

The Gospel of Luke

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Here are some things to look out for as you hear Luke proclaimed.

Who is the Author?

- Luke was a second generation Christian
- he was an educated man, probably a gentile who knew the Greek Old Testament.
- he was a bit of a poet and artist

Luke and Paul

- Luke was a companion of Paul, at least early on in Paul's missionary work.
- The author's name is Luke, the doctor whom Paul mentions as his companion and colleague [col.4:14]
- Tradition says he was from Antioch, on the Orontes, a gentile pagan converted to Christianity. He is also seen as the author of the Book of Acts.
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Luke: his relationship to Paul

- Luke was greatly influenced by Paul. While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Luke was his constant companion. From Paul, Luke gained a general attitude rather than detailed information. Paul may have contributed to Luke's strong position on the universality of salvation; Jesus' will to save; and Luke's cool attitude toward the Law.

Luke and Herod

- Luke, living in Antioch, where he probably was baptised, met Manaen, a companion of Herod Antipas, and, through him, may have come to know Joanna, the wife of Antipas' steward, Chuza. From these persons he could have learned about Jesus' dealings with Herod, which are only related in Luke's Gospel.

Luke and John

- In Asia Minor, he must have moved among the disciples of John and, from them, adopted some of the Johannine themes; such as the motifs of Jerusalem and the Temple; the importance of Jesus' glorification; exclusive facts about Jesus' ministry; the transfiguration scene; Jesus' hymn of praise "*No one knows the Father except the Son etc.*"; and his exhortation to trust completely in God.

Luke and Philip

- Luke also met the deacon Philip, the apostle of Samaria, from whom Luke probably heard the story of the Samaritans refusing to welcome Jesus and how only one leper of ten, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus although all of them were cleansed.

Luke and Mark

- Luke also depended on Mark's Gospel. He incorporated almost 60% of Mark's verses. Luke may have also been influenced by Matthew's Gospel but this dependence is more difficult to establish.
- Luke used his sources respectfully but never slavishly. He carefully inserts his own viewpoint, omitting some details and adding others, always being master of his narrative.

Date of Gospel

- The date of Luke's Gospel is often placed, during Paul's Roman arrest but prior to his execution, around 63AD. But it may have been after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. because Luke refers to it. However references to this catastrophe could easily be based on the Old Testament, as Luke's descriptive language is drawn for this source. It is widely proposed that Luke wrote after 70 A.D. but not beyond 85 A.D. Tradition gives southern Greece as the place of composition.

THE LITERARY STYLE

- Probably because of his pagan background, Luke shows a great favouritism for minorities, segregated groups and the underprivileged.
- also, the little ones, namely, Samaritans, lepers, publicans, soldiers, disgraced sinners, unlettered shepherds and the poor.
- Luke writes primarily for gentiles, choosing to use Greek rather than Semitic words and literary constructions.

THE LITERARY STYLE

- Also he seldom quotes from the Old Testament , apparently because his audience, namely, Gentiles, would not be familiar with it.
- Instead he speaks of Jesus' prophetic ministry which is fulfilled in the church's ministry to the Gentiles.
- Another characteristic is evident in the way Luke records earlier events or statements as anticipating future events culminating in Jesus' passion and glorification.

The Gospel of Mercy

- This is the only Gospel which includes events and/or parables about the sinful woman, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son; Jesus' in the home of Zacchaeus and forgiving his executioners on Calvary.

The Gospel of Universal Salvation

- Luke begins Jesus' genealogy, not with David, but with Adam, placing him within the family tree of the whole human race. The faith of Abraham can be shared with all humankind and "*all mankind shall see the salvation of God*".
- This is a gospel of universal salvation

Characteristics of Luke's Gospel

First, Jesus as Prophet

- Luke presents Jesus as the prophet foreshadowed by the Old Testament prophets. He brings to completion the entire prophetic tradition. Like the prophets of old, he is rejected and put to death in Jerusalem but he remains faithful to his teachings to the end.

Second characteristic: Time

- History and time are important for Luke. Luke situates the story of Jesus in the context of world history. He gives the dates of various rulers and in Acts (his second volume) traces the spread of the church begun by Jesus from Jerusalem to Rome. Luke makes every effort to show that Jesus was innocent of any political crime and that the Roman Empire had nothing to fear from him and early Christians

Time

- Luke's telling of the story aims to help Christians make their way through history in peace. The second coming of Christ is in the future, not now and Christians are in for the long haul of history.

