



THE BOOK OF  
**LUKE**

BOOK SUMMARY

# Introduction

## The Book of Luke

If one doesn't study the Bible within its proper historical and literary context, they run the risk of putting thoughts in, versus taking the teachings of Scripture out. That's why it's imperative to not only know God's Word, but to also take time to study the details of when and how each individual book or letter was created.

The Bible Background Series hosted on Sermonary.co is designed to help pastors and Bible teachers do just that. Each packet in this series contains important background information on a specific biblical book—such as authorship, date, setting, and book outlines—gleamed from sources that are both rich and tested. With this document, you'll be well on your way to understanding important details of the Bible that could easily go unnoticed.

As a result, we believe this packet will give you tools you need to dive deep into scripture, better organize your messages, and communicate God's Word in a way that's responsible, informed, and relevant. We are thrilled that we can put this product into your hands. We pray it will assist you and your ministry!

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## Book Summary of

# Luke

2017 Edition

## Introduction

### **WRITER**

Several factors indicate that the writer of this Gospel was the same person who wrote the Book of Acts. First, a man named "Theophilus" was the recipient of both books (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Second, Acts refers to a previous work by the same writer. Third, both books have several common themes, some of which do not receive the same emphasis elsewhere in the New Testament. Fourth, there are general structural and stylistic similarities, including the use of chiasms and the tendency to focus on specific individuals.

The writer also acquired his knowledge of Jesus' life and ministry from research rather than from eyewitness observations (Luke 1:1-4). Therefore he was not one of the disciples who traveled with Jesus.

The early church identified the writer as Luke (probably shortened from "Lukios" or "Lukanos"<sup>1</sup>). The heretic Marcion is the earliest witness we have to Luke's authorship (ca. A.D. 135). The Muratorian Canon (ca. A.D. 180) mentioned Luke as the writer too. It described him as the physician who accompanied Paul on his journey (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1—28:16; Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11). Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 180-185) also believed Luke wrote this Gospel and called him the "inseparable" companion of Paul.<sup>2</sup> Later church fathers likewise referred to Luke as the writer of this Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 2:ix.

<sup>2</sup>*Against Heresies*, 3:14:1.

Luke was evidently a Gentile (cf. Col. 4:10-14). However, some scholars believed that Colossians 4:11 and 14 do not necessarily mean that Luke was a Gentile, and that he may have been a Hellenistic Jew.<sup>1</sup> Church tradition identified Antioch of Syria as Luke's hometown, but this has not been validated. Philippi also has some traditional support.<sup>2</sup>

## **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**

The main doctrines of systematic theology that Luke stressed were God, Jesus, salvation (especially redemption), the Holy Spirit, angels, and things to come.

"Luke is the only synoptic evangelist to use the noun 'salvation' (*soteria* four times [1:69, 71, 77, 19:9]; *soterion* twice [2:30; 3:6]) and 'savior' (*soter* [1:47; 2:11]), and he used the verb 'save' (*sodzo*) more than any other book in the New Testament (although this is mainly because of Luke's greater length)."<sup>3</sup>

"In the gospel of Luke the phrase *praising God* occurs oftener than in all the rest of the New Testament put together."<sup>4</sup>

There is also much emphasis on the glory of God, prayer, miracles, the divine plan that Jesus fulfilled, Israel, believing, discipleship, forgiveness, and God's Word. About 20 of Jesus' parables are unique to this Gospel. Luke also related certain events in Jesus' life to secular history, and he emphasized Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

Luke stressed Jesus' concern for all people, especially for individuals that Jewish society of His day despised, such as Gentiles, the poor, women,

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., R. P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty*, p. 146; and John Wenham, "The Identification of Luke," *Evangelical Quarterly* 63:1 (1991):16.

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, 2:x. Cf. John Nolland, *Luke 1—9:20*, p. xxxix.

<sup>3</sup>Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 220.

<sup>4</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. xvi.

<sup>5</sup>For an excellent summary of Luke's theology, see Darrell L. Bock, "A Theology of Luke-Acts," in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 87-166.

children, and "sinners." He wrote "the gospel of the underdog."<sup>1</sup> Luke used the Greek term *nomikos*, which means "lawyer," rather than the Hebrew term *grammateus*, meaning "scribe." He emphasized Jesus' practical teachings, such as what He taught about money (cf. chs. 12 and 16).

