

Luke

- **Author**

- Originally from Antioch (where the disciples of the 'Way' were first called Christians (Acts 11:26)).
- A Greek by birth and education. Not classical Greek writing, but polished, elegant and dignified. Only Gentile author to compose a book for the New Testament.
- Not among the immediate followers of Jesus, and had probably never seen him.
- Called by Paul, '*The Most Dear Physician*' (Col 4:14).
 - '*Clinical eye*'
 - Peter's Mother in law
 - Gadarene demoniac
 - Woman with flow of blood
 - Woman bent double
 - Demoniac boy
 - Bloody sweat of Jesus
 - Jesus' fellow townsmen call him '*physician*'.
 - Overall emphasis on Jesus' healing power in recounting miracles, '*power went forth from him and healed them all.*' (6:19)
- A close disciple of Paul.
 - Accompanied Paul on 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys. Returned with him to Jerusalem. After his two year imprisonment in Caesarea (where Luke was not permitted to attend to Paul), Luke traveled with Paul to Rome under Roman guard.
 - He is attending to Paul during his Roman imprisonment, "*Only Luke is with me.*" (2 Tim 4:11).
 - Possibly referred to by Paul in 2 Cor 8:18 as a, '*brother, whose praise is in the gospel through all the churches*'. St. Jerome and other early Christian writers think this was a reference to Luke.
 - About 100 words used by Luke and Paul that are not used by any other New Testament writers. They also use common phrases.
 - Overall content and major themes emphasized contain an echo of Paul's catechesis (e.g., universality of salvation wrought by Jesus, Our Lord's poverty and humility, power of prayer, joyousness of spirit that ought to characterize Christians, etc.).

- Also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Both Luke's Gospel and Acts begin in a very similar way. The narrator of Acts speaks in the 1st person plural as though they were there, which further points to Luke.
- Prologue is of extremely important historical value. A narrative (diagesis), or orderly account diligently researched. Mentions other written and oral testimony.
- Writes in the context of contemporary history. He is a historian of wide vision that takes in all of humanity. He dates the coming of John the Baptist in six different ways. This gives the reader a certain reassurance that this historian is trustworthy and researched well (3:1-2).
- **Destination**
 - Addressed to Theophilus, but clearly written for pagan converts.
 - Tactfully omits negative references to gentiles. For example, Matthew writes, '*Do not even the gentiles do that?*' Mt 5:47. But, Luke writes, '*Do not even sinners do that?*' Luke 6:33).
 - John the Baptist gives a cordial welcome to the soldiers.
 - The centurion's generosity toward the Jews.
 - Charity and gratitude found among the abhorred Samaritans.
 - Many examples of him eliminating Hebrew words/meanings and/or replacing them with Greek ones.
 - 'Simon the Zealot' (6:15)(VS. 'Simon the Canaanean' in Matthew 10:4)
 - Replaces words like 'Rabbi' with Greek equivalent 'Master', or 'Golgotha' with Greek 'Kranion'.
 - Paul repeats the exhortation to '*rejoice in the Lord*' often. Luke seems informed by this spirit of Paul.
 - Luke's Gospel contains the four metrical compositions: Magnificat; Benedictus; Gloria in Altissimis; Nunc dimittis. These are not found in the other Gospels.
 - Luke's Gospel ends with, "*and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God*" (24:52-53).
- **Date**
 - Probably written in the early 60's, since it is a prequel to Acts, which stops narrating abruptly around 62 with Paul's imprisonment in Rome. Luke does not mention either the Roman persecution of the mid 60's, in which Peter and Paul were both martyred, or the complete destruction of Jerusalem in 70.
- **Structure**
 - Follows Mark generally, in terms of chronological outline, but also adds much. About one half of the contents is unique to Luke and not found in

Matthew or Mark (e.g., 7 miracles, 20 parables, birth and infancy of Christ).

