

The Gospel of Luke

Prologue	Infancy Narrative	Preparation for Ministry	Galilean Ministry	Travelogue to Jerusalem	Entrance into Jerusalem	Passion Narrative
1:1-4	1:5 – 2:52	3:1 – 4:13	4:14 – 9:50	9:51 – 19:27	19:28 – 21:38	22:1 – 24:53
SOURCES PURPOSE RECIPIENT	ANNOUNCEMENTS BIRTHS WITNESSES	JOHN THE FORERUNNER JESUS THE SAVIOUR	REJECTION INSTRUCTION MIRACLES CONFESSION PREDICTION	DISCIPLESHIP REJECTION	TRIUMPHAL ENTRY TEMPLE CLEANSING CONFRONTATION OLIVET DISCOURSE	PASSOVER SUPPER GETHESEMANE ARREST AND TRIAL CRUCIFIXION RESURRECTION ASCENSION

Jesus Christ: The Perfect Man	“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (19:10)
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Purpose Statement for the Gospel of Luke:

The Gospel of Luke is the first of a two-volume work (Luke / Acts) in which Luke provided an orderly account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ for a Hellenistic or Greek audience to demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Old Testament Messiah for Israel and was indeed the Son of God who became the Son of Man in order to provide the way for all to enter the kingdom of God.

An Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

I. The Author

- A. The superscription of the book *Euangelion Kata Lukan (Gospel According To Luke)* reveals the basic convictions of the early church and its acceptance of Lukan authorship. In the early church, no other person was ever set forth as the author of the third Gospel.
- B. The external evidence for the book is strong with the early church document the *Muratorian Fragment* being the first to give evidence of Lukan authorship. To this can be added the witness of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, the Anti-Marcionite Prologue, Origen, and Jerome.
- C. The internal evidence of Luke should be considered along with that of Acts, since both works are clearly the product of the same author.
 1. The two books are addressed to the same person, Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3)
 2. The material in Acts perfectly supplements that which is presented in Luke (Acts 1:1-2). Luke/Acts reads naturally as a two-volume work.
 3. The emphasis and attention given to the person and work of the Holy Spirit is very similar in both Luke and Acts. Luke is often called “the gospel of the Spirit.”
 4. The vocabulary, style, and language of both books are very similar.
 5. The “we” sections of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-21; 21:18; 27:1–28:16) point to an author who was with Paul during portions of his missionary work and in his first Roman imprisonment. The prison epistles (Eph.; Phil., Col.; and Philemon) list a number of people who were with Paul, but by process of elimination, Luke is the only real possibility.

- D. The medical language in both Luke and Acts suggests the author was a physician. Luke was called the “beloved physician” (cf. Col. 4:14).
 - E. Conclusion: On the basis of both external and internal evidence, it is reasonable to identify Luke as the author of the third Gospel.
- II. Date of Writing
- A. If Luke 21:20-24 is accepted as predictive prophecy, then Luke must be dated prior to A.D. 70. More liberal scholars usually deny this and will date Luke, and the other three Gospels as well, past A.D. 70.
 - B. Because of the abrupt ending of the book of Acts, it seems likely that Luke concluded his writing at the end of Paul’s two years of imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:30-31). The introduction of Acts (1:1) indicates that Luke was written before the Acts. This would place the writing of Luke before A.D. 63, the end of the Roman imprisonment.
 - C. Evidently Luke gathered his material during his ten years of service with Paul. He indicates in his prologue he talked to eyewitnesses and carefully examined the historical evidence (1:1-4). It also is quite reasonable to date Luke in close proximity to Acts. Though we cannot be certain, it is possible that before leaving Palestine with Paul on the journey to Rome (Acts 27–28), Luke sent the third Gospel from Caesarea to his friend Theophilus.
 - D. It is reasonable to conclude that Luke wrote his account of the Gospel during Paul’s two-year imprisonment at Caesarea, and this would place the date of the book at c. A.D. 59. A date of A.D. 59–61 sets reasonable parameters.
- III. Historical Background
- A. The origination of the book is, of course, connected to the date of writing and was possibly Caesarea where Luke accompanied Paul while he was imprisoned there for two years (Acts 23:31–26:32). However, we cannot be certain based upon the available historical evidence. Rome, Caesarea, Arabia, Asia Minor, and Alexandria have also been suggested.

- B. The recipient of the book is given in the prologue (1:1-4) as a man named Theophilus. Both Luke and Acts are dedicated to Theophilus, which means “lover of God” and may be the name of an actual person or a figurative representation of any Christian. Some believe that Theophilus is a discreet pseudonym to protect a highly placed Christian. Theophilus is an informed person, a statement probably referring to his Christian instruction (1:4; Acts 18:25). The title “most excellent” (1:3) could indicate a Roman of high rank (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25) before whom the truth of Christianity is to be defended. Speculation identified Theophilus with Titus Flavius Clemens, cousin of the Emperor Domitian. His wife Domitilla was a Christian, and he himself was to fall from the emperor’s favor and be executed on the charge of “atheism.” The Romans used the term “atheists” to describe Christians because they refused to worship idols. But the term “most excellent” was not limited to Roman officials, and there is really no way of knowing the identity of Luke’s named reader. Modern scholarship is divided over whether Luke wrote for Gentiles, Jews, or a combination of both groups. In addition, the prologue (1:1-4) can be interpreted to mean that Theophilus was not yet a Christian (hence Luke’s purpose would be evangelistic), or that he was a new Christian who needed to be strengthened in the faith (hence Luke would have a didactic purpose). It is interesting to note that there was about this time a Jewish High Priest named Theophilus (cf. Acts 6:7).
- C. The circumstances of the book revolve around the instruction of Theophilus in the certainties of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a time when philosophical schools such as Stoicism and Epicureanism flourished, the need for a presentation of the historical verities of the Christian faith was great.