"In terms of its worldview, its theology, and its practical presentation of principles, this Gospel explains how we can serve God better."<sup>2</sup>

Luke used more medical terms than we find in the writings of Hippocrates, the father of medicine.<sup>3</sup> Luke showed interest in purpose, fulfillment, and accomplishment. He documented the joy that resulted from Jesus' saving and healing works. He stressed Jesus' call for people to become His disciples. He portrayed Jesus as dependent on the Holy Spirit and on the Father through prayer. Finally, Luke recorded many examples of Jesus' power.<sup>4</sup> Muslims respect the Gospels, and probably more Muslims have been brought to faith in Christ through Luke's Gospel than any other, because of its emphases.

"Luke's Gospel gives a reader a more comprehensive grasp of the history of the period than the other Gospels. He presented more facts about the earthly life of Jesus than did Matthew, Mark, or John."<sup>5</sup>

Luke is the longest book in the New Testament (1,121 verses), Matthew is second (1,071 verses), and Acts is third (1,007 verses). (John has 879 verses, and Mark has 678 verses.) Luke and Acts combined comprise about 27 percent of the Greek New Testament. Furthermore, Luke wrote more verses in the New Testament than anyone else: 2,128 in Luke and Acts. Paul wrote

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<sup>1</sup>Barclay, p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, 4:238.

<sup>4</sup>For other characteristic features of Luke's Gospel, see W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, pp. 366-81.

<sup>5</sup>John A. Martin, "Luke," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, p. 201.

the second largest number of verses (2,032), then John (1,416), then Matthew (1,071), then Mark (678), and finally the lesser contributors.<sup>1</sup>

"The presentation of the facts is fuller in some respects, but is less topical than Matthew's and is more flowing than Mark's."<sup>2</sup>

"The gospel according to St. Luke has been called the loveliest book in the world. . . . It would not be far wrong to say that the third gospel is the best life of Christ ever written."<sup>3</sup>

## **PURPOSES**

The Gospel of Luke is one of the books of the Bible that states the purpose of the writer. Luke said that he wrote to inform Theophilus about the truthfulness of the gospel that Theophilus had heard (1:4).

In Acts, Luke said he had written previously about the things that Jesus began to do and teach before His ascension (Acts 1:1-2). He then proceeded to record the things Jesus continued to do and teach after His ascension—through His apostles—in Acts. Presumably Luke wrote both his Gospel and Acts with a larger audience than just Theophilus in view.

The distinctive emphases of the Gospel help us to identify secondary purposes. Luke demonstrated a strong desire to convince his readers of the reliability of the facts that he recorded, so they would believe in Jesus and become Christians, as well as the significance of what God had done in Christ.<sup>4</sup> These concerns are also clear in Acts.<sup>5</sup> Obviously he wrote to preserve the record of events that happened during Jesus' earthly ministry, but few ancient writers wrote simply to narrate a chronicle of events.<sup>6</sup> They

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<sup>1</sup>See Bock, *Luke*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Tenney, p. 1028.

<sup>3</sup>Barclay, p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup>Carson and Moo, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>See I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*.

<sup>6</sup>Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," in *Matthew-Luke*, vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 800.

wrote to convince their readers of something, and they used history to do that. Nevertheless, historical accuracy was important to them.<sup>1</sup>

We believe that Luke's Gospel is an accurate continuation of biblical history that God preserved in Scripture. This Gospel constitutes an apologetic for Christianity that would have been of special interest to Greeks because of Luke's selection of material, vocabulary, and style.<sup>2</sup> It would give them a reason for the hope that was in them (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

"Luke's purpose was apparently not to provide an historical foundation for the Christian message. . . . He has 'ordered' the events of his narrative so as to bring out their significance, to persuade Theophilus—who is not so much concerned with the issue, Did it happen? as with the queries, What happened? and What does it all mean? By providing a more complete accounting of Jesus in his significance, Luke hopes to encourage active faith."<sup>3</sup>

## **ORIGINAL AUDIENCE**

Evidently Theophilus was a real person.<sup>4</sup> His name is Greek and means "lover of God." He appears to have been a fairly recent convert to Christianity from Greek paganism. Consequently, it appears that Luke wrote for people such as Theophilus originally. Before his conversion, Theophilus may have been one of the Gentile God-fearers to which Luke referred several times in Acts. The "God-fearers" were Gentiles who had a certain respect for, and who wanted to learn more about, the God of the Jews. They came to the Jewish synagogues and listened to the Jewish Scriptures read there. Luke's

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<sup>1</sup>See A. W. Mosley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965-66):10-26.

<sup>2</sup>See William J. Larkin Jr., "The Recovery of Luke-Acts as 'Grand Narrative' for the Church's Evangelistic and Edification Tasks in a Postmodern Age," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43:3 (September 2000):405-15, for suggestions for using Luke-Acts in a postmodern age.

<sup>3</sup>Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>See my comment on 1:3.

orientation of his Gospel to the secular world and his references to Judaism also suggest that he wrote his Gospel with these people in mind.

