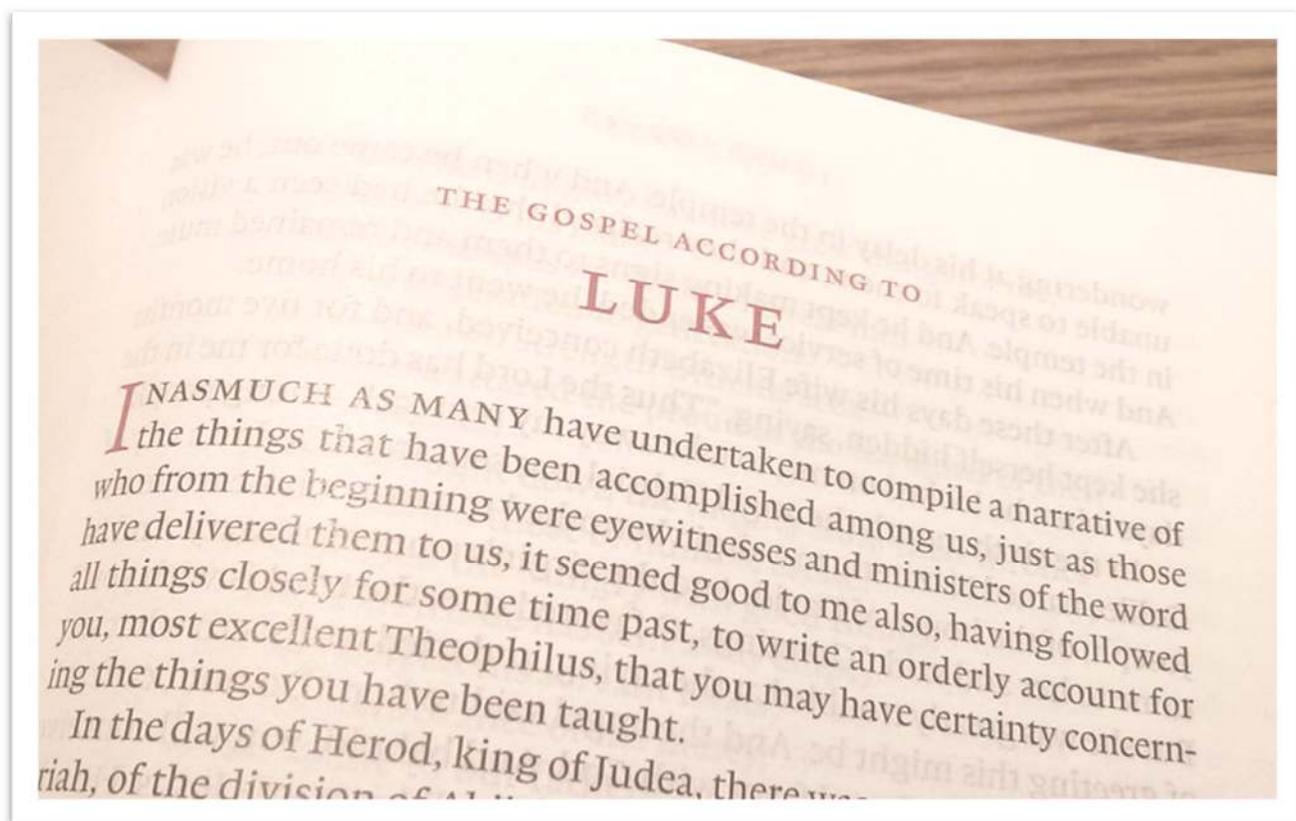


Saint Paul's Women's Bible Study



Gospel of Saint Luke

Spring 2022

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(The above outline is from *New Testament Survey*, by Merrill C. Tenney, 177)

LUKE

Herod the Great begins to rule 37 B.C.

Jesus is born 6/5 B.C. Escape to Egypt 5/4 B.C.

Herod the Great dies 4 B.C. Return to Nazareth 4/3 B.C.

Jesus visits Temple as a boy A.D. 6/7

VITAL STATISTICS

PURPOSE:

To present an accurate account of the life of Christ and to present Christ as the perfect human and Savior

AUTHOR:

Luke—a doctor (Colossians 4:14), a Greek, and Gentile Christian. He is the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. Luke was a close friend and companion of Paul. He also wrote Acts, and the two books go together.

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:

Theophilus (“one who loves God”), Gentiles

DATE WRITTEN:

About A.D. 60

SETTING:

Luke wrote from Rome or possibly from Caesarea.

