



Introduction to Luke

The Author's Background

Luke's Gospel should be seen as part one of a two-part work, with Acts of the Apostles being the second part (Acts 1:1). Luke was a Gentile Christian who was an associate of the Apostle Paul and identified himself with Paul's ministry circle at various points in Acts (16:10-17, 20:5-16, 21:1-18, 27:-28:16). Luke is often described as a physician based on Col. 4:14, but one should be careful about equating that with today's kind of medical doctor; in the ancient world "physics" was more akin to natural philosophy that would include the life sciences but was broader than that. Luke was highly educated and has the most polished Greek of any New Testament writer. Luke probably wrote his Gospel in the early 60s AD, since Acts ends with Paul's imprisonment in Rome before the Neronian persecution in AD 64 and subsequent Paul's execution. Luke was with Paul until late in Paul's life, possibly to the end (cf. 2 Tim. 4:11).

The Covenantal Significance of Luke

Luke was Gentile Christian writing for Gentiles to catechize them into the faith, as indicated in his inscription to Theophilus in 1:4. As such, Luke draws out the fact that salvation is available to the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. In fact, Luke demonstrates a distinct concern throughout the Gospel for the outcasts of society – the unclean, women, Gentiles, the poor, etc. Luke provides much information about Jesus that is unique among the Gospels and shows more distinctly than the other Gospels that Jesus is the culmination of salvation history. Jesus's comments on the road to Emmaus, which only Luke records, highlights that all Scripture, Old and New Testaments, point to Jesus. Luke also evidences a particular theological concern for the Holy Spirit and that this continues in Acts as well – Jesus' ministry is not confined to Luke but continues on in Acts through the church and the Holy Spirit.

Outline of Luke

I. Preface (1:1-4)

II. The Coming of Jesus the Lord (1:5-2:52)

- A. Annunciations to Zacharias, Mary, and Elizabeth (1:5-56)
- B. The Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-80)
- C. The Birth and Childhood of Jesus (ch.2)

III. The Preparation of Jesus for His Public Ministry (3:1-4:13)

- A. His Forerunner, Baptism and Genealogy (ch 3)
- B. His Temptation (4:1-13)

IV. Jesus' First Tour in Galilee (4:14-7:50)

- A. Jesus's Authority Established (4:14-44)
- B. Jesus's Commanding Presence (ch. 5)
- C. Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath (6:1-11)
- D. Jesus as Leader and Teacher of His Disciples (6:12-16)
- E. Jesus as One Who Associates with the Unclean (7:1-17)
- F. Jesus the Expected One Who Forgives Sins (7:18-50)

V. Jesus' Subsequent Tours of Galilee (8:1-9:62)

- A. Jesus's Entourage and Support from Women (8:1-3)
- B. Parables About the Word of God (8:4-18)
- C. Jesus's Compassion on the Unclean (8:26-56)
- D. Jesus and the Twelve (9:1-62)

VI. Jesus' Ministry in Judea and Perea (10:1-19:27)

- A. The Mission of the 72 to Prepare the Way for the Lord (10:1-24)
- B. Foreshadowing the Heart of the Judeans (10:25-42)
- C. The Beginning of Opposition by the Religious Authorities (11:14-54)
- D. Exhortations to be Ready for the Coming Crisis (12:1-13:9)
- E. Mercy, Kingdom, and Judgment (13:10-14:35)
- F. God's Heart for Finding the Lost of His Kingdom (15:1-32)
- G. Traits of Discipleship (16:1-17:19)
- H. The Coming of the Son of Man and the Kingdom of God (17:20-37)
- I. Final Teachings on Discipleship (18:1-30)
- J. From Jericho to Jerusalem (18:31-19:27)

VII. The Passion of the King (19:28-24:53)

- A. The triumphal entry (19:28-44)
- B. The hardening of Jewish opposition (19:45-21:4)
- C. The Temple's destruction and the Last Things [Olivet Discourse] (21:5-38)
- D. The Last Supper (22:1-38)
- E. Jesus praying in Gethsemane (22:39-46)
- F. Jesus' betrayal and arrest (22:47-65)
- G. Jesus on trial (22:66-23:25)
- H. The Death of the King (23:26-56)
- I. The Resurrection (24:1-12)
- J. Post-resurrection appearances (24:13-49)
- K. The Ascension (24:50-53)