"Much about Luke-Acts would well suit Cornelius-like readers."<sup>1</sup>

His use of the Septuagint version and his interest in the God-fearers suggest this too. The God-fearers had turned from Greek polytheism to Jewish monotheism, but many of them were not familiar with Palestinian geography and culture. Luke clarified these matters for his readers when necessary. The God-fearers were the Gentiles whom Paul found to be the most receptive soil for the gospel seed. Luke himself may have been one of this group, though there is no way to prove or to disprove that possibility.

"[Luke] writes to reassure the Christians of his day that their faith in Jesus is no aberration, but the authentic goal towards which God's ancient dealings with Israel were driving."<sup>2</sup>

By the first century, most of the pagan Greeks had stopped believing in the gods and goddesses of their mythology, and had abandoned fatalism. Many of them were following Eastern "mystery" religions that competed with Christianity for their allegiance. Both beliefs offered saviors, but the Savior of Christianity was a personal resurrected Lord, whereas the savior of the mystery religions was impersonal and ideal. Luke evidently wrote to persuade these people to believe in Jesus and to give them a solid factual basis for their faith.

"That he wrote for an urban church community in the Hellenistic world is fairly certain."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nolland, p. 10. Cf. pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 33.



## **LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS**

Experts in Greek literary styles acknowledge Luke's style and structure as superb.<sup>1</sup> No one knows Luke's educational background, but clearly he had training in Greek composition as well as medicine, and a talent for writing. Luke used many words that the other Gospel writers did not, and many of them show a wide literary background. He also used several medical and theological terms that are unique. Luke's use of Semitisms shows that he knew the Hebrew Old Testament well. However, his preference for the Septuagint suggests that it was the version his reader(s) used most. Perhaps Luke was a Gentile who had much exposure to Semitic idioms from Paul and other Jews. He was a skillful enough writer to use *chiasms* as a major structural device.<sup>2</sup> A "chiasm" was a literary device, used by both Jews and Greeks, that gave unity to a composition or section of text. Acts also contains them.

Luke also repeated *similar stories with variations* (cf. 1:80; 2:40; 2:52). This literary device aids learning while giving additional new insights. He also tended to use a *particular term* frequently in one or more passages, and then rarely or never after that. This makes the term stand out and calls attention to it where it occurs.<sup>3</sup>

Luke identified the genre of his work as a narrative (orderly "account"; 1:1). It is a historical narrative in that it relates events that happened in the past in story form.<sup>4</sup>

## **DATE**

Practically all scholars believe that Luke wrote his Gospel before he wrote Acts. Many conservative scholars hold that he wrote Acts during Paul's first Roman imprisonment, during which the book's timeline ends (A.D. 60-62), or shortly thereafter. Luke accompanied Paul during much of that apostle's

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<sup>1</sup>See Henry J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*.

<sup>2</sup>See Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*.

<sup>3</sup>See Henry J. Cadbury, "Four Features of Lucan Style," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 87-102.

<sup>4</sup>See Green, pp. 2-6.

missionary ministry. At times Luke was not with Paul, but he was ministering as Paul's representative in one or another of the churches that Paul had founded, including the one in Philippi. Evidently Paul was Luke's primary source of information for his Gospel and Acts, as Peter was Mark's primary source for the second Gospel.

Luke may have written his Gospel during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, along with Acts. However, it seems more likely, in view of how Luke introduced these two books, that he wrote the Gospel sometime earlier than Acts. Luke had the most time to write this Gospel during Paul's Caesarean imprisonment (A.D. 57-59, cf. Acts 24:1—26:32). This seems to me and some other writers to be a possible date of writing.<sup>1</sup>

## **OUTLINE**

- I. Introduction 1:1-4
- II. The birth and childhood of Jesus 1:5—2:52
  - A. The announcement of John the Baptist's birth 1:5-25
    1. The introduction of John's parents 1:5-7
    2. The angel's announcement to Zechariah 1:8-23
    3. The pregnancy of Elizabeth 1:24-25
  - B. The announcement of Jesus' birth 1:26-56
    1. The introduction of Mary and Joseph 1:26-27
    2. The angel's announcement to Mary 1:28-38
    3. Mary's visit to Elizabeth 1:39-56
  - C. The birth and early life of John the Baptist 1:57-80
    1. The naming of John 1:57-66
    2. Zechariah's song of praise 1:67-79

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<sup>1</sup>E.g., J. S. Howson, in *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 612; Robertson, 2:xi; Merrill C. Tenney, "The Gospel According to Luke," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1028; Mark L. Bailey, in *The New Testament Explorer*, p. 102. For additional introductory information, see Earle E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*; and Carson and Moo, pp. 198-224.

