

# Luke

## I. Introduction to Luke

Luke is the third book of the New Testament and the third among the Gospels. The book of Luke has 25 chapters and 1151 verses; making it the longest book of the New Testament. As the author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts, Luke is responsible for writing one fourth of the Bible. Luke was written to give an accurate account of the person and the work of Christ.

**A. Luke 1:1-4** “In as much as many have taken pen in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered then to us it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

Very early on, fanciful stories of Christ began to be circulated. Luke, the Church’s first historian, set out to give an accurate account of Christ. His method of research was to interview eyewitnesses of the ministry of Jesus. Luke is considered to be a first rate historian.

The book of Luke is among nine New Testament books whose authors are not cited. However, the earliest traditions attribute the Gospel of Luke to Luke, even though he is never mentioned by name in the Gospels or Acts. There is strong traditional evidence to accept him as the author.

Irenaeus (175-195 A.D.) declares Luke recorded in a book the Gospel preached by Paul.

Tertullian (150-270 A.D.) says Luke wrote a digest of Paul’s gospel

Eusebius (circa 260-340 A.D.) affirmed Luke as the author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts.

One reference, dating from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Century, states Luke was the author who was from Antioch, a doctor, followed Paul, and died at 84.

There are lists of Bible books from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century referring to the Gospel of Luke.

There is no reason for a forgery to bear the name of an obscure follower of Christ, who is never mentioned in Gospel accounts or in Acts. The Author is not nearly as important of the content.

There are three New Testament references to Luke:

Colossians 4:14, “Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.”

# Luke

2 Timothy 4:11, "Only Luke is with me."

Philemon 1:24 , ". . . as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers . . ."

From the Biblical and traditional references we learn Luke was a second generation follower of Christ. He did not meet Christ until after the ascension. Although details are not recorded, we know he came to Christ the same way we do; someone told him about Jesus.

Luke was part of the church in Antioch, where he came into contact with Paul. Later he would join Paul in ministry. In Acts 16:10, the narrative changes to the first person as Luke includes himself in the story.

We find the first person plural used again in Acts 20:5 when Luke rejoins Paul who was traveling toward Jerusalem. Luke continued to accompany Paul to Jerusalem and remained a faithful friend and lifetime supporter of Paul's ministry.

**B. 2 Timothy 4:11**, "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry."

Luke was the first historian of the church. He received his information through careful and methodical research, which includes interviews with eyewitnesses of the life of Christ and the beginning of the church.

**C. Colossians 4:14, Luke the beloved physician. . ."**

Luke was a Physician. According to J.S. Baxter, Luke records more of Jesus' healing than Matthew, and Mark combined. He also uses more than 300 terms related to medicine, cures, or diseases. Luke becomes the first in a long history of medical missionaries.

Dr. Luke proved to be a great addition to Paul's ministry, given that Paul seemed to be encumbered with physical infirmities making life and ministry difficult. One can only wonder how much of the New Testament would have been written if Paul didn't have a doctor/historian at his side.

The book of Luke was written sometime around 62 A.D., probably from Rome during Paul's imprisonment. He wrote the treatise to Theophilus.

There are two possible theories regarding Theophilus' identity.

A Roman official: The term 'excellent' is used of Felix and Festus, who were both governors.

A wealthy supporter of Paul's ministry and Luke's writing.

Theophilus means 'lover of God' or 'loved of God.'

# Luke

The message of Luke, although written to an individual, is universal. Luke was widely distributed and quoted by church leaders as early as the first Century. Luke's message is for all humanity.

Luke 2:10, "Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.'"

Luke 24:46-47, "Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day., and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

Perhaps a key verse of the entire book is found in Luke 19:9-10

"And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

Luke may have developed a mission mindset from his time at Antioch, his journeys with Paul, or his interviews with those who knew Christ best.

## II. Outline

Luke is 24 chapters long, but can easily be read in one sitting. However, Luke also divides neatly into four sections for more detailed analysis.

### **Section 1    Chapters 1:1-4:13    Introduction to Jesus**

Covers thirty years and serves to introduce us to Jesus.

Chapter 1 and 2      His birth and childhood

Luke gives the majority of information of all the Gospels concerning the birth and upbringing of Jesus.

Coupled with Matthew's account, we learn Jesus was born to a virgin, fled to Egypt when young, and returned to Nazareth where He was raised. We have only one account of the life of Christ as a child, Luke 2:41-50.

Many other stories arose regarding Jesus as a child, but Luke alone gives an accurate account of His upbringing. Many of these stories are found in the Apocryphal Book entitled 'The Infancy Gospel of Thomas', dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries.

These stories include Jesus turning clay pigeons into real ones. This particular story made its way to Mecca 500 years later and is now included in the Koran, the Muslim holy book.

Other fanciful stories include:

Jesus purifies pools of water, zaps a child for throwing a stick into one of the pools. The child dried up and died. The parents wanted to kick Joseph out of town.

