

#5. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

1. Luke's Gospel is the product of *the Beloved Physician* (Colossians 4:14), who was a traveling companion of Paul (from Acts 16: 29 - until Paul's death - 2 Timothy 4:11). Luke wrote not only this Gospel, but the Book of Acts as well.
 - Luke is generally considered to be a Greek, and therefore would be the only non-Jewish writer of Scripture. Careful examination, however, places some doubt on that assumption. His name is Greek, but so were several others in Scripture who were identified as Jewish. Eusebius and Jerome (early church historians) identified him as a resident of Antioch. If true, it may reveal how Paul and Luke became acquainted (Acts 11:19-27; 13:1-3; 14:26; 15:22, 23, 30-35; 18:22-23).
 - Luke's purpose was to present Christ as the *Perfect Human* and the *Second Adam* described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:45.
 - As a physician, it is not unexpected that Luke would take special care to record Jesus' healing ministry in considerable detail (4:38-40; 5:15-25; 6:17-19; 7:11-15; 8:43-56; 9:2-11; 13:11-13; 14:2-4; 17:12-14; and 22:50,51).

2. **Luke's name means *Light Giver*.**

3. **Luke's emphasis** is to circulate a global message of Christ's mission and message. Both his gospel and the Book of Acts are written to *Most Excellent Theophilus* (which means *lover of God* - Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1), but this should be seen as similar to a dedication in a modern book, not as the destination of the letter such as we see in many of Paul's epistles. Theophilus may have been a patron, underwriting the cost of the project, or he may simply have been a friend. Although the dedication focuses on Theophilus, we can be fairly certain Luke's target was a worldwide audience, not just an individual.

4. **The Date of writing** is about 60-62AD.

5. **Key Chapters**
 - Chapter 1:1 - 4:13 discusses in great detail the birth of Jesus and His preparation for public ministry.

- Chapters 4:14 - 21:38 focuses on Jesus' ministry (1) in and around Galilee, (2) on the way to Jerusalem, and (3) His latter ministry in that city.
- Chapters 22:1 - 24:53 are the account of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

6. Key Verses

- **Luke 1:1-4 NASB** Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ²just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; ⁴so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.
- **Luke 19:10 NASB** "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

7. Key People

- **Jesus the Messiah** - The Messiah (the same term as Christ - *the anointed one*). In Mark, Jesus is seen particularly as God's Servant; a true *man on a mission*.
- **Mary and Joseph** - the mother and earthly father of Jesus.
- **John the Baptist** - the cousin of Jesus who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for the presentation of the Lord to Israel first, and also to the world.
- **Herod The Great** - leader in Jerusalem who was secretly called *Herod The Great Pervert* because of his ruthless barbarism. Even family members were not spared his wrath. He killed wives and several offspring. It was said that it was *safer to be Herod's sow than Herod's son*. Upon his death, Herod had left instructions to kill many prominent family leaders in Jerusalem in order to ensure the day of his death would be a day of mourning, and not a day of celebration. Thankfully, his order was not carried out.
- **Zechariah and Elizabeth** - a priestly family who were relatives of Mary. They became the parents of John the Baptist when God healed their barrenness.
- **The Twelve Disciples (the original Apostles)**

- *Andrew*
- *Nathaniel (also called Bartholomew)*
- *James, the Elder*
- *James, the Lesser or Younger*
- *John The Beloved*
- *Judas Iscariot*
- *Jude (also called Thaddeus)*
- *Matthew (also called Levi)*
- *Simon Peter (also called Cephas)*
- *Philip*
- *Simon the Zealot*
- *Thomas (also called Didymus)*

8. Key Places

- **Nazareth** - the hometown of Mary, and subsequently of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Today it is primarily a Muslim and Christian community in Israel and the largest city in the North Region of Israel.
- **Jericho** - a *city of Palm trees* and the location of at least 22 various settlements throughout history. In this city Jesus healed two blind beggars, converted Zacchaeus the tax collector, and used the area as the setting for the story of the Good Samaritan.
- **Bethany** - a village near Jerusalem; the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. A city of retreat and refuge for Jesus from time to time.
- **Mount of Olives** - a place of prayer and retreat for Jesus; scene of a large Jewish cemetery, and the site of Jesus' Ascension. It was the location where Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem.
- **Golgotha** - a hill just outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. It is also known as *the place of the skull*.