3. The preparation of John 1:80
- D. The birth and early life of Jesus ch. 2
  1. The setting of Jesus' birth 2:1-7
  2. The announcement to the shepherds 2:8-20
  3. Jesus' circumcision 2:21
  4. Jesus' presentation in the temple 2:22-38
  5. Jesus' development in Nazareth 2:39-40
  6. Jesus' visit to the temple as a boy 2:41-50
  7. Jesus' continuing growth 2:51-52
- III. The preparation for Jesus' ministry 3:1—4:13
  - A. The ministry of John the Baptist 3:1-20
    1. The beginning of John's ministry 3:1-6
    2. John's preaching 3:7-18
    3. The end of John's ministry 3:19-20
  - B. The baptism of Jesus 3:21-22
  - C. The genealogy of Jesus 3:23-38
  - D. The temptation of Jesus 4:1-13
- IV. Jesus' ministry in and around Galilee 4:14—9:50
  - A. Jesus' teaching ministry and the response to it 4:14—5:11
    1. An introduction to Jesus' Galilean ministry 4:14-15
    2. Jesus' teaching in Nazareth 4:16-30
    3. Jesus' ministry in and around Capernaum 4:31-44
    4. The call of Peter, James, and John 5:1-11
  - B. The beginning of controversy with the Pharisees 5:12—6:11
    1. Jesus' cleansing of a leprous Jew 5:12-16
    2. Jesus' authority to forgive sins 5:17-26
    3. Jesus' attitude toward sinners 5:27-32
    4. Jesus' attitude toward fasting 5:33-39

5. Jesus' authority over the Sabbath 6:1-5
  6. Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath 6:6-11
- C. Jesus' teaching of His disciples 6:12-49
1. The selection of 12 disciples 6:12-16
  2. The assembling of the people 6:17-19
  3. The Sermon on the Mount 6:20-49
- D. Jesus' compassion for people ch. 7
1. The healing of a centurion's servant 7:1-10
  2. The raising of a widow's son 7:11-17
  3. The confusion about Jesus' identity 7:18-35
  4. The anointing by a sinful woman 7:36-50
- E. Jesus' teaching in parables 8:1-21
1. The companions and supporters of Jesus 8:1-3
  2. The parable of the soils 8:4-15
  3. The parable of the lamp 8:16-18
  4. The true family of Jesus 8:19-21
- F. Jesus' mighty works 8:22-56
1. The stilling of the storm 8:22-25
  2. The deliverance of a demoniac in Gadara 8:26-39
  3. The healing of a woman with a hemorrhage and the raising of Jairus' daughter 8:40-56
- G. Jesus' preparation of the Twelve 9:1-50
1. The mission of the Twelve to Israel 9:1-6
  2. Herod's question about Jesus' identity 9:7-9
  3. The feeding of the 5000 9:10-17
  4. Peter's confession of faith 9:18-27
  5. The Transfiguration 9:28-36
  6. The exorcism of an epileptic boy 9:37-43a
  7. Jesus' announcement of His betrayal 9:43b-45

8. The pride of the disciples 9:46-50
- V. Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem 9:51—19:27
- A. The responsibilities and rewards of discipleship 9:51—10:24
    1. The importance of toleration 9:51-56
    2. The importance of self-denial 9:57-62
    3. The importance of participation 10:1-16
    4. The joy of participation 10:17-20
    5. The joy of comprehension 10:21-24
  - B. The relationships of disciples 10:25—11:13
    1. The relation of disciples to their neighbors 10:25-37
    2. The relation of disciples to Jesus 10:38-42
    3. The relation of disciples to God the Father 11:1-13
  - C. The results of popular opposition 11:14-54
    1. The Beelzebul controversy 11:14-26
    2. The importance of observing God's Word 11:27-28
    3. The sign of Jonah 11:29-32
    4. The importance of responding to the light 11:33-36
    5. The climax of Pharisaic opposition 11:37-54
  - D. The instruction of the disciples in view of Jesus' rejection 12:1—13:17
    1. The importance of fearless confession 12:1-12
    2. The importance of the eternal perspective 12:13-21
    3. God's provisions for disciples 12:22-34
    4. The coming of the Son of Man 12:35-48
    5. The coming crisis 12:49-59
    6. A call to repentance 13:1-9
    7. A sign of Jesus' ability to effect change 13:10-17
  - E. Instruction about the kingdom 13:18—14:35

