

Like the other Gospels, the third Gospel bears the name of its presumed author, Luke. Early church historians attribute this Gospel to Luke. We don't know anything about his early life or his conversion to Christianity. Nor do we know anything of his life after the death of Paul. All we know is that he was a Gentile, and a close friend and associate of the Apostle Paul. From the narratives in the book of Ax, we know that the author traveled with Paul from the Macedonian vision (Ax 16) all the way until Paul was executed. We know this from the several first person narratives sprinkled throughout the book of Ax (*a.k.a.*; the "we" sections). Paul distinguishes Luke from other disciples that he refers to as those "*from the circumcision*" (*i.e.*; Jewish Christians).

Col 4:10 -14

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Ax were obviously written by the same person, and together they comprise a little more than a quarter of the New Testament. And yet — neither book specifically names its author. The name of Luke only appears in three New Testament passages: Col 4:14; II Tim 4:11; and Philemon 24.

As the author of this Gospel and the book of Ax, Luke is the only Gentile author of the New Testament. Luke was a physician by profession, but is also recognized as a reliable historian. His Gospel is the result of careful research and documentation.

Lk 1:1-4

Luke carefully researched his material for specific reasons. He consulted eyewitnesses for information, which implies that he was not an eyewitness himself. He may have gathered certain details, such as facts on Jesus' youth, from Mary herself. Luke also seemed to have had certain contacts with the Herodian court. Several times in his Gospel, he mentions court personnel, and even some of the royal relatives, by name.

★ **Ax 21:8 - 10** Paul and Luke stayed with Philip the Evangelist. They stayed with him for several days (cf. :10). Whaddaya s'pose they talked about?

★ **Lk 8:1-3; Lk 23:55 – 24:10**

Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, seems to have been an acquaintance of Luke's. She would have been a good source for Luke's discussion of Herod's dealings with Christ. Luke records more details of this than the other writers.

Note: Even though Luke compiled his Gospel through painstaking research, this in no way diminishes the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit.

★ **II Pet 1:20-21**

QUOTE: JOHN MacARTHUR

"The process of inspiration never bypasses or overrides the personalities, vocabularies, and styles of the human authors of Scripture. The unique traits of the human authors are always indelibly stamped on all the books of Scripture. Luke's research is no exception to this rule. The research itself was orchestrated by divine Providence. And in his writing, Luke was moved by the Spirit of God. Therefore, his account is infallibly true."

THE MacARTHUR STUDY BIBLE; © 1997, by Word Publishing; p1505

DATE

Because of Luke's meticulous research, we can date his Gospel with some certainty. He carefully notes several relevant historical events in his writings, especially as he is establishing the dates for the births of both John and Jesus. But by noticing what he does *not* mention, that is what actually helps us date the Gospel.

- ★ He records Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, but makes no mention of it in the Gospel or Acts. The destruction of Jerusalem took place in the summer of AD 70.
- ★ The book of Acts makes no mention of the great persecution that began under Nero in AD 64.
- ★ James, the Lord's brother who had become the recognized leader of the Church at Jerusalem and writer of the epistle that bears his name, was martyred in AD 62. Luke had recorded the martyrdom of James the Apostle in the book of Acts (Ax 12), but he does not mention the death of this James. That would seem to indicate that it had not yet occurred.
- ★ We know from the intros to both books, that Luke wrote Acts after he had written his Gospel. The book of Acts closes with Paul in Rome under house arrest. Paul's house arrest was in the early 60's.

These facts would seem to indicate that Luke wrote his Gospel in the late 50's or very early 60's.

