

The Gospel of Luke

The Gospel of Luke is the first book in a two-part series written by a man named Luke. Like the other Gospels, Luke's first book tells the story of the life and teachings of Jesus. The second book continues the story by following the lives and teachings of Jesus' disciples and apostles. The second book is called the book of Acts.

Writer: Luke, a medical doctor and co-worker of the apostle Paul

Date of writing: Between 60-69 AD

Original Audience: A man named Theophilus and non-Jewish followers of Jesus

Main Purpose of the Book:

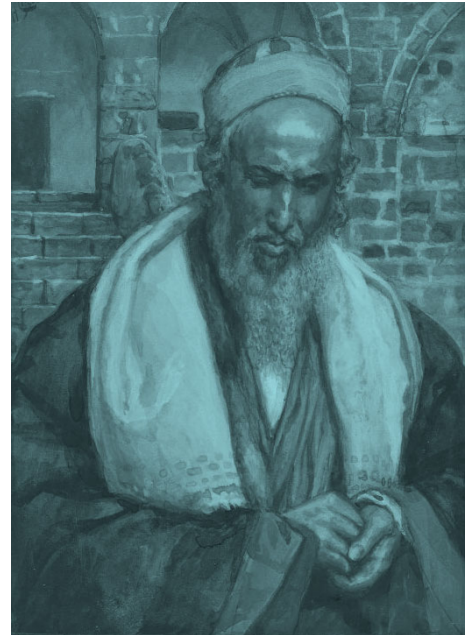
Luke tells us what his main purpose was for writing his Gospel in the first four verses of chapter one: "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (1:1-4).

Luke said his main purpose was to write an orderly account. More importantly, he wrote the orderly account so that Theophilus and other believers in Jesus would be certain of the things they had been taught. For the first 20-30 years after Jesus died, his disciples and apostles shared his teaching and the stories of his miracles everywhere they went. The number of people following Jesus and obeying his teaching was growing every day. As the original disciples and eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry became older and some began to die, the Gospel writers like Matthew, Mark, and Luke decided to write down the things Jesus did and taught.

Luke is probably the only non-Jewish author of a book in the Bible. Also, he was not one of Jesus' twelve disciples, but Luke was a co-worker of the apostles. He made a careful investigation of the events he recorded in his Gospel, and he did this so that you, too, could be certain of the things you have believed.

Outline of Luke:

1. The preparation of the Messiah (Chapters 1 and 2)
2. The introduction of the Messiah (3:1 - 4:13)
3. The ministry of the Messiah (4:14 - 9:50)
4. The mission of the Messiah (9:51 - 18:30)
5. The suffering of the Messiah (18:31 - 23:56)
6. The resurrection of the Messiah (Chapter 24)



Matthew, Mark, and Luke all share many of the same stories about Jesus. If you haven't studied Matthew or Mark, you should study the whole book of Luke. If you have already studied either Matthew or Mark, you can study the stories and teachings that are only found in Luke's Gospel. Here are 27 stories and teachings that are only in Luke's Gospel:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Promised birth of John 1:1-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of rich fool 12:13-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angel appears to Mary 1:26-38 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of barren tree 13:1-9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mary visits Elizabeth 1:39-56 | <input type="checkbox"/> Healing of disabled woman 13:10-17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth of John the Baptist 1:57-80 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parables about guests 14:1-14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shepherds visit Jesus 2:1-20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of being a disciple 14:25-35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation of Jesus in Temple 2:21-38 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of the lost son 15:11-32 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Jesus visits Jerusalem 2:41-52 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of shrewd manager 16:1-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus reads Isaiah 4:14-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of rich man and Lazarus 16:19-31 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miraculous catch of fish 5:1-11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Healing of ten lepers 17:11-19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus raises a widow's son 7:11-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of widow and judge 18:1-8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A sinful woman anoints Jesus 7:36-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of Pharisee and tax collector 18:9-14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women support Jesus 8:1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Story of Zacchaeus 19:1-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parable of Good Samaritan 10:29-37 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus' ascension 24:36-53 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mary and Martha 10:38-42 | |

As you study each of these passages on your own and in a group, ask these questions:

- 1) What do we learn from these verses?
- 2) Why did Luke include this story or teaching in his Gospel?
- 3) What do I need to do to obey Jesus?
- 4) Who can I share this story with?

The City of Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem is mentioned more in Luke's Gospel than in the other Gospels. Luke's Gospel begins and ends in Jerusalem (1:5-8 and 24:52-53); Jesus visits the city as a child (2:22-52); Luke writes about Jesus' journey to Jerusalem over ten chapters (9:51-19:40); Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44); and Jesus appears in and around Jerusalem after his resurrection. Finally, Jesus tells his disciples to stay in the city after he returns to heaven. Jerusalem was the most important place for the Jewish people because it was where God's temple was. In Luke's second book called Acts, he tells how the church began in Jerusalem but quickly spread all around the world. Today, God's temple is not in Jerusalem. The disciples of Jesus are God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Theme of Worship

The Gospel of Luke has a strong theme of worship. The book opens (1:8) and closes (24:53) with stories of people worshipping God in the temple at Jerusalem. Luke also includes many songs in his Gospel (1:46-55, 1:67-79, 2:14, and 2:29-32). In the whole book, there are twenty references to people worshipping or giving thanks to God. As you study the book of Luke, what will you thank and worship God for?