1. Parables of the kingdom 13:18-21
  2. Entrance into the kingdom 13:22-30
  3. Jesus' postponement of the kingdom 13:31-35
  4. Participants in the kingdom 14:1-24
  5. The cost of discipleship 14:25-35
- F. God's attitude toward sinners ch. 15
1. The setting for Jesus' teaching 15:1-2
  2. The parable of the lost sheep 15:3-7
  3. The parable of the lost coin 15:8-10
  4. The parable of the lost son 15:11-32
- G. Jesus' warnings about riches ch. 16
1. Discipleship as stewardship 16:1-13
  2. Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees for their greed 16:14-31
- H. Jesus' warning about disciples' actions and attitudes 17:1-19
1. The prevention of sin and the restoration of sinners 17:1-4
  2. The disciples' attitude toward their duty 17:5-10
  3. The importance of gratitude 17:11-19
- I. Jesus' teaching about His return 17:20—18:8
1. A short lesson for the Pharisees 17:20-21
  2. A longer explanation for the disciples 17:22-37
  3. The parable of the persistent widow 18:1-8
- J. The recipients of salvation 18:9—19:27
1. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector 18:9-14
  2. An illustration of humility 18:15-17
  3. The handicap of wealth 18:18-30
  4. Jesus' passion announcement and the disciples' lack of perception 18:31-34
  5. The healing of a blind man near Jericho 18:35-43

6. Zaccheus' ideal response to Jesus 19:1-10
7. The parable of the minas 19:11-27

VI. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 19:28—21:38

- A. The Triumphal Entry 19:28-40
- B. The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 19:41-48
  1. Jesus' sorrow over Jerusalem 19:41-44
  2. Jesus' cleansing of the temple 19:45-46
  3. A synopsis of Jesus' teaching in the temple 19:47-48
- C. Jesus' teachings in the temple 20:1—21:4
  1. The controversy over authority 20:1-8
  2. The parable of the wicked tenant farmers 20:9-19
  3. The question of tribute to Caesar 20:20-26
  4. The problem of the resurrection 20:27-40
  5. Jesus' question about David's son 20:41-44
  6. Jesus' condemnation of the scribes 20:45-47
  7. Jesus' commendation of a widow 21:1-4
- D. Jesus' teaching about the destruction of the temple 21:5-36
  1. The setting and the warning about being misled 21:5-9
  2. The need for faithful perseverance 21:10-19
  3. The judgment coming on Jerusalem 21:20-24
  4. The second coming of the Son of Man 21:25-28
  5. The certainty of these events 21:29-33
  6. The concluding exhortation to watchfulness 21:34-36
- E. A summary of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 21:37-38

VII. Jesus' passion, resurrection, and ascension chs. 22—24

- A. The plot to arrest Jesus 22:1-6
  1. The leaders' desire 22:1-2
  2. Judas' offer 22:3-6

- B. The preparations for the Passover 22:7-13
- C. Events in the upper room 22:14-38
  - 1. The Passover meal 22:14-18
  - 2. The institution of the Lord's Supper 22:19-20
  - 3. Jesus' announcement of His betrayal 22:21-23
  - 4. Teaching about the disciples' service 22:24-30
  - 5. Jesus' announcement of Peter's denial 22:31-34
  - 6. The opposition to come 22:35-38
- D. The arrest of Jesus 22:39-53
  - 1. Jesus' preparation in Gethsemane 22:39-46
  - 2. Judas' betrayal 22:47-53
- E. The trials of Jesus 22:54—23:25
  - 1. Peter's denial of Jesus 22:54-62
  - 2. The mockery of the soldiers 22:63-65
  - 3. Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin 22:66-71
  - 4. Jesus' first appearance before Pilate 23:1-7
  - 5. Jesus' appearance before Herod 23:8-12
  - 6. Jesus' second appearance before Pilate 23:13-25
- F. The crucifixion of Jesus 23:26-49
  - 1. Events on the way to Golgotha 23:26-32
  - 2. Jesus' death 23:33-49
- G. The burial of Jesus 23:50-56
- H. The resurrection of Jesus 24:1-12
- I. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus 24:13-49
  - 1. The appearance to the disciples walking to Emmaus 24:13-35
  - 2. The appearances to the disciples in Jerusalem 24:36-49
- J. The ascension of Jesus 24:50-53



## **MESSAGE**

The first Gospel presented Jesus as the King. The second Gospel presented Him as the Servant. The third Gospel presents Him as the perfect Man. Matthew wrote to Jews about their King. Mark wrote to Romans about a Servant. Luke wrote to Greeks about the ideal Man. The title "Messiah" is most fitting for Jesus in Matthew. The title "Suffering Servant" is most appropriate in Mark. "Son of Man" is the title most characteristic of Luke's presentation of Jesus.