KEY VERSES:

“Jesus responded, ‘Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost’” (19:9, 10).

KEY PEOPLE:

Jesus, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Mary, the disciples, Herod the Great, Pilate, Mary Magdalene

KEY PLACES:

Bethlehem, Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem

SPECIAL FEATURES:

This is the most comprehensive of the Gospels. The general vocabulary and diction show that the author was educated. He makes frequent references to illnesses and diagnoses. Luke stresses Jesus’ relationships with people; emphasizes prayer, miracles, and angels; records inspired hymns of praise; gives a prominent place to women. Most of 9:51–18:35 is not found in any other Gospel.



EVERY birth is a miracle, and every child is a gift from God. But nearly 20 centuries ago, the miracle of miracles occurred. A baby was born, but he was the Son of God. The Gospels tell of this birth, but Dr. Luke, as though he were the attending physician, provides most of the details surrounding this awesome occasion. With a divine Father and a human mother, Jesus entered history—God in the flesh.

Luke affirms Jesus’ divinity, but the real emphasis of his book is on Jesus’ humanity—Jesus, the Son of God, is also the Son of Man. As a doctor, Luke was a man of science, and as a Greek, he was a man of detail. It is not surprising, then, that he begins by outlining his extensive research and explaining that he is reporting the facts (1:1–4). Luke also was a close friend and traveling companion of Paul, so he could interview the other disciples, had access to other historical accounts, and was an eyewitness to the birth and growth of the early church. His Gospel and book of Acts are reliable, historical documents.

Luke’s story begins with angels appearing to Zechariah and then to Mary, telling them of the upcoming births of their sons. From Zechariah and Elizabeth would come John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Christ. And Mary would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit and bear Jesus, the Son of God. Soon after John’s birth, Caesar Augustus declared a census, and so Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, the town of David, their ancient ancestor. There the child was born. Angels announced the joyous event to shepherds, who rushed to the manger. When the shepherds left, they went praising God and spreading the news. Eight days later, Jesus was circumcised and then dedicated to God in the Temple, where Simeon and Anna confirmed Jesus’ identity as the Savior, their Messiah.

Luke gives us a glimpse of Jesus at age 12—discussing theology with the Jewish teachers of the law at the Temple (2:41–52). Eighteen years later Jesus went out in the wilderness to be baptized by John the Baptist before beginning his public ministry (3:1–23). At this point, Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy on his stepfather Joseph’s side, through David and Abraham back to Adam, underscoring Jesus’ identity as the Son of Man (3:23–38).

After the Temptation (4:1–13), Jesus returned to Galilee to preach, teach, and heal (4:14ff). During this time, he began gathering his group of 12 disciples (5:1–11, 27–29). Later Jesus commissioned the disciples and sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. When they returned, Jesus revealed to them his mission, his true identity, and what it meant to be his disciple (9:18–62). His mission would take him to Jerusalem (9:51–53), where he would be rejected, tried, and crucified.

While Jesus carried his own cross to Golgotha, some women in Jerusalem wept for him, but Jesus told them to weep for themselves and for their children (23:28). Luke’s Gospel does not end in sadness, however. It concludes with the thrilling account of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, his appearances to the disciples, and his promise to send the Holy Spirit (24:1–53). Read Luke’s beautifully written and accurate account of the life of Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God. Then praise God for sending the Savior—our risen and triumphant Lord—for all people.

