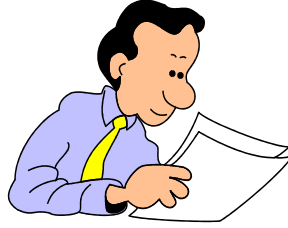


## AN INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE



### BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF LUKE

A. When we refer to the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) we do not mean four different gospels, but four accounts of the same gospel. The first three books of the New Testament are known as the Synoptic Gospels (refer to the *Introduction to the Gospels*, p 3 in your notebook). This Gospel is oriented to the Greek mind and is designed to show that Christ is the Savior of all men. The literary quality is quite high and it has been called the “most beautiful book ever written.”

1. Luke’s gospel is the closest thing we have to an “authorized biography” of Jesus. Luke produced a carefully written, meticulously researched record of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection that is filled with details and human-interest stories.
2. Luke takes us closer to Jesus the man than any of the other gospel writers. Jesus’ humanity is the focus of Luke’s gospel. Luke presents Jesus as a man moved to compassion by human suffering and a man who enjoyed being around children.
3. Jesus was not God pretending to be human. He was deity, who took on Himself human form, Phil 2:5-11.
4. Jesus was a real human being, who came from heaven’s glory to a stable and then to the dusty roads of Palestine—and finally to a bloody cross. Jesus lived in the real world with all its pain, sorrow, and disappointment. He knows from personal experience what human existence is all about.

B. Nowhere in either Luke or Acts does the author identify himself explicitly.

1. The tradition of the early church attributes them to Luke, the beloved physician and companion of Paul. The strongest internal evidence for Luke’s authorship of the material is the “we sections” of Acts. Cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16. By the process of elimination, Luke is the only reasonable candidate for authorship.
2. Luke was a Gentile and thus the only non-Jewish writer of any New Testament literature. He was a “fellow laborer” of the apostle Paul, Philem 24; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11. These three references are our only direct knowledge of Luke in the New Testament.
3. A bit more of Luke’s life and personality can be pieced together with the air of his writings (Luke and Acts) and some outside sources. Tradition records that he came from Antioch in Syria. This is possible, because Antioch played a significant role in the early Gentile mission, which

Luke described in Acts, 11; 13; 14; 15; 18. Luke was a Gentile as we read in Col 4:10-17.

4. Luke's gospel reveals his concern for the poor, sick, and outcast, thus offering a clue to why Paul called him "the beloved physician" Col 4:14. He was faithful not only to Paul, but to the greater cause which he served—the publication of "good tidings of great joy" Lk 2:10.

C. Luke addressed his gospel to Theophilus (thee-**off**-ill-us). His name means "Lover of God" or "Loved by God." It is a Greek name.

1. There are various opinions as to the identity of Theophilus.
2. There is a question whether Theophilus was the name of an individual or whether it was the name used to designate all "Lovers of God," friends of God.
3. The title "most excellent" implies that Theophilus was a dignitary in the Roman Government or among the leading citizens of a city. Felix and Festus were addressed as "Most excellent." Acts 24:3; 26:25

D. The book was written before the book of Acts (see Acts 1:1).

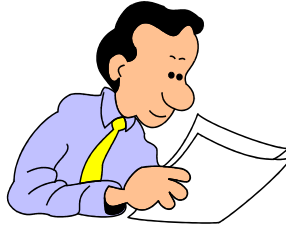
1. As Acts closes with Paul having been a prisoner in Rome for two full years (Acts 28-30), this being 63 or 64 A.D., we have some evidence as to the date of Luke's writing.
2. The date is uncertain but was probably written in Caesarea, while Paul was a prisoner there, 60 or 61 A.D.

E. The purpose of the book is clearly stated:

Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (NIV)

1. Just as Luke wanted Theophilus to know the certainty of the things he had been taught, so we may know also the certainty of what we have believed.
2. Notice that Luke says, "I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning." Luke was a trained scientist, a doctor. He was a man acquainted with research. He knew the importance and value of accuracy and correct procedures of mind. He knew the cruciality of one's being able to prove his case. Add to this, the miraculous inspiration by which he wrote, and we have a tremendously important irrefutable Christian Apologetic.
3. Dr. A. T. Robertson (Word Pictures, Luke, page xiii) speaks of:
  - a) This scientific physician
  - b) This man of the schools

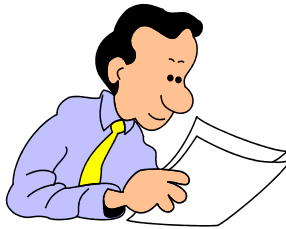
- c) This converted Gentile
- d) This devoted friend of Paul
- e) A trained intellect
- f) An historian's method of research
- g) A physician's care in diagnosis and discrimination
- h) With a charm and style all his own
- i) With reverence for and loyalty to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.