Luke stressed the saving work of Jesus in his Gospel. He presented Jesus as the Savior of humankind. He also proclaimed Jesus' work of providing salvation for humankind. Observe, first, the Savior that Luke presents, and then the salvation that the Savior came to provide.

Luke presented Jesus as the Savior in three different relationships. He presented Him as the firstborn of a new race. Second, he presented Him as the older brother in a new family. Third, he presented Him as the Redeemer of a lost humanity.

We will consider first Luke's concept of Jesus as the firstborn of a new race. Luke's genealogy (3:23-38) reveals how the writer wanted the reader to regard Jesus. Matthew traced Jesus' lineage back to David and Abraham, in his genealogy, to show His right to rule as Israel's Messiah. Luke traced Jesus' ancestry back to Adam. He did this to show Jesus' true humanity.

However, Luke went back even further than that to God. This indicates that Jesus was not just like other humans who descended from Adam. He was, as the Apostle Paul called Him, the "Last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). The first Adam that God placed on this earth failed and plunged his race into sin and death. The last Adam that God placed on the earth did not fail, but saved His race from sin and brought it new life. The first man begins the Old Testament, but the "Second Man," to use another Pauline title (1 Cor. 15:47), begins the New Testament. As Adam headed one race, so Jesus heads a new race. Both "Adams" were real men. Thus, both men *head* real races of mankind. Luke viewed Jesus as succeeding where Adam failed, as atoning for Adam's transgression.

For Jesus to undo the consequences of Adam's fall, He had to be more than just a good man. He had to be a perfect man, a sinless man. Therefore Luke stressed Jesus' sinlessness. He did this primarily in his account of Jesus' birth. Luke stressed the virgin conception of Jesus. The Holy Spirit, not a sinful human, fathered Jesus. God regards the male as responsible in the human family. Husbands are responsible for their wives (Eph. 5:23-24). Fathers are responsible for their children (Eph. 6:4). God held Adam, not Eve, responsible for his descendants (Gen. 3:17-19).

Human beings are sinners for three separate reasons. First, we are sinners because we commit acts of sin. Second, even if we never committed one act of sin, we would still be sinners because we inherited a sinful human nature. This nature apparently comes through our fathers (traducianism; cf. Heb. 7:9-10). Third, we are sinners because God has imputed the guilt of Adam's sin to us because he is the head of the race and we are his descendants. As an illustration of this three-fold influence, consider a child. He is what he is for three reasons: his personal actions, his parents, and his citizenship (the country in which he was born). These all make him what he is, not just his actions.

Jesus was not a sinner. He did not commit any acts of sin. Second, He did not inherit a sinful nature from His human father because God was His real Father. Third, God did not impute Adam's sin to Jesus because Jesus was the direct descendant of God and therefore the head of a new race. God gave the first Adam life by breathing the breath of life into the body that He had created. Likewise, God gave the second Adam life by implanting His divine life into a body that He had created, namely, Mary's body.

The doctrine of the virgin birth is extremely important because it establishes the sinlessness of Jesus in two of the three ways whereby people become sinners: an inherited sinful nature, and the imputation of Adam's sin. If a virgin did not conceive Jesus, then He was a sinner. If Jesus was a sinner, then He cannot be the Savior of sinners.

One way a person becomes a sinner is by committing acts of sin. Luke showed that Jesus did not commit sins in his account of Jesus' temptations (4:1-13).

In the wilderness, Satan subjected Jesus to the strongest temptations that humans face. Satan directed Jesus' three tests at the three areas of human personality that constitute the totality of human existence. These areas are doing (the lust of the flesh), having (the lust of the eyes), and being (the pride of life). These are the same three areas in which Satan attacked Eve (cf. Gen. 3:1-7).

The first man fell in a garden, a good environment conducive to withstanding temptation. The Second Man overcame temptation in a wilderness, a bad environment conducive to yielding to temptation. Rather than showing at every turn in Jesus' life that He did not sin, Luke showed that in the supreme test of His life Jesus did not sin. However, he continued to note Jesus' conflicts with Satan, demons, and sin throughout His life. Luke's record of these encounters also demonstrates Jesus' sinlessness.

At the Transfiguration (9:28-36), God declared His Son acceptable to Him. This meant that He was sinless.

Second, not only did Luke present Jesus as the head of a new race, but he also presented Jesus as the older brother in a new family. Since Jesus was the head of a new race, we might think that Luke would have presented Jesus as a father. Jesus was the first and, therefore, the source of all that follow in the race that He established. Nevertheless, Luke stressed Jesus' likeness with those in the new race. He is like an older brother to us who have new life through Him. This is not to deny His deity. In one sense, Jesus is completely different from us, since He is God. However, Luke stressed the sense in which He is like us, namely, in His humanity. He is one of us—fully human.