*Tiberius
Caesar
becomes
emperor
14*

*John's
ministry
begins
26*

*Jesus
begins his
ministry
26/27*

*Jesus
chooses
twelve
disciples
28*

*Jesus
feeds
5,000
29*

*Jesus
is crucified,
rises again,
and ascends
30*

THE BLUEPRINT

- A. BIRTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (1:1—4:13) From an infant who could do nothing on his own, Jesus grew to become completely able to fulfill his mission on earth. He was fully human, developing in all ways like us. Yet he remained fully God. He took no shortcuts and was not isolated from the pressures and temptations of life. There are no shortcuts for us either as we prepare for lives of service to God.
- B. MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (4:14—21:38)
1. Jesus' ministry in Galilee
2. Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem
3. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem
Jesus taught great crowds of people, especially through parables, which are stories that illustrate great truths. But only those with ears to hear will understand. We should pray that God's Spirit would help us understand the implications of these truths for our lives so we can become more and more like Jesus.
- C. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (22:1—24:53) The Savior of the world was arrested and executed. But death could not destroy him, and Jesus came back to life and ascended to heaven. In Luke's careful, historical account, we receive the facts about Jesus' resurrection. We must not only believe that these facts are true, but we must also trust Christ as our Savior. It is shortsighted to neglect the facts, but how sad it is to accept the facts and neglect the forgiveness that Jesus offers to each of us.
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MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<i>Jesus Christ, the Savior</i>	Luke describes how God's Son entered human history. Jesus lived as the perfect example of a human. After a perfect ministry, he provided a perfect sacrifice for our sin so we could be saved.	Jesus is our perfect leader and Savior. He offers forgiveness to all who will accept him as Lord of their lives and believe that what he says is true.
<i>History</i>	Luke was a medical doctor and historian. He put great emphasis on dates and details, connecting Jesus to events and people in history.	Luke gives details so we can believe in the reliability of the history of Jesus' life. Even more important, we can believe with certainty that Jesus is God.
<i>People</i>	Jesus was deeply interested in people and relationships. He showed warm concern for his followers and friends—men, women, and children.	Jesus' love for people is good news for everyone. His message is for all people in every nation. Each one of us has an opportunity to respond to him in faith.
<i>Compassion</i>	As a perfect human, Jesus showed tender sympathy to the poor, the despised, the hurt, and the sinful. No one was rejected or ignored by him.	Jesus is more than a good teacher—he cares for you. Because of his deep love for you, he can satisfy your needs.
<i>Holy Spirit</i>	The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus' birth, baptism, ministry, and resurrection. As a perfect example for us, Jesus lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit.	The Holy Spirit was sent by God as confirmation of Jesus' authority. The Holy Spirit is given to enable people to live for Christ. By faith we can have the indwelling Holy Spirit's presence and power to witness and to serve.



KEY PLACES IN LUKE



The broken lines (---) indicate modern boundaries.

Luke begins his account in the Temple in Jerusalem, giving us the background for the birth of John the Baptist, then moves on to the town of Nazareth and the story of Mary, chosen to be Jesus' mother (1:26ff). As a result of Caesar's call for a census, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born in fulfillment of prophecy (2:1ff). Jesus grew up in Nazareth and began his earthly ministry by being baptized by John (3:21, 22) and tempted by Satan (4:1ff). Much of his ministry focused on Galilee: He set up his "home" in Capernaum (4:31ff), and from there he taught throughout the region (8:1ff). Later he visited Gerasa (also called Gadara), where he healed a demon-possessed man (8:36ff). He fed more than 5,000 people with one lunch on the shores of the Sea of Galilee near Bethsaida (9:10ff). Jesus always traveled to Jerusalem for the major festivals, and he enjoyed visiting friends in nearby Bethany (10:38ff). He healed 10 men with leprosy on the border between Galilee and Samaria (17:11) and helped a dishonest tax collector in Jericho turn his life around (19:1ff). The little villages of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives were Jesus' resting places during his last days on earth. He was crucified outside Jerusalem's walls, but he would rise again. Two of Jesus' followers walking on the road leading to Emmaus were among the first to see the resurrected Christ (24:13ff).

Introduction

1. What was Luke's stated purpose in writing his account of the gospel? (Luke 1.1-2)
2. Who is Luke's audience—to whom did he write this book (1:3)?
3. What is the significance of the introductory words to Luke's Gospel?
4. What sources of information did St. Luke use to write his gospel? (Luke 1.3-4)

St. Luke wrote that he had “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” so that he could “write a careful account” (1:3). Certainly Luke's investigation would have included interviews with eyewitnesses to Christ's life as well as checking and rechecking any written reports against the facts. As a Gentile, Luke could have been objective in his research. As a doctor, he would have been meticulous. As we read and study Luke's biography of Christ, we can be confident that it is an accurate account. Written to Theophilus, the Gospel of Luke is for all those who love God.

5. Christians believe that Luke and the other Bible writers were inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit as they wrote (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), so that all of the Bible is accurate. Why, then, is it important that Luke was a careful historian?
6. What might have motivated St. Luke to begin his gospel with such strong claims of accuracy?

Other Themes

1. What qualifications did Luke have for writing a Gospel to a Gentile audience?
2. What special qualifications has God given you to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ?
3. Why was the theme of “the perfect human” especially appropriate for a Greek audience? What themes in Luke strike a responsive chord in you?
4. How is the Greek culture of the first century similar to ours today? Why is Luke's message especially appropriate for people in our world?