RECIPIENTS

- ★ Luke wrote his gospel primarily to a government official named Theophilus. The title "most excellent" was used for dignitaries and high ranking government officials.
- ★ Although the gospel is addressed to Theophilus, Luke had a larger Gentile audience in mind. The Gospel of Luke has a decidedly Gentile flavor. *E.g.:*
 - Luke often explains Jewish localities.
Lk 4:31; Lk 8:26; Lk 23:50-51; Lk 24:13
 - He traces Christ's genealogy back to Adam, thereby implying Christ's representation of all mankind, not just the Jews (*Lk 3*).
 - Luke refers to the Roman Emperors and the current public officials in dating John's preaching and Christ's birth.
Lk 2:1-2; Lk 3:1-2
 - Luke freely uses Greek terms, rather than their Aramaic equivalent. For example, Jesus is referred to as "*didaskolos*" rather than "*rabbi*." Luke referred to Calvary, rather than Golgatha, which was the Hebrew name for the site of Christ's crucifixion.
 - There are only a few direct quotes from the Old Testament, and then those quotes are taken from the Greek version of the Old Testament, the LXX.
 - There are relatively few references to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This would not have been as important to a Gentile reader as it would have been to Jewish reader.

PURPOSE

There seems to be two purposes in Luke's mind as he's writing this book.

- ★ One was to confirm the faith of Theophilus. Luke wanted to show this Greek dignitary that his faith in Christ rested on firm historical fact (*Lk 1:3-4*).
- ★ His other purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of Man, who had been rejected by Israel. Because of this rejection, Jesus was also preached to Gentiles so that they could know the kingdom program of God and attain salvation. Therefore, Christ is presented as the Savior of all mankind, not just Israel.

QUOTE: D. EDMOND HIEBERT

“This gospel portrays the person of Jesus as a member of humanity who lived the perfect and representative life as the Son of Man. His self-sacrifice qualified Him to be the Savior of mankind.

The theme of the gospel may be stated as ‘The Son of Man, the Savior of Mankind.’”

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT: Vol. I; The Gospels and Acts; © 1975, Moody Bible Institute; BMH Books; pp. 146-147

STYLE

- ★ Luke’s Gospel is in the style of a scholarly, well-read author. His language is the most polished of any New Testament book, except Hebrews. He wrote as would a meticulous historian. He often intersperses his narrative with details and explanations to help clarify the historical context of the events.
- ★ Luke alone includes some of the details surrounding John’s birth (chap 1). And his narrative of Christ’s birth is the most detailed of all the Gospel records (chap 2).
- ★ This attention to detail makes Luke’s Gospel the longest of the all the Gospels. While it has less chapters than does Matthew’s Gospel, it has more verses.
- ★ Luke also emphasized forgiveness, prayer, and joy more than the other Gospels. He also focuses more on individual and personal responses to the Lord. Many individuals are mentioned by name in Luke’s Gospel in connection with their interaction with the Lord Jesus Christ. As a physician, he also displays a special interest in Jesus’ miracles of healing.
- ★ Luke also demonstrates Jesus’ special compassion for those who were the outcasts of Jewish society: Gentiles, Samaritans, tax-collectors, sinners, and lepers, even women and children. Whenever they show up in the narrative, they are almost always presented in a favorable light. Luke especially gives women a high profile in Christ’s life and ministry — from the birth narratives of both John and Jesus, to the women at the tomb on resurrection morning.
Note: This emphasis supports Luke’s purpose in writing his Gospel. His focus on the rejects of Jewish society points to the universal message of the Gospel, especially in light of Jewish rejection of that message.
- ★ Beginning at chapter 9:51, Luke devotes the next 10 chapters of his Gospel to Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem. This material is unique to Luke, and serves as the heart of his Gospel. It emphasizes the theme that permeates the Gospel — Jesus’ relentless move to the cross. This was the very purpose for His coming, and Luke presents the Lord as a man singularly focused on His destiny. The salvation of sinners was His mission — this and nothing else.
The entire life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ can be summed in one verse.
Lk 19:10 “... the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”
That’s exactly what we see the Lord doing throughout the entire Gospel of Luke.

THE OUTLINE OF LUKE

- I. PROLOGUE 1:1-4
- II. THE SON OF MAN’S COMING 1:5 — 2:52
- III. THE SON OF MAN’S PRESENTATION 3:1 — 4:13
- IV. THE SON OF MAN’S MINISTRY 4:14 — 21:38
 - A. In Galilee 4:14 — 9:50
 - B. En route to Jerusalem 9:51 — 19:28
 - C. In Jerusalem 19:29 — 21:38
- V. THE SON OF MAN’S PASSION 22:1 — 23:56
- VI. THE SON OF MAN’S VICTORY 24:1-53