- 1 - 4:13 Prologue, Infancy and Preparation
- 4:13 - 9:50 Galilean Ministry
- 9:51 - 19:27 Journey to Jerusalem
- 19:28 - 23:56 Passion Week
- 24 Resurrection and Ascension

- **Themes**

- Women are showcased
 - Virgin Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, widow of Nain, sinful woman, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Mary and Martha of Bethany, infirm woman, women in parables (Lost Coin, Unrighteous Judge).
- Loves the poor, lowly, and sinners. The following are only found in Luke:
 - Woman who anoints Jesus' feet in the home of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50).
 - Story of Zachaeus (19:1-10).
 - Parable of Prodigal son (15:11-32).
 - Shepherd searching for the lost sheep (15:3-7).
 - Woman searching for the lost coin (8:10).
 - Words of dying Jesus, *'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!'*
 - Promise of paradise to the repentant thief.
- Universal Salvation through Israel. (Catholicity)
 - Anchored in the Old Testament. Clear continuity shown between Testaments.+
 - Jesus' lineage traced to Adam. Common origin of all humanity emphasized.
 - Simeon exclaims the universality in his canticle: *'prepared in the presence of all peoples... a light for revelation to the Gentiles'* (2:29-32).
 - John the Baptist exclaims that *'all flesh'* can now find salvation (3:6).
 - Outreach to Samaritans
 - Does not include Matthew's text (10:5), where Jesus says "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no towns of the Samaritans".
 - Jesus scolds the apostles for wanting to call down fire and brimstone on the Samaritans when they reject the Lord (9:55).
 - Good Samaritan is held up as an example (10:25-37).
 - Only one of the 10 lepers that our Lord heals that returns to offer thanks is a Samaritan (17:16).

- Before his ascension Jesus commands the apostles to carry his forgiveness to *'all nations'* (24:47).
- Temple
 - The Gospel begins and ends with the Temple. Also Jesus found in the Temple. Harkens to the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:2-3.
 - Build up to the culmination of the Ascension: Transfiguration; *'when the days drew near for him to be received up'* (9:51); on the road to Emmaus our Lord explains that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer *'and enter into his glory'*. Luke mentions the ascension twice (in his Gospel and in the Acts).
- Blessed Virgin Mary
 - Figures very prominently in this Gospel
 - Pondered in her heart after both the encounter with the Angel, and after finding the child Jesus in the Temple.
 - She models the virtues of the genuine Christian: caring servant, obedient, grateful for all blessing, meek, sincere, and contemplative.
 - Highly plausible that she related to him directly many of the details that only she would have knowledge of (e.g., Her thought processes when encountering the angel, the words of the Magnificat, motherly details like wrapping the child in swaddling clothes and laying him in the manger, the experience of the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple, how our Lord later was obedient to his parents and grew in wisdom, and age and grace with God and men). This is further strengthened by the fact that Luke just told us that he inquired of eyewitnesses (1:2).
- Prayer of Christ mentioned repeatedly
 - Baptism by John (3:21), before his first confrontation with the Pharisees ((5:16), selection of the Apostles (6:12), before he questions the disciples about who they thought he was (9:18), Transfiguration (9:29), When he foretells Peter's denial he also informs him that he has prayed for him personally (22:32), Gethsemane (22:39-46), and on the Cross (23:46).
 - Prayer of the Pharisee VS. The Tax Collector (18:10-14).
 - Parables that teach about the life of prayer
 - Friend at Midnight (11:5:13).
 - Unjust Judge and persistent woman (18:1-8).
- Joy is essential in the Christian life
 - The Angel says to Zechariah that *'many will rejoice at his birth'* (1:14).

- Elizabeth declares that when she heard Mary's greeting, the child '*leapt with joy*' in her womb (1:44).
- The Angel announce to the shepherds '*news of great joy for all the people*' (2:10).
- The shepherd rejoices at finding the lost sheep (15:6).
- The woman rejoices when she finds the lost coin (15:9).
- Our Lord says that the angels in heaven will rejoice over the repentant sinner (15:10).
- In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father calls for a feast to celebrate and rejoice over the return of his lost son (15:11-32).
- When foretelling the persecutions sure to come for his disciples, our Lord says to '*rejoice in that day and leap for joy*' (6:23).
- The disciples rejoice when they return from being sent out on mission, and our Lord then also '*rejoiced in the Holy Spirit*' (10:27-21).
- Lastly, after our Lord ascended into glory, the apostles returned to Jerusalem '*with great joy*' (24:52-53).
- Importance of poverty and detachment
 - Beatitudes of Luke '*blessed are the poor*' (6:20-26), whereas in Matthew it is, '*blessed are the poor in spirit*' (5:3).
 - Parable of Rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31). Story of the rich fool (12:13-21).
- He repeatedly stresses the need for his disciples to abandon all things in imitation of him (e.g., 5:11, 28; 11:41; 12:13-33).