shepherds, and Simeon and Anna (**Luke 2:25–38**).

A running theme in Luke's gospel is Jesus' compassion for Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners, and others often regarded as outcasts in Israel.

Every time he mentions a tax collector it is in a positive sense. (**Luke 3:12; 5:27; 7:29; 15:1; 18:10–13; 19:2**).

Luke did not ignore the salvation of those who were rich and respectable. **Luke 23:50–53**,

From the outset of Jesus' public ministry (4:18) to the Lord's final words on the cross (23:40–43), Luke underscored this theme of Christ's ministry to the pariahs of society. Again, and again he showed how the Great Physician ministered to those most aware of their need (Luke 5:31, 32; 15:4–7; 31, 32; 19:10).

The high-profile Luke accords to women is particularly significant. From the nativity account, where Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna are given prominence (**chapters 1&2**), to the events of resurrection morning, where women again are major characters (**Luke 24:1, 10**), Luke emphasized the central role of women in the life and ministry of our Lord (**Luke 7:12–15, 37–50; 8:2, 3, 43–48; 10:38–42; 13:11–13; 21:2–4; 23:27–29, 49, 55-56**).

Several other recurring themes form threads through Luke's gospel.

Forgiveness

(Luke 3:3; 5:20–25; 6:37; 7:41–50; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3, 4; 23:34; 24:47);

Joy (Luke 1:14)

The role of the Holy Spirit

(Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25–27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12);

The temple in Jerusalem

(Luke 1:9–22; 2:27–38, 46–49; 4:9–13; 18:10–14; 19:45–48; 20:1–21:6; 21:37, 38; 24:53);

Jesus' prayers (Luke 6:12).

Starting with 9:51 till Luke 19:10, Luke devoted 10 chapters of his narrative to a travelogue of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. Much of the material in this section is unique to Luke. Jesus relentless progression toward the Cross.

This is the heart of Luke's gospel, and it features a theme Luke stressed throughout.

This was the very purpose for which Christ had come to earth and He would not be deterred. (**Luke 9:22, 23; 17:25; 18:31–33; 24:25, 26, 46**),

The saving of sinners was His whole mission!
Luke 19:10,

Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus' teachings that are not recorded in the other Gospels.

In Luke alone we find the following parables.

- Parable of two debtors (7:40–43)
- the good Samaritan (10:29–37)
- Parable of the friend at midnight (11:5–8)
- Parable of the rich fool (12:13–21)
- Parable of punishment (12:47–48)
- Parable of the barren tree (13:1–9)
- Parable of the lost coin (15:8–10)
- Parable of the Lost son (15:11–32)
- Parable of the shrewd manager (16:1–12)
- Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31)
- Parable of the persistent widow (18:1–8)
- Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14)

Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work. Jesus was not trying to raise opposition to the Roman government, nor was he lacking in sympathy or understanding of those whom the Jews regarded as foreigners.

He places the highest value on good character regardless of a person's race or nationality. For example, although many Jews look down upon and no regard for Samaritans, but Luke emphasizes that of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, only the one who was a Samaritan expressed his gratitude for what Jesus had done. Again, in the parable of the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho, a Samaritan befriended the man and saw to it that he was given proper care.

Throughout his gospel, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a friend not only to Jews but to Samaritans and to so-called outcasts from different races and nationalities.

Purpose

Luke is written to a Christian with little education in the life of Christ, making this book a terrific starting point for believers interested in studying His life today.

Just as Matthew portrays Jesus as the King, and as Mark reveals Him as the Servant, so Luke offers a unique perspective of Jesus

as the Son of Man. This phrase, “Son of Man,” was Jesus’s favourite way to refer to Himself.

Most famous among the people unique to Luke’s gospel is the tax collector Zacchaeus, a short man who had to climb a tree to see over the crowds as Jesus approached his town. Jesus ended up sharing a meal with Zacchaeus at his house, much to the chagrin of the local religious leaders. When Zacchaeus expressed his regret over his former way of life and vowed to make restitution, Jesus responded with what became the theme of Luke’s gospel: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Luke portrayed Jesus as God’s ideal Man, who offers salvation to all humanity—Jew and Gentile alike.

Overview

The Gospel of Luke has 24 chapters

1151 Verses

Matthew has 28 chapters and 1071 verses

Mark has 16 chapters and 678 verses

Outline of the Book of Luke

His Birth, Childhood, Early Ministry - Chapters 1:1-4:13

Introductory chapters of the gospel where Luke, like Matthew, traces the genealogy of Jesus, we find the same emphasis on

the universality of Jesus' mission. Matthew traces the ancestry back to Abraham, who is regarded as the father of the Hebrew people. Luke traces it back to Adam, the father of all humanity.

His Ministry in Galilee - Chapters 4:14-9:50

His Journey to Jerusalem, Ministry - Chapters 9:51-21:38

Chapters 9–18 are often referred to as Luke's "long insertion," for in them he departs from the sequence of events in Mark and introduces a section that includes much of the most valued portions of Jesus' teachings.

Here, we have a report of Jesus sending out the "seventy" to carry the message of the kingdom to different places. The number "seventy" is especially significant: In the Jewish Torah, the number refers to all the nations of the earth.

Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus' mission is for all humankind and not just for the Jews. In the story that describes the conversation between Jesus and Zacchaeus, we have the statement "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

In reporting Jesus' discourses with his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Luke does not emphasize the nearness of the event as the other evangelists do. Toward the end of the gospel, he describes the

events leading up to the crucifixion, stressing the point of Jesus' innocence of any wrongdoing toward either Jews or the Roman government. Pilate, the Roman governor, declares Jesus innocent of any crime, and a Roman centurion protests Jesus' execution with the words, "Surely this was a righteous man."

His Rejection and Death - Chapters 22:1-23:56

His Resurrection and Ascension - Chapter 24:1-53

The gospel closes with an account of the resurrection and the subsequent meetings of Jesus with the disciples and others. As two men are walking to the village of Emmaus, Jesus joins them, but the men do not recognize Jesus until he sits at a table with them and blesses the food that they are about to eat.

Later, Jesus meets with the eleven disciples in Jerusalem and overcomes their suspicions by showing his hands and feet to them. They cook some fish, and Jesus partakes of the food with them. Then follows a farewell discourse to the disciples, during which Jesus gives them instruction concerning what they should do. Afterward, they go together as far as Bethany, and after blessing the disciples, Jesus departs from them.

Conclusion:

The richness of Luke's portrayal of Jesus has profound implications for our relationship with God today. Jesus walks through Luke's gospel illustrating His deep and abiding care for people, regardless of what they have done or their status in society.

Do you believe that God loves you no matter what you've done?

The fact that the eternal Son of God condescended to lower Himself, take on human flesh, make Himself subject to human limitations, and seek out His people in bodily form shows us clearly how much God cares for us and, in turn, how we are to care for others.