IV. Reason for Writing

The stated purpose for Luke (1:1-4) was to give Theophilus a comprehensive, accurate, and historical account of the matters concerning Jesus Christ in order that he may be assured of the reality of the things that he has been taught. The secondary purpose is to convey these truths to Hellenists, both Jew and Gentile, to awaken and deepen their faith in Jesus as the Divine Son of Man, the Savior of all mankind (cf. 19:10). Therefore, Luke was written for the confirmation of

Theophilus in the Christian faith and the communication of that faith to the Greek speaking world.

V. Characteristics

- A. Luke is the most literary of the four Gospels. The author was a master of the classical Greek language. Eighteen to twenty parables recorded are unique to Luke.
- B. A large place is given to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Luke (1:15, 35; 3:22; 4:1, 18; 10:21).
- C. The temple is frequently mentioned in the narrative (1:8, 21-22; 2:27, 37, 41-51; 24:53). This Jewish emphasis is often overlooked.
- D. Over twenty references to angels are listed highlighting the deity of the Son of Man.
- E. Luke emphasizes the redemptive mission of Christ with extensive usage of Isaiah 53 and 40-66 (22:37; 24:27, 44, 46).
- F. Luke alone tied the sacred narrative to secular history (2:1-2; 3:1).
- G. Luke has a special section (9:51–19:27) that emphasizes the geographical movement of Christ referred to as the “travelogue” of Luke. From the onset, Jesus is pictured as resolutely set on going to Jerusalem to face His passion.

Luke – A Short Outline

- I. The prologue and purpose of the Gospel. 1:1-4
- II. The narrative of the births of John and Jesus. 1:5 – 2:52
- III. The preparation for the ministry of Jesus. 3:1 – 4:13
- IV. Jesus' ministry in Galilee. 4:14 – 9:50
 - A. Jesus announced His ministry in Nazareth. 4:14-30
 - B. Jesus began to preach in Capernaum and Galilee. 4:31 – 6:16
 - C. Jesus taught the great Sermon. 6:17-49
 - D. Jesus ministered in Capernaum and surrounding cities. 7:1 – 8:56
 - E. Jesus taught His disciples. 9:1-50
- V. Travelogue: The journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem. 9:51 – 19:27
 - A. Jesus was rejected by most on his journey toward Jerusalem.
9:51-11:54
 - B. In response to the rejection, Jesus taught his followers.
12:1-19:27
- VI. Jesus ministered in Jerusalem. 19:28 – 21:38
- VII. The passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. 22:1 – 24:53

The Twelve Apostles (A Comparative Analysis)

Matthew 10	Mark 3	Luke 6	Acts 1
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James	James	James	James
(of Alphaeus)	(of Alphaeus)	(of Alphaeus)	(of Alphaeus)
Thaddaeus ¹	Thaddaeus	Simon (Zealotes)	Simon (Zealotes)
Simon	Simon	Judas	Judas
(the Canaanite) ²	(the Canaanite)	(of James)	(of James)
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	-----

¹ Matthew and Mark list Thaddaeus, while Luke, in his two lists, names Judas (of James). Some Bible scholars think Judas may have been his original name and that it was changed later to Thaddaeus (meaning perhaps “warm hearted”) in order to avoid the stigma attached to the name Judas Iscariot.

² “The Canaanite” is the transliteration into English of a Greek word which probably presents an Aramaic word meaning “zealous.” The Zealots in Judaism were a group who advocated revolutionary tactics to overthrow the power of Rome.

It is interesting that all four lists begin with Simon Peter and end with Judas Iscariot (except, of course, the Acts 1 list, where Judas is omitted having already killed himself). Also, the names appear to be groups of four. Peter, Andrew, James, and John are always in the first group—though not always in that order—and Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew are in the second group in all four lists. In all four lists, Peter’s name heads the first group, Philip leads the second, and James (of Alphaeus) heads the third.

Why Did Jesus Come?

Luke 19:1—10

- I. Jesus came to seek sinners. 19:1-7
 - 1. Sinners may have position. 19:1-2
 - 2. Sinners usually have possessions. 19:2
 - 3. Sinners always have problems. 19:3-7
 - a. They may be physical. 19:3-6
 - b. They may be personal. 19:7
- II. Jesus came to save sinners. 19:5, 8-10
 - 1. The Lord calls sinners. 19:5
 - 2. The Lord changes sinners. 19:8-9
 - 3. The Lord covets sinners. 19:10

Resurrection Appearances of the Risen Lord Jesus

EVENT	DATE	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	I Cor.
At the empty tomb outside Jerusalem	Early Sunday morning	28:1-10	16:1-8	24:1-12	20:1-9		
To Mary Magdalene at the tomb	Early Sunday morning		16:9-11		20:11-18		
To the two travelers on The road to Emmaus	Sunday at midday			24:13-32			
To Peter in Jerusalem	During the day on Sunday			24:34			15:5
To the ten disciples in the upper room	Sunday evening		16:14	24:36-43	20:19-25		
To the eleven disciples in the upper room	One week later				20:26-31		15:5
To seven disciples fishing on the Sea of Galilee	One day at daybreak				21:1-23		
To the eleven disciples on the mountain in Galilee	Some time later	28:16-20	16:15-18				
To more than 500	Some time later						15:6
To James	Some time later						15:7
At the Ascension on the Mount of Olives	Forty days after the resurrection			22:44-49		1:3-8	