### **SOME DISTINCTIONS OF THE BOOK**

- A. Luke gives the most detailed account of the birth and childhood of Jesus. Chapter 2
- B. He gives a special place to women.
  - 1. More is recorded about Elizabeth and Mary than the other Synoptic Gospels. 1:5-79
  - 2. It is from Luke that we learn about Anna, the widow of Nain and of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee.
- C. He is the only writer who gives us a record of Jesus' first Passover. 2:41-50.
- D. Some other records given only by Luke:
  - 1. The parable of the lost sheep 15:3-7
  - 2. The parable of the lost coin 15:8-10
  - 3. The parable of the prodigal son 15:11-24
  - 4. The parable of the elder brother 15:25-32
  - 5. The rich man and Lazarus 16:19-31
  - 6. The Pharisee and the publican 18:9-14
  - 7. The raising from the dead the son of the widow of Nain 7:11-15
- E. Only Luke tells of Mary's visit from the angel Gabriel (1:26-38), Mary's journey to see her relative Elizabeth (1:39-56), Jesus' birth in a stable, and the shepherds' visit (2:1-20).
- F. Only Luke gives us the details of Jesus' circumcision and presentation to God in the temple (2:21-28). Jesus' visit to the temple at age twelve is recorded in no other gospel (2:41-52).

- G. Only Luke records Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (19:41) and an angel coming to strengthen Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:43).
- H. Luke pictures Jesus in prayer more than any other gospel writer. At every major crisis, Jesus prayed.
- I. Luke alone tells the story of Jesus' appearance after His resurrection to two of His followers who were traveling to the town of Emmaus (24:13-35).



### KEY CHARACTERS

**JESUS:** the Savior of the world, a man filled with compassion for hurting people.

**Luke:** a non-Jewish Christian and companion of the apostle Paul; the author of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

**Theophilus:** the original recipient of Luke's story of Jesus.

**Mary:** Jesus' mother; a virgin who conceived miraculously and gave birth to God the Son.



### LUKE'S MESSAGE

#### Good News About Salvation

The Message of Luke is that God has come to rescue man from his sin and situation.

#### Good News About a Kingdom

The central section (9:51 – 19:44) has much to say about the kingdom of God that was central to Jesus' preaching. 4:43; 8:1.

## Good News Seen In Jesus

The good news was not a myth or fairy story but was well supported by events that took place in the life of Jesus.



### KEY THEMES

- A. Prayer – Luke often speaks about the prayer life of Jesus. 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18 – 22, 29; 10:17 – 21; 11:1; 22:39 – 46; 23:34, 46. He also records parables Jesus told about prayer: 11:5 – 13; 18:1-8. What can you learn about when to pray, how to pray and what to pray from these verses?
- B. The Holy Spirit – The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus is emphasized by Luke. 1:35; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21, 22; 24:49.
- C. Praise and Joy – Luke’s Gospel opens with a number of songs of praise: 1:46-55, 68 – 79; 2:14; and 2:29-32.
- D. Forgiveness – The good news is basically about the forgiveness of sins. Be careful to note all that Jesus says about it: 5:17 – 25; 6:37; 7:36 – 50; 11:4; 17:3 – 4; 23:34; 24:47.
- E. Money – Luke speaks more about money than any of the other Gospels and has a special place for the poor. 1:53; 4:18; 6:20; 12:13-34; 15:8-10; 16:1-15, 19 – 31; 18:1 – 14; 19:1 – 27; 20:19-26.