Third Characteristic: Outsiders and salvation

- Jesus' words and deeds express God's special love for the outsiders and outcasts of society.
- In the infancy story there is Mary and Joseph, Zachariah and Elizabeth, the shepherds and Anna and Simeon
- In his public ministry there are the lepers, the sick, the handicapped.
- In his preaching he includes the poor, the rich the tax collectors, sinners, women

Third Characteristic: Outsiders and salvation

- He presents Samaritans in a positive ways and points to the gentiles as worthy of God's concern
- Even on the cross in his dying moments he reaches out to a criminal

Fourth Characteristic: Rich and Poor

- The relationship between Jesus and the poor in society was one of Luke's special concerns. Perhaps his community comprised rich and poor people. He warns the rich that material wealth is not the most important thing in life and that the rich have a serious obligation to share with the poor

Fourth Characteristic: Rich and Poor

- He also encourages the poor respond to Jesus' invitation to enter God's kingdom; and that one's standing before God is more important than one's place in society.

Fifth Characteristic: Prayer

- Luke's gospel is often called the gospel of prayer because he presents Jesus as praying at key moments in his life and ministry
- Jesus prays before his baptism; in response to the crowd's enthusiasm over his miracles; before choosing his twelve apostles; before Pilate identifies him as the Messiah; prior to the transfiguration; after the Last Supper; before his arrest and at the moment of his death.

Fifth Characteristic: Prayer

- Luke's Jesus urges a surprising persistence in prayer.
- He also includes instructions on prayer not found in the other gospels

Sixth Characteristic: Holy Spirit

- The Spirit is a major figure in Luke's gospel
- Jesus is conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Elizabeth and Zachariah, Anna and Simeon prophesy about Jesus through the inspiration of the Spirit.
- Just as the Spirit descended on him at his baptism, it also comes upon him at the very beginnings of his public ministry in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Sixth Characteristic: Holy Spirit

- That Jesus is the sole agent of the Holy Spirit is made clear in all of his healings and public actions.
- Luke makes it clear that the Spirit is the principle of continuity between the Old Testament, the time of Jesus and the time of the Church

Sixth Characteristic: Holy Spirit

- In Acts, Luke makes it clear that conversion, the gift of the Spirit and baptism are intimately connected and go together.
- After his Ascension he promises to pour out his Spirit on the disciples

Seventh Characteristic: Women

- The sensitivity of Luke's gospel to women has long been recognized. The number of times women are mentioned, the contribution of women to the early life of the church, the kinds of interaction Jesus allows women, the special importance and role of Mary give ample evidence that one cannot deal with the ministry of Jesus in this Gospel without giving careful attention to the dynamic role and value of women in making Christian message come alive.

AN OUTLINE: GOSPEL OF LUKE

- **(I) PROLOGUE: Ch: 1:1-4**

THE INFANCY NARRATIVE: Ch: 1:5-2:52

- (A) Story of the Annunciation (1:5-56)
- (a) The Annunciation of the Birth of John the Baptist (1:5-25)
- (b) The Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus (1:26-38)
- (c) The Visitation (1:39-56)

THE INFANCY NARRATIVE:

Ch: 1:5-2:52

- (B) The Story of the Births (1:57-2:52)
- (a) The Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-80)
- (b) The Birth of Jesus (2:1-40)
- (c) The Boy Jesus in the Temple (2:41-52)

THE PUBLIC MINISTRY: Ch. 3:1-4:13)

- (a) John the Baptist (3:1-20)
- (b) The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)
- (c) The Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38)
- (d) The Temptation (4:1-13)
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THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (4:14-9:50)

- (a) Two Typical Events: At Nazareth and Capernaum (4:14-44)
- (b) From the Call of Peter to the Naming of the Twelve (5:1-6:16)
- (c) The Full Ministry (6:17-9:9)
- (d) The Climax (9:10-50)

THE JOURNEY NARRATIVE: (9:51-19:28)

- (a) Section Proper to Luke (9:51-18:14)
- (b) Section Common with Mark's Gospel (18:15-19:28)

THE JERUSALEM MINISTRY: (19:29-21:38)

- (a) Events at Jesus' Entry (19:29-48)
- (b) Controversies in Jerusalem (20:1-21:4)
- (c) Discourse on the Fall of Jerusalem (21:5-38)

Death and Resurrection:

(22:1-24:53)

- (a) The Paschal Meal (22:1-38)
- (b) The Passion, Death and Burial (22:39-23:56)
- (c) The Resurrection and Ascension (24:1-53)