Luke presented Jesus as a man among men. He, of all the Gospel writers, wanted his readers to appreciate the fact that Jesus was a real person. There are many small indications of this throughout this Gospel that I have tried to point out in the exposition that follows. Luke did this because he was evidently writing to Greeks. Greeks had a background in polytheism and mythology. Because of their cultural background, they tended to think of gods as superhumans. These gods were not real people, but they had the characteristics of people expanded into superhuman proportions, faults and all. Luke wanted his readers to realize that Jesus was not that type of god. He was fully human, but He was also sinless. He had superhuman powers, but He was not the type of superman that the Greeks envisioned.

Jesus was a *fellow human being*, albeit sinless. This is very hard for us to imagine. Therefore, Luke put much in his Gospel that helps us understand Jesus, from His birth announcements, to His ascension into heaven. For example, Luke emphasized Jesus praying more than the other Gospel evangelists. As a man, Jesus was dependent on, and drew His strength from, the Father. We must not be too quick to ascribe Jesus' superior powers to His being God. He laid aside the use of these powers in the Incarnation, and usually operated as a Spirit-empowered man. Luke helps us appreciate this about Jesus. He stressed the Holy Spirit's enablement of Jesus. Luke alone recorded, "The Child continued to grow and to become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (2:40), and "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (2:52).

Third, Luke presented Jesus as the redeemer of a lost humanity, as well as the head of a new race, and the elder brother of believers. Since he was writing to Greeks, Luke did not identify many allusions to the Old Testament, or to Jewish life and history. These allusions are in the text, but Luke did not draw attention to them. One of the outstanding concepts in Israelite life that Luke did not identify as such, but which overshadows his portrait of Jesus, is the kinsman-redeemer. His presentation of Jesus fits the image of the Jewish kinsman-redeemer remarkably.

The kinsman-redeemer had to be the next of kin to the person he redeemed. Luke presented Jesus as qualifying as our redeemer in this respect. He was a man, as we are. Therefore He could provide redemption for His needy brothers.

The kinsman-redeemer also had to accept personal responsibility for those he purposed to save from their miserable estate. Luke presented Jesus as taking personal responsibility for lost sinners. He recorded Jesus saying that He *had* to go to the Cross. He viewed the salvation of mankind as something that He needed to accomplish, because He had made a personal commitment to do so. That commitment began in heaven, before the Incarnation, but continued on earth throughout Jesus' life.

The kinsman-redeemer had to overcome those who opposed his brethren. Luke presented Jesus as in conflict with Satan and his hosts. He showed Him interceding for the Father's help for His tempted brethren—Peter, for

example. Jesus won the victory over mankind's great enemy for His brethren.

The kinsman-redeemer had to create an opportunity for his brother's redemption. Luke presented Jesus as doing this. Luke's distinctive presentation of Jerusalem as Jesus' city of destiny contributes to this theme. Jesus deliberately advanced toward Jerusalem and the Cross, because He was creating an opportunity for mankind's redemption. (Similarly, Luke presented the Apostle Paul deliberately advancing toward Rome, his city of destiny, in the Book of Acts.)

The kinsman-redeemer turned his back on his personal rights and privileges in order to provide redemption for his brother. Luke presented Jesus doing this as well. Jesus modeled this strongly for His disciples, we see in this Gospel. He also taught the importance of disciples doing this so we can bring salvation to our brothers (and sisters).

These major themes are very strong in Luke's Gospel. Jesus is the head of an entirely new race of people: the redeemed. He is the elder brother who provides an example for His brethren to follow, including depending on the Father and relying on the Spirit. He is the Savior who has come "to seek and to save the lost" (19:10).

We have observed how Luke presents Jesus as the Savior. Now let us turn to what he revealed about salvation. The key verse in the Gospel is, I believe, 19:10: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost." We have been looking at "the Son of Man." Now let us look at "seeking and saving the lost." I would say that the key verse in Matthew is 27:37: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," and the key verse in Mark is 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." I would say the key verse in John is 20:31: "These [things] have been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

Luke reveals that the Son of Man has redeemed mankind. This Gospel is a record of God's redeeming work through Jesus Christ. Jesus' work on the Cross is the climax of this Gospel, as it is the climax of all the Gospels and history itself. Jesus was born to die. By His death, Jesus purchased mankind's freedom from sin at the cost of His own life. Jesus instituted the

Lord's Supper so His disciples would always keep the memory of the significance of His death freshly before them. The Christian mission is to tell the world about this redemption (24:46-47).

