

LUKE

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR

Once again, the author is not named within the book itself. The books of Luke and Acts have similar prologues (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2), both addressed to the same person, Theophilus. The storyline of Acts picks up where Luke's gospel ends (Luke 24:48-53; Acts 1:1-12). These things all point to the author being the same person, who has historically been recognized as Luke since the mid-second century.

Luke was not an eyewitness observer of Jesus, but was a close companion and travel partner of Paul (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-21, 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24). Luke was a highly educated man and physician (Col. 4:14), which is demonstrated in his writing style and use of vocabulary common to physicians of that era.

Most scholars believe Luke hailed from Antioch in Syria (different from Antioch in Acts 13), and was a Gentile God-fearer with considerable exposure to Judaism. If true, Luke may hold the honor of being the only Gentile author in the New Testament, though the possibility also exists that Luke was a Jew living in Syria and highly influenced by Greek culture.

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE

There is no certainty as to where Luke was when he wrote the Book of Luke, though it is obvious Luke meant the work to be read by Theophilus, a Gentile Christian. Some believe Theophilus, "lover of God," is not an actual person, but a representative of a larger Greek audience of God-fearers within synagogues who were seriously interested in the works of Jesus and the Christian faith. Luke's advanced literary style indicates the intended audience, whether that be Theophilus or a larger group, were likely also highly educated and held social status, potentially as artisans and urbanites who were familiar with Jewish and Greek cultures.

DATE

Luke obviously wrote his gospel before the Book of Acts, which was written before Paul's first Roman imprisonment. This means Luke was written prior to AD 63. But, because several verses of Mark appear in Luke, this may bump the date up to the late 50s. Most scholars date the book between the late 50s to early 60s AD.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Luke is clear in his purpose for writing (Luke 1:1-4). Though Luke was not an eyewitness of Jesus, he dutifully researched and compiled reports from eyewitnesses and presents a carefully crafted report of Jesus, His works, and confirmation of the truths Theophilus had been taught. As a research report, it makes sense that Luke would draw from Mark's gospel, but Luke's book also includes about 50% of his own material. Most of Luke's stories fall in a chronological sequence with time indications (Luke

1:5, 26, 36, 56, 59; 2:42; 3:23;9:28; 12:1-7). Though addressed to Theophilus, the Book of Luke gives all believers assurance that Christianity is a movement bound up in the historical events of Jesus' birth, life, and resurrection!

In this first volume work, Luke takes care of pointing out the innocence of Christians (Luke 23:4, 14, 22) and continues to show Christians judged to be innocent several times in Acts (Acts 16:39; 17:9; 18:15-16; 19:37; 23:29; 25:25; 26:31). This speaks to his attempt to counter hostile opposition which began around AD 50-60.

Another key focus of Luke's gospel is upon Gentiles and the Christian message for all humankind. Greek expressions are substituted for nearly all Jewish expressions and quotes from Old Testament prophecy are significantly less than in Matthew. However, when Old Testament quotations are used, they focus on "all flesh" (Jews and Gentiles) seeing God's salvation (Luke 3:6). The poor, outcast, and women also receive particular attention. Where Matthew traces Jesus' lineage back to Abraham, the father of the Jews (Matt. 1:2), Luke traces it back to Adam, the father of the human race (Luke 3:38). Also, Matthew references Jesus sending His disciples "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6), but Luke leaves out this restriction (Luke ch. 9-10).

A few interesting notes:

- Luke's account of Jesus' birth is a favorite of many.
- Songs within Luke have inspired countless other melodies (Luke 1:46-55, 67-79; 2:13-14, 29-32).
- Many artists such as Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, Rossetti, Plockhorst, Rubens, and Rembrandt have featured stories from Luke in their artwork.

LITERARY STRUCTURE

Here are a couple ways to outline Luke:

Son of Man Focus	Geographic Ministry Focus
Introduction of the Son of Man (1:1-4:13)	Prologue & Preparation for Ministry (1:1-4:13)
Ministry of the Son of Man (4:14-9:50)	In Galilee (4:14-9:50)
Rejection of the Son of Man (9:51-19:27)	Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
Crucifixion & Resurrection of the Son (19:28-24:53)	Jerusalem Death & Resurrection (19:28-24:53)

KEY WORDS

- **Jesus**-- Don't just notice the references, but what do you learn about Him through those references? Names, functions, His emotional responses, how others address Him, etc.
- **Holy Spirit** – When He's named directly, what He does, note miracles, etc.

- **God** -- Different ways He's referenced & what you learn about Him, how Jesus speaks of Him, etc.
- **Word** (especially "word of the Lord/God") – What do you learn about the Word? What happens?
- **Baptized** – In what? In who's name? What other connections do you see with baptism?
- **Tongues** – Who speaks? When do tongues happen?
- **Signs and Wonders** – Who is doing them? What things are happening?
- **Witness/Witnesses** – What is a witness? Who is witnessing? What happens to witnesses?
- **Pharisees / Sadducees / Scribes** – Who are they? What are they doing? What do you learn?
- **Church** – What do you learn about the church?
- **Old Testament passages** – Usually identified by all capital letters. How are these references used? What's the purpose of them?

Summary Questions

- What did you learn about Jesus through this book?

- What did you learn about the Holy Spirit through this book?

- What did you learn about God through this book?

- What do you learn about the church?

- How do you explain baptism in the Holy Spirit to someone? What does it mean to be baptized in the Spirit? Is tongues necessary to be considered baptized in the Spirit? Who does the baptizing?

- How did persecution both help and hinder the church?

- What do you learn about prayer through this book?

KEY WORD – How do you summarize the whole book in one word or short phrase?

KEY VERSE – What verse stands out to you as the summary of the whole book, or a verse that the Lord used to teach you something important. Why did you choose the verse you did?

KEY CHAPTER – What chapter summarizes the book, is a turning point, or just stands out to you? Why did you choose this chapter?