

# Luke

## Summary

The Gospel of Luke is the third of four books in the Bible that record the life of Jesus. This Gospel was most likely written for a Roman, or at least a Gentile (non-Jewish), audience because the author makes an effort to explain Jewish customs and traditions to his readers. This Gospel emphasizes the humanity of Jesus and portrays Him as the perfect man. Luke begins by recounting Jesus' ancestry, birth, and early childhood. He then describes His message, ministry, rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection. This book is the longest and most comprehensive of the four Gospels, as well as the longest book in the New Testament.

## Author

Although Luke's name never shows up in his Gospel, the internal content and evidence clearly point to him as the Spirit-inspired author. He was most likely a Gentile by birth, which makes him the only non-Jewish writer of the New Testament. Paul refers to Luke in Colossians 4:14 as his dear friend and as a physician. In Philemon 24, Paul lists Luke among his fellow workers. Luke accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey and during his first imprisonment in Rome.

## Date

Most New Testament scholars would identify the writing of Luke's Gospel in one of these time periods: 1) A.D. 59-63, and 2) in the A.D. 70s or 80s based on speculations about the place of Luke's writing.

## Primary Characters

God (Luke 1-24)

Jesus (Luke 1-24)

Zechariah (Luke 1)

Elizabeth (Luke 1)

Mary and Joseph (Luke 1-3)

John the Baptist (Luke 1, 3)

The Twelve Apostles Simon (later called Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), Judas (son of James), and Judas Iscariot (Luke 5-24)

Mary Magdalene (Luke 8, 24)

Herod (Luke 22)

Pilate (Luke 22-23)

## Historical Moments

The Events Preceding the Birth of Jesus (Luke 1)

Description of Jesus' Birth (Luke 2)

The Early Childhood of Jesus (Luke 2)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus (Luke 3)

Jesus' Temptation in the Desert (Luke 4)

Jesus Performs Miracles and Teaches Pharisees and His Disciples (Luke 4-9)

Jesus Continues to Teach but Opposition Mounts (Luke 9-19)

The Last Days of Jesus (Luke 19-22)

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (Luke 23)

Jesus Is Resurrected, Appears to Many, and Ascends to Heaven (Luke 24)

## Major Theological Themes

**Jesus Was Perfect** - He entered into human history by being born to Mary, a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He freely offered Himself as a sacrifice to atone for our sins and provide a way for all humans to live eternally with God in Heaven.

**Jesus Is the Son of Man** - Luke records the ancestry, birth, and early childhood of Jesus. He experienced everything that humans do, which is what made Him a perfect sacrifice.

**Jesus Came to Seek and Save the Lost** - Chapter fifteen records three parables about lost things: a sheep, a coin, and a son. All of these highlight God's desire for those who are far from Him to come near. God values and wants to be in a relationship with all of His creation.

**The Prominence of the Holy Spirit** - Luke describes the work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus and in the life of those who follow Jesus. This theme will be of utmost importance in the second part of Luke's account, the book of Acts.

## Lessons Learned from Luke

**The Universal Nature of the Gospel** - The Gospel of Luke makes it clear that Jesus came to save all men and women; Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans; rich and poor; religious leaders and ordinary people; the respected and the reviled. Luke especially emphasizes that the gospel is not just for the Jewish people, but the entire world.

**Jesus Came to Save the Lost** - We are all lost and in need of a Savior. Our sin separates us from God. Jesus lived a perfect life but was crucified on the cross. His death became the atoning sacrifice for all our sins. His resurrection means our relationship with God can be restored and we can live eternally with Him if we accept His sacrifice.

**The Power of Prayer** - Luke records several instances in which Jesus prayed and two parables about the power of prayer. If Jesus felt it was important to pray to the Father for guidance and strength, then it should be important to us!

**The Role of Women** - Luke mentions more women involved or related to Jesus' ministry than any other account of Christ's life. There is a clear sense that Jesus respected the females in His life and considered them an important part of His ministry.