- **Jerusalem** - the scene of intense confrontation between Jesus and the civil and religious leaders of Israel.
- **Capernaum** - a fishing village on the north shore of Galilee; hometown to Peter, Andrew, James, and John. A scene of considerable ministry during Jesus' life.
- **Galilee** - a large lake region in northern Israel; several locations were the scene of many miracles and teaching events by Jesus.
- **Judea** - a mountainous region in southern Israel, known today as the West Bank.

9. Key Themes

- **Jesus is the Son of God sent to redeem the lost** - the message of Jesus' divinity and mission of redemption is clearly presented in Luke just as it is in the other Gospels. The emphasis is upon His sacrifice and compassion for the lost.
- **Jesus is the Compassionate Savior who is energized by the Holy Spirit** - Jesus responded to every class of people and catching the eye of the compassionate physician. We see a clearer presentation of the Holy Spirit in Luke's account. The Spirit is seen at Jesus' birth, baptism, ministry, and resurrection. We see in at least three occasions, the expulsion of demons by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 9:1; 9:49; 10:17-20). Also, in addition to Jesus, we see two resurrections from the dead in this Gospel (Jairus' daughter in Luke 8 and the son of the Widow of Nain in Luke 8). This Holy Spirit power encounter theme is carried forward into Volume Two of Luke's writings - The Book Acts.
- **Prayer is seen as a central part of the Christian experience.**
 - Jesus prayed:
 - at His Baptism - 3:21
 - in the wilderness - 5:16
 - before choosing His disciples - 6:12, 13
 - a blessing as He fed 5,000 -9:16
 - on the Mount of Transfiguration - 9:28, 29
 - a prayer of gratitude to God - 10:21

- when teaching the disciples how to pray - 11:2-4
 - when blessing the Last Supper - 22:17-19
 - for Peter's faith - 22:31, 32
 - for strength and blessing in Gethsemane - 22:39-46
 - He prayed on the Cross - 23:46
 - when He blessed the food after the Emmaus Road encounter - 24:30
- Others prayed:
 - Simeon prayed in the Temple - 2:29-32
 - the leper prayed for healing - 5:12
 - the Roman Centurion prayed - 7:6,7
 - the Gadarene demoniacs prayed - 8:28
 - Jairus prayed - 8:41,42
 - the Ten Lepers prayed - 17:12,13
 - the blind men at Jericho prayed - 18:38-41

10. The Contents of Luke

- *The Birth of Jesus and His Prelude to Ministry - 1:1-4:13*
 - Dedication - 1:1-4
 - The birth of Jesus - 1:5-2:38
 - The boyhood of Jesus - 2:39-52
 - The baptism of Jesus - 3:1-4:13
- *Jesus' Ministry in Galilee - 4:14-9:50*
 - Jesus begins His public ministry - 4:14-44

- Jesus calls His Disciples - 5:1-6:16
- Jesus preaches and ministers healing and deliverance in the cities of Galilee - 6:17-9:50
- *Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem - 9:51-19:27*
 - Samaria (the inclusion of all into the Kingdom) - 9:51-10:37
 - Bethany and Judea (lessons on prayer, devotion, and loyalty) - 10:38-13:35
 - Perea (the Friend of Sinners teaches Kingdom principles) - 14:1-19:27
- *The Passion Week - 19:28-23:56*
 - Sunday - 19:28-44
 - Monday - 19:45-48
 - Tuesday - 20:1-21:38
 - Wednesday - 22:1-6
 - Thursday - 22:7-53
 - Friday - 22:54-23:55
 - Saturday - The Sabbath - 23:56
- *The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus - 24:1-53*
 - The Resurrection - 24:1-12
 - The Walk to Emmaus - 24:13-45
 - The Ascension - 24:46-53

Worth noting

1. Luke pays special attention to the women who played a part in the story of Jesus and the Early Christians.

- Church tradition tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a source for Luke's material. Many scholars believe the genealogical record in Luke was that of Mary's side of the family, while Matthew's record established Joseph's credibility.
- In Luke's writings we read about Anna (Luke 2:36-38), Bernice (Acts 25:13), Damaris, and a group of women converted in Athens (Acts 17:34), Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41; Drusilla (Acts 24:24), Elizabeth (Luke 1:5, 13), Joanna (Luke 8:3), Lydia (Acts 16:14), Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), Priscilla (Acts 18:2), Sapphira (Acts 5:1), and Susanna (Luke 8:3).

