



## “Luke: Perfect for the Gentiles”

### Luke 1:1-4

April 25, 2021

#### The Book of Luke

**Author:** Luke was a follower of Christ, a physician (Col. 4:14), and an historian. Only Gentile (Col. 4:10-14 – Luke not listed with Jews but with Gentiles) to write in the N.T. His name is Lucas, which is a Greek word indicating his Greek/Gentile origin. Name never mentioned. Not an apostle because he was not an eyewitness. Neither was Mark. Luke was a companion of Paul and Mark was a companion of Peter. Remained unmarried.

#### Luke 1:3

3 it 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;

#### Acts 1:1

1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

#### 2 Tim 4:10-11

10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me.

**Background:** Tradition says he grew up and was educated in Antioch. Language in Luke shows high level of education.

**Writings:** Luke (longest book in N.T.) and Acts. Wrote more in the N.T. than any other author, if Hebrews is not ascribed to Paul. Luke & Acts constitute 28% of the N.T.

**Readers:** Theophilus, Greeks/Gentiles. Greeks were who were lovers of beauty, poetry and culture. They lived in a world of large ideas. The Greeks were concerned about the ideal man, the ideal leader, and the ideal teaching.

**Date of writing:** 56-61 A.D. (Matt. – 50 A.D., Mark 55-56 A.D.)

**Place of writing:** Rome, during Paul's imprisonment.

**Purpose:** To present Jesus Christ as the Son of Man.

**Key Verse: Luke 19:10**

10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jews rejected the Messiah (Jn. 1:11), so here in Luke it now goes to the Gentiles.

**Tone:** Warm and compassionate as we would expect an elderly family doctor to be.

**Emphasis:** The outcasts of society – the poor, tax-collectors, Gentiles, Samaritans, sinners (Luke uses the word “sinners” 16 times, more than Matthew – 5, Mark – 5, and John – 4), women (Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Martha & Mary, Bernice, Candace, Damaris, Dorcas, Drusilla, Joanna, Lydia, Priscilla, Sapphira, & Susanna), and children (the child hood of John & Jesus). Healing ministry of Jesus. Luke shows Christ to be the tender Savior of those whom society rejects or despises. More on the Holy Spirit than other gospels. Matt.'s genealogy goes back to Abraham, Luke's to Adam.

**Death:** Tradition tells us Luke died at age 84.

**The book of Luke continues to speak:** In 1979, the movie "JESUS", which is based on the gospel of Luke, premiered in 250 U.S. theaters. Since then, it has been translated to more than 1,700 languages and shown all over the world, leading to more than 572 million decisions for Christ!

#### Luke is unique:

#### 6 miracles peculiar to Luke.

1. The catching of fish, Lk 5:4-11.
2. The raising of the widow's son, Lk 7:11- 18.
3. The woman with the spirit of infirmity, Lk 13:11-17.
4. The man with dropsy, Lk 14:1-6.
5. The ten lepers, Lk 17:11-19.
6. The healing of Malchus' ear. Lk 22:50-51.

#### 11 parables, peculiar to Luke.

1. The two debtors, Lk 7:41-43.
2. The good Samaritan, Lk 10:25-37.
3. The persistent friend, Lk 11:5-8.
4. The rich fool, Lk 12:16-19.
5. The barren fig-tree, Lk 13:6-9.
6. The lost piece of silver, Lk 15:8-10.
7. The prodigal son, Lk 15:11-32.
8. The unjust steward, Lk 16:1-13.
9. The rich man and Lazarus, Lk 18:19-31.
10. The unjust judge, Lk 18:1-8.
11. The Pharisee and publican, Lk 18:9-14.

### **Additional items peculiar to Luke:**

- The "son of man" (23 times).
- The "son of God" (7 times).
- The "kingdom of God" (32 times).
- References to law, lawyer, lawful (18 times).
- Publican (11 times).
- Sinner and sinners (16 times).
- Most comprehensive of the gospels (Luke records from John the Baptist to the ascension of Christ).
- 715 words that are only used in Luke.

Estimated that 59 percent of Luke is peculiar to himself.