### APPLICATION

## **To Those Who Do Not Believe In Jesus**

### **To put your faith in Jesus:**

Is to build on the witness of history  
Is to know the forgiveness of God  
Is to be able to start life again  
Is to be involved in the kingdom of God  
Does not demand prior goodness or respectability  
Does demand humility and a willingness to give up everything wrong for Jesus  
Pays great rewards in the future

## **To Those Who Do Believe In Jesus**

### **Your faith in Jesus means you should:**

Be joyful and thankful in life  
Imitate Jesus' love for all men  
Get involved in spreading the good news of the kingdom  
Put self to death every day  
Pray as Jesus taught  
Make God's kingdom your clear priority  
Trust that God is in control of the world



## **GENERAL OUTLINE OF LUKE**

### **A. Introduction 1:1-4**

### **B. The early days of the Savior 1:5 – 4:13**

1. The birth of John foretold 1:5-25
2. The birth of Jesus foretold 1:26-38
3. Mary's visit to Elizabeth 1:39-56
4. The birth of John 1:57-80
5. The birth of Jesus 2:1-38
6. The childhood of Jesus 2:39-52
7. The preaching of John 3:1-22
8. The family tree of Jesus 3:23-38
9. The temptation of Jesus 4:1-13

### **C. The Savior in Galilee 4:14-9:50**

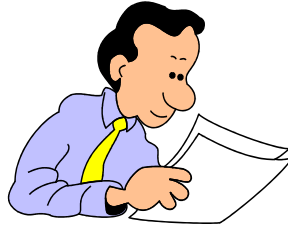
1. Jesus launches His ministry 4:14-30
2. Jesus heals in Capernaum 4:31-44
3. Jesus works miracles 5:1-26
4. The calling and party of Levi 5:27-39
5. Arguments about the Sabbath 6:1-11
6. Jesus chooses His disciples 6:12-16
7. Jesus preaches to a crowd 6:17-49
8. Miracles of healing and resurrection 7:1-17
9. The questions of John answered 7:18-35
10. A prostitute worships Jesus 7:36-50
11. Teaching about the word of God 8:1-21
12. Three more miracles 8:22-56
13. The disciples are sent on mission 9:1-6
14. Herod's reaction to Jesus 9:7-9
15. The feeding of the five thousand 9:10-17
16. Jesus asks the crucial question 9:18-27
17. The transfiguration of Jesus 9:28-36
18. Jesus talks with His disciples 9:37-50

### **D. The Savior Goes to Jerusalem 9:51-19:44**

1. The cost of following Jesus 9:51-62
2. The mission of the Seventy 10:1-24
3. The parable of the Good Samaritan 10:25-37
4. Martha and Mary 10:38-42
5. Teaching on prayer 11:1-13
6. Teaching on spirits and signs 11:14-36
7. Confronting the Pharisees and lawyers 11:37-54
8. Teaching a great crowd 12:1-59
9. Unless you repent 13:1-9
10. A crippled woman is healed 13:10-17
11. The kingdom of God is like... 13:18-30
12. Jerusalem and the prophets 13:31-35
13. Dinner with a Pharisee 14:1-24
14. The cost of being a disciple 14:25-35
15. Three stories about the lost 15:1-32
16. Teaching about money 16:1-31
17. Teaching about service 17:1-10
18. The healing of ten lepers 17:11-19
19. The coming of the kingdom of God 17:20-37
20. Teaching about justice and humility 18:1-17
21. Jesus meets a rich young ruler 18:18-34
22. A beggar gets back his sight 18:35-43
23. Jesus meets Zacchaeus 19:1-10
24. The parable of the pounds 19:11-27
25. The entry to Jerusalem 19:28-44

## **F. The Savior In Jerusalem**

1. Jesus teaches in the temple 19:45-21:4
2. Jesus speaks about the future 21:5-38
3. The Last Supper 22:1-38
4. The scene in the Garden 22:39-53
5. The denial of Peter 22:54-62
6. The trials of Jesus 22:63-23:25
7. The crucifixion and burial 23:26-56
8. The resurrection 24:1-49
10. The ascension 24:50-53



### **WALKING THE WALK**

- A. Who is a Theophilus in your life – someone you can help bring either to faith in Jesus or to maturity as a Christian?
- B. Luke records four “songs” sung or spoken in praise of Jesus’ coming to earth. Mary’s song (1:46-55), Zechariah’s song (1:68-79), the angels’ song (2:14), Simeon’s song (2:29-32). Take time to read them and describe what you would have expected of Jesus if you had heard each one when it was first sung.
- C. Jesus was moved with compassion to do what He could to help those in need that were around Him. What can you do today to be involved personally in helping someone?
- D. How does the resurrection of Christ change your perspective on who Jesus was? How has He affected your life?