Through redemption, God regenerates those who are dead in sin. This is the second step in God's plan of seeking and saving the lost, after providing redemption. Believers receive new life when they believe on Jesus. Comprehending what this new life involves—learning how to live in view of its reality, and appreciating its great potential—are all things that Luke stressed in this Gospel. Jesus' disciples struggled with learning this, as all Christians do. Luke recorded many of Jesus' teachings that are helpful in understanding and appreciating regeneration.

Through regeneration, God brings believers into *relationship with Himself*. This is the third step in this great salvation process. Luke helps the reader understand the difference between "trusting for salvation" and "working for rewards." What is our relationship to Jesus as His followers? What are our privileges and our responsibilities? How does prayer enter into our relationship? Luke has more to say to disciples about our relationship to the Father and the Son than any other Gospel evangelist.

Then, through *relationship with Himself*, God prepares believers for life after death as members of a new race. Luke recorded much that is of great help for us as readers on this subject as well. What is the next phase of our life with God going to be like? How should we prepare for it? What is ahead in the future? Luke teaches us what it means to be a member of the new redeemed race of humanity.

In addition to the central teaching of this Gospel, let me also point out what I believe are the reasons for its abiding appeal. These are two: the personality of Jesus, and the presentation of discipleship.

The personality of Jesus, as Luke presents Him in this Gospel, is very appealing. Three things make Him so.

First, we feel that we can identify with the Jesus of Luke's Gospel. This is probably because Luke presented Him as a real man. It may be harder to identify with a King or with a Suffering Servant, to say nothing about God: John's emphasis. Even though He is perfect, He is someone with whom we

feel a natural kinship, because we share humanity together. Jesus faced what we face, yet He was pleasing to God. This is very encouraging.

Second, the Jesus of Luke's Gospel is attractive because He is different from us. Even though we are of the same kind, He holds a fascination for us, because He was the personification of ideal humanity. He was everything that God intended man to be. It is thrilling to view someone like that, since we all fall so far short of what we should be.

Third, this Jesus is attractive because He was so compassionate. One of the characteristic features of Luke's Gospel is the many references it contains featuring Jesus' concern for the needy—including women, the poor, the sick, and outcasts of society. We read of the social outcasts of Jesus' day flocking to Him and feeling at home in His presence. We see Him welcoming children, and we feel drawn to Him. We see Jesus' compassion in Matthew and in Mark, but Luke stresses Jesus' compassion more than they do.

Another reason for the appeal of this book is its presentation of discipleship. It contains some of the straightest talk and most challenging demands for followers of Jesus that the New Testament holds. We read Jesus telling us that unless we hate our family members, we cannot be His disciples (14:26). He taught that we have to deny ourselves (14:27). We have to renounce all that we have (14:33). Interestingly, these three conditions correspond to the three things that I mentioned earlier that Luke pointed out about Jesus. He did not call His disciples to do anything He had not done. Let me explain further.

Jesus calls Christians to view our connections with our old race differently, because we have become members of a new race. Jesus taught that our spiritual relations are really closer than our physical relations. Therefore, we should let these old relations go if they interfere with our participation in the calling of our new race. We should not break contact with unbelievers, of course, any more than Jesus did. But we should put our allegiance to Jesus and our spiritual brethren before our ties to our unbelieving brethren.

Jesus calls us to accept the same responsibility that He accepted, since we are now brothers. He denied Himself and took up His cross for us. Now we are brothers, so we need to do the same for Him. Brothers sacrifice for each other.

Jesus also calls us to give up everything for Him. Having received the benefits of redemption, because of the work of our Kinsman-Redeemer, who paid a great price for us, we need to pay a great price too. The price He calls us to pay is not to earn redemption. He has given that to us as a gift. It is to express our gratitude to Him for His grace, and to advance the mission that He has given us to fulfill. He had a mission from God, and He gave up everything to fulfill it. We, too, have a mission from God, and we need to give up everything to fulfill it.

Finally, this Gospel has a two-fold application: to the church and to the world.

To the church, Luke says: "Be witnesses!" "You are witnesses of these things" (24:48). We are to be so in view of the relationship that we now enjoy with the Son of Man. We should be witnesses for three reasons: we have experienced redemption, we enjoy His fellowship, and we have a future as members of a new race. We are also to be His witnesses in view of the lost condition of mankind. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Our fellowship with Jesus requires participation in His mission to seek and to save the lost. We can do this for three reasons: He has transformed our lives, He will open people's eyes with His Word, and He has empowered us with His Spirit (cf. ch. 24).

To the world Luke says: "You are lost, but the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost." A Redeemer has come. A Brother is available. A new life is possible. Behold *the* Man! He understands you. Yet He is different from you. And He will receive you.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from G. Campbell Morgan, *Living Message of the Books of the Bible*, 2:1:41-54.