

# THE BOOK OF LUKE

## General Introduction Matters

Luke and Acts are two volumes of a single work written by the same author (Luke). Luke's Gospel records the announcement of John the Baptist's birth (Jesus' herald) until the ascension of Jesus Christ (from glory to glory, cf. Mark 1:1-2). Then Acts records (almost seamlessly) the Lord Jesus' work beginning with His ascension and then documenting the resurrected Lord establishing and advancing His Church well into the Apostolic era.

Luke faithfully and accurately documented the origins of the Christian faith and the power of its transforming message from the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the birth of the church and then its explosive growth and strong presence all the way to Rome, the Empire's illustrious capitol.

His work as 'historian' of the Christian Faith cannot be over-appreciated!

Luke addressed his work to a man named Theophilus ("one who loves God," or "lover of God"). He was likely a high Roman official, thus addressed as "most excellent" Theophilus (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:2; 26:25, s. Gk. for Felix and Festus). He appears to be a sincere believer in Jesus Christ, who underwrote the expensive task of Luke's research and writing the "Gospel of Luke."

NOTE: Luke and Acts account for about 28% of the entire NT. Luke's name appears only 3 times in the NT: Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; and Philemon 24. However, Luke indirectly refers to himself in the "we" passages in Acts (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1 – 28:16).

In writing Luke, the author consulted eyewitnesses for information (1:2).

## Luke's Purposes in Writing the Book

Luke states two of his purposes for writing the book in 1:3-4: 1) confirm the faith of Theophilus, and 2) to demonstrate that his faith in Christ rested on firm historical fact.

Surely, Luke had other unstated purposes in mind as well. For example, Luke writes for both a *wider* audience and a *future* audience. For the *wider* Gentile audience, he explains matters that were unnecessary for a Jewish audience (locality examples: 4:31; 8:26; 21:37; 23:50; 24:13; also, rather than use the word "rabbi," Luke uses the Greek, "didaskalos" for teacher.

Similarly, for *future* audiences, he includes the Roman Emperors along with the birth account of Jesus (2:1) as well as the outset of John's prophetic ministry (3:1).

In Luke, little is said about Jesus' fulfilling OT prophecies, because this was not nearly as important to Gentile readers (only 5 direct references are mentioned, and 4 of the 5 are used in Jesus' teaching to Israel.).

### **Special Features of the Book**

Luke is one of the three "Synoptic" Gospels, so called because they record many of the same episodes and the same ministry progression. That is, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke on many occasions record the same events. However, Luke has a lengthy section in which much of the material is unique to his book. Beginning with 9:51 and until 18:14, there are very few parallels with Matthew & Mark.

Twenty-one of the 28 parables that occur in Luke are found in 10:30 – 19:27.

Of the 20 miracles recorded in Luke, only 5 appear in 9:51 – 19:27. Already in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, Jesus is seen anticipating His final appearance in Jerusalem and His crucifixion.

### **Important Themes in the Book of Luke**

- Luke emphasized **forgiveness** (3:3; 5:18-26; 6:37; 7:36-50; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3-4; 23:34; 24:47).
- Luke emphasized **prayer**. At many points in His ministry Jesus prayed (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 22:32, 40-41).
- Luke speaks much about **repentance**.
- Luke said more about **money** and material things than did any other NT author.
- Luke often spoke of **joy** that accompanies faith and salvation (1:14; 8:13; 10:17; 13:17; 15:5,9,32, 19:6,37).

### **Life of Christ Passages Unique to LUKE**

Gabriel's announcements of 2 births: John and Jesus – 1:5-38

Mary's Magnificat – 1:39-56

Birth of John and the birth of Christ with angelic presence – 1:57 – 2:40

Jesus' early years and visit to the temple – 2:41-52



Jesus' genealogy: Joseph's physical lineage through David – 3:23-38  
 Jesus' initial rejection in Nazareth – 4:16-30  
 Jesus raises the widow of Nain's son – 7:11-17  
 Sinful woman anoints Jesus' feet & Jesus' parable to Simon the Pharisee – 7:36f  
 Jesus sends out 72 disciples – 10:1-24  
 Parable of the Good Samaritan – 10:25-37  
 Jesus visit Mary and Martha, Mary sits at Jesus' feet – 10:38-42  
 Parable of the Great Feast – 14:15-24  
 Parable of the Lost Coin – 15:8-10  
 Parable of the Prodigal Son – **15:11-32**  
 Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus – 16:19-31  
 Jesus heals 10 men with Leprosy – 17:11-19  
 Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector – 18:9-14  
 Jesus bring salvation to Zacchaeus – 19:1-10  
 Jesus' Trial before Herod – 23:8-12

### **Timeline for the *Life of Christ* in Luke** (ESV Study Bible)

37-4 B.C. Herod the Great a king of Judea  
 6-4 B.C. Birth of Jesus Christ  
 26-36 A.D. Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea  
 28-29 A.D. John the Baptist's ministry begins ("15<sup>th</sup> yr. of Tiberius," beg. A.D. 14)  
 29-30 A.D. Jesus Begins His Messianic Ministry (Luke 3:23, at "... *about* thirty.")  
 33 A.D. Passover, Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection (April, A.D. 33)  
 33 A.D. Pentecost, the Apostolic Ministry building Christ's Church begins  
 58-62 A.D. Luke writes the Gospel of Luke (Paul's Roman Imprisonment: 61/62)  
 (Nero's persecution begins in 64 A.D. – Luke written before this)