# Luke

Later a young boy bumped into Jesus; Jesus kills him.  
A teacher became angry at Jesus and struck Him; Jesus kills him.

The result of these stories was great fear of the young Jesus.

“Nobody except God can subordinate this child.”

“Nobody dared to make Him angry because they did not want to be cursed or crippled.”

“Don’t let Him out the door because the people who anger Him will die.”

There are some good stories told as well.

Chapter 9 of the Infancy Gospels records:

Jesus was playing with friends on the roof of a house. One of the children fell from the roof and died. When the other children saw this, they fled. The parents of the dead child accused Jesus of throwing him down. Jesus defended himself and denied throwing the child down. He called for the child, Zeno, to rise and tell his parents Jesus was innocent. The parents, when they saw their child arise and speak, they glorified God and worshipped Jesus.

Chapter 13 of the Infancy Gospels tells us:

Since his father was a carpenter, he was making plows and yokes in that season. Joseph received an order to make a bed for a wealthy customer. Upon examining the lumber, he discovered one of the crossbeam boards was shorter than the other. Joseph didn’t know what to do. The child Jesus told him to put the two pieces of wood down (side-by-side), and lined up the ends. Then Jesus stretched the shorter board making it as long as the other. Joseph was amazed, kissed Jesus and said, “I am blessed because God gave me this child.”

All in all, these are ridiculous and fanciful stories that not only have no bearing in history, but also contradict what we know to be the truth about Christ.

Chapters 3-4:13 Preparation for Ministry

Two major events are recorded in these chapters.

The baptism of Jesus; reveals our need for the Holy Spirit

The temptation of Jesus; reveals the value of the Word in dealing with spiritual warfare and temptation.

**Know the Word, memorize the Word, and use the Word. Hebrews 5:14**

**Section 2 Chapters 4:14-9:50 Ministry in Galilee**

His ministry in Galilee covers three years, but before ministry begins, Jesus is empowered by the Spirit (Luke 3:22).

The book of Luke was written to the Greek world to reveal the perfect man, an important concept in the Greek culture. God’s ideal man is baptized with the Spirit.

35 – Born of the Spirit	John 3:3
3:22 – Baptized with the Spirit	Luke 3:16
4:1 – Filled with the Spirit	Ephesians 5:18
4:14 – Empowered with the Spirit	Acts 1:8

# Luke

## **Section 3      Chapters 9:51 – 19:27      En route to Jerusalem**

The key verse of Section 3 is Luke 9:51, “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.”

The section is filled with instruction, on prayer 11:1-3, and on hypocrisy 11:37- 12:7.

There are many parables:

- 12:22 Rich Fool
- 13:6 Barren Tree
- 13:18 Mustard Seed
- 13:20 Leaves
- 15:1 Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Prodigal Son
- 16:1 Unjust Stewart
- 19:11 Ten Minas

## **Section 4      Chapters 19:28 – 24 Passion Week**

More information is given regarding the final week of Christ’s life than any other time period. It must have been marvelous for Luke to hear the eyewitness testimony of these events.

Luke records that Jesus:

- Entered Jerusalem to the sounds of the crowds shouting (Hosanna), “Blessed is the King who lives . . .”
- Cleansed the temple
- Was confronted by the religious leaders
- Gave instruction regarding His return
- Gathered for Passover with the twelve disciples; instituted communion
- Left for the Garden
  - Prayed
  - Betrayed
  - Arrested
- Stood before
  - Sanhedrin
  - Pilate
  - Herod
- Was condemned to death on the cross
- Buried
- Rose
- Instructed followers from Scripture
- Ascended

### **III. Why Study Luke**

Luke completed the synoptic Gospels and along with the Gospel of John concludes the New Testament narrative of the life of Christ.

Luke is filled with details unique to his gospel alone. There are certain stories Luke records that the other Gospel writers omit.

# Luke

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:28-37) A man looking for loop holes in the law is instructed to love God and others. The Samaritan is an example of the extravagant love we should show other in the name of Christ.

The Persistent Friend (Luke 11:5-13) Jesus teaches the need for consistent and persistent prayer, particularly for the work of the Spirit.

The Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21) This was spoken to those who love money and ate guilty of covetousness. It teaches the values of eternal benefits.

The Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9) Jesus teaches about the patience of God, but also his desire for us to bear fruit. Fruit is both the characteristic of Christ birthed in our lives, and reproduction: leading others to Christ.

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) One of the greatest and most valuable stories Jesus ever told. It teaches about the heart of God for the fallen saint.

The Unjust Stewart (Luke 16:1-13) One of the most puzzling of Jesus' parables. It teaches the need to be faithful in little things if more is to be earned.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) This is one of the most important text regarding the condition of those who die without Christ. The rich man speaks from his place in torment, pleading with us to warn his friends.

The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8) this parable teaches the need to not lose heart in praying; especially for the lost.

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) This emphasizes the folly of self-righteousness and the need for justification.

Certainly, Luke's gospel brings an accurate account of the life of Christ and insight into Jesus' teaching.