2. Luke's Gospel helps us understand the chronology of the Passion Week and Resurrection Day.

- **Sunday**
 - The Triumphal Entry - Mark 11:1-11
- **Monday**
 - Jesus cleanses the Temple - Mark 11:15-19
- **Tuesday**
 - The Sanhedrin challenge Jesus' authority - Luke 20:1-8
 - Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple - Matthew 24:25
 - Jesus predicts His Second Coming - Matthew 24:25
 - At Bethany, Mary anoints Jesus for His burial - John 12:2-8
- **Wednesday**
 - Judas strikes a deal to betray Jesus - Luke 22:3-6

- **Thursday**

- Jesus and His Disciples eat the Passover meal, thus instituting the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper - John 13:1-30; Mark 14:22-26
- In Gethsemane, Jesus prays for His Disciples - John 17

- **Friday**

- Thursday night and Friday before dawn was a night of illegal trials. Three religious trials (illegal because they were conducted at night) occurred under Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin. Civil trials occurred under Pilate (twice) and Herod.
- Jesus is betrayed and arrested after praying in Gethsemane (Mark 14:43-50). Jesus is questioned by Annas, the former High Priest. - John 18:12-24
- Jesus is found guilty by Caiaphas and The Sanhedrin. - Mark 14:53-65
- Peter denies Jesus three times. - John 18:15-27
- Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin. - Luke 22:66-71
- Judas commits suicide. - Matthew 27:3-10
- Jesus is brought to trial before Pilate. - Luke 23:1-5
- Jesus appears before Herod Antipas. - Luke 23:6-12
- Jesus is formally sentenced to death by Pilate (this had to be done under Roman authority). - Luke 23:13-25
- Jesus is mocked, then led away to be crucified between two thieves. - Mark 15:16-27
- The veil of the Temple is torn in two as Jesus dies. - Matthew 27:51-56
- Upon Jesus' death, some graves of the righteous were opened, and they were seen

after His resurrection by citizens in Jerusalem. - Matthew 27:52, 53

- Jesus is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. -John 19:31-42

- **Saturday**

- The women rest on the Sabbath Day, awaiting an opportunity on Sunday to prepare the body of Jesus for proper burial. - Luke 23:56

- **Sunday**

- Jesus is raised from the dead. - Luke 24:1-9
- Three women go to the tomb in order to prepare Jesus' body for proper burial. - Luke 23:55-24:1
- They find the stone has been rolled away. - Luke 24:2-9
- Mary Magdalene leaves in order to inform the disciples. - John 20:1, 2
- Mary, the mother of James, sees the two angels. - Matthew 28:1, 2
- John and Peter arrive and see that the tomb is empty. - John 20:3-10
- Mary Magdalene returns, sees the angels, and then sees Jesus. - John 20:11-18
- Mary, the mother of James, returns to the tomb with the other women. - Luke 24:1-4
- That group of women see the angels. - Luke 24:5; Mark 16:5
- The angel tells them Jesus has risen. - Matthew 28:6-8
- Jesus appears to them as they depart. - Matthew 28:9, 10

When reading the Gospel of Luke

1. Remember this is a companion to the Book of Acts.

2. Pay attention to material found only in Luke's Gospel.

- Special events preceding the births of Jesus and John - 1:5-80
- Certain scenes from Jesus' childhood -2:1-52
- The imprisonment of John the Baptist by Herod - 3:19, 20
- The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth - 4:16-30
- The special calling of the first disciples - 5:1-11
- A widow's son is raised from the dead. - 7:11-17
- A woman anoints Jesus' feet. - 7:36-50
- A group of women minister to Christ. - 8:1-3
- Some teaching leading up to Jesus' death occur in Luke. - 10:1-18:4
- Christ and Zacchaeus - 19:1-27
- Herod and Christ - 23:6-12
- Final words before the Ascension - 24:44-49