### **1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,**

- Verses 1-4 is one long sentence.
- It is an introductory statement that only Luke writes among the 4 gospel writers.
- This was the custom among the great Greek historians to explain and justify their work in a preface. They wanted to assure the reader of their capability, thorough research, and reliability. If your work was to be accepted among the Greeks, you must have a prologue.
- **Luke is saying 3 things here in verse 1:**
  1. many have attempted a daunting task . . .
  2. to assemble together into an organized account . . .
  3. of that has been witnessed among us.

Verse 1 is talking about a written record.

Verse 2 is talking about an oral record.

### **2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,**

- Verse 2 gives us Luke's 2 sources:
  1. **Eyewitnesses.** (Medical term – αὐτοπτεῖσθ – autopsy – to see with one's eyes.)
    - These are the apostles. No doubt many of them had jotted down items and events of things they saw Christ do.
  2. **Servants of the Word.** (Med. term – βοηθηταῖσθ - assistants)
    - These are other followers of Jesus.
    - These were the women who followed Jesus.
    - There were the 120 in the Upper Room.
    - These were hundreds if not thousands still alive who had personally heard Jesus teach and had seen Him perform miracles just thirty years previously.
    - Matthew and Mark were both most likely written before Luke's gospel so Luke would have seen and studied them.
    - Luke may have talked with Mary, and with James and Jude, two of Christ's brothers, both of whom wrote NT books.
- **No matter how careful one is with his research, what he discovers and writes can only be as good as his sources.**

### **Luke 1:1-4**

- 1 **Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,**
- 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
- 3 it 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;
- 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

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### **1 Cor 15:3-6**

- 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance **what I also received**, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
- 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
- 6 After that He appeared to more than **five hundred brethren at one time**, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

### **1 John 1:1-3**

- 1 **What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life** —
- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —
- 3 **what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also**, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

### **John 14:25-26**

- 25 "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.
- 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**

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- **Note:** Luke does not say, “I had a dream, I had a vision, God spoke to me.”

### To assemble His Word God used:

- Direct dictation.
- Other times He used Q & A.
- Or Allegory’s acted out.
- Or Preaching.
- Or Signs.
- To Moses at Sinai He spoke with the voice of thunder & lightning.
- To Elijah in a still small voice.
- To Ezekiel by visions.
- To Daniel by dreams.
- To Abram in human form.
- To Jacob as an angel.
- Other times He spoke through men who did ordinary historical research (as in the case of Luke)

### Heb 1:1-2

- 1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
- 2 in these last days has **spoken to us in His Son,**

### The result –

#### 1 **Thess 2:13**

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

#### 2 **Tim 3:16-17**

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

#### 2 **Peter 1:20-21**

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

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- Luke wanted to give a third account with an emphasis on comprehensiveness and order.
- How does he go about his work?
  - Investigate (med. term – to look at the symptoms) everything. This is why there is so much fresh material. Perfect tense--“stands investigated”
  - Do it carefully. Luke as a physician was a trained observer.
  - Start at the beginning.
  - Put it to paper.
  - Arrange in consecutive order.
- Who is Theophilus?
  - Theophilus’ name means “lover of God
  - “**most excellent**,” - identifies him as a ranking Roman official (see Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25).

#### **Acts 23:26**

26 “Claudius Lysias, to the **most excellent governor Felix,** greetings.

#### **Acts 24:3**

3 we acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, **most excellent Felix,** with all thankfulness.

#### **Acts 26:25-26**

25 But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, **most excellent Festus,** but I utter words of sober truth.

- Theophilus is a Roman official who is going to be taught personally by Luke.
- Who is your Theophilus?

Take care of the depth of your ministry and  
God will take care of the breadth of it.

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**“know”** – ἐπίγνωσκω – to know fully, be fully assured.

• You may know the “stability and security of the truth.”

**“taught”** – κατηχεω - catechism – literally “to sound down into the ears.” To teach systematically.

• Barna: 53% of those who call themselves “evangelical Christians” do not believe in absolute truth.

• Luke wants to build on what believers have been taught and give them the security that it is right.

• That is what this book is going to do for you.

“The Christian faith does not require believing things that are contrary to the facts but believing things that are true. Luke wrote his introduction to assure his readers that there was a factual basis for their faith. The gospel tradition was and is reliable.”

- Tom Constable