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# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: AN INTRODUCTION



Luke 1:1-4

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## The Book itself

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- Longest of all the Gospels
  - Most thorough of all the gospels
  - Most complete (descriptions, events, and timeline)
  - Many unique parables
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# The Author:

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- Not named in the book
  - Early church fathers as well as the church historically have held that Luke is the author (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, etc)
  - Luke was a gentile (as he is not named among the Paul's Jewish companions-Col 4:10-11)
  - And therefore, he is the only "non Jewish" author of the NT
  - We do see Colossians and the book of Acts that he was traveling companion of Paul
  - He was a physician by trade
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# Luke the Physician

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What were physicians like in Luke's time?

*1) Those educated, trained well, dedicated to their craft, and to helping others...at a cost!*

"The aristocrats had physicians as servants or as private employees in their own establishments, or had access to them despite their high fees and lofty reputations." (McGee)

*2) Those who used the role of physician to take advantage of those they treated. Often leaving them in a worsened condition than before (ex: Luke 8:43, Mark 5:26)*

"those money-seeking, routine-bound quacks who "enter the sickroom, bleed the patient, lay on a plaster, and give an enema." Both from the epigrams and from non-medical writers of the second century [A.D.] it is evident that the medical profession was regarded as being characteristically greedy and fond of public display. (McGee)

- In Colossians 4:14, Luke is called the "beloved physician"
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# Luke the historian (Luke 1:1-3a)

## Building on a documented foundation (1)

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- Previous writers had written accounts
- Only preserved accounts were the other gospels (Matthwe, Mark, John)
- Luke's Gospel written around 60 AD
- Luke along with Acts was a 2 volume set

“the things accomplished among us”

- Not merely historical facts, timeline, or a biography
- Luke's gospel is a narrative on God's finished work through Christ to redeem sinners from their sin

*“The gospels do not relate the story of a misunderstood ethical teacher, a failed social revolutionary, a model of selfless humility, or even a heroic martyr; they reveal the Savior who is God incarnate, the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (MacArthur)*

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# Luke the historian (Luke 1:1-3a)

## The Gospel's Documented Sources (2-3)

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- Luke was not a firsthand observer of the ministry of Jesus
- He was not an Apostle in that he received his revelation directly from Jesus
- The message was “handed down”

“handed down”: lit: to pass on something of authoritative nature

**Question:** Where did Luke get his facts? How could he verify these accounts?

*“those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses”*

There are two groups of eyewitnesses

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# Two Types of Witnesses

## General Eyewitnesses

Those who were related to Jesus, ministered to Him, or followed Him in His ministry

### Examples:

- Mary (Jesus Mother)
- The “Seventy” (Luke 10)
- The women who ministered to Him (Luke 8)
- The 120 believers gathered in Jerusalem after Jesus’ Ascension (Acts 1:15)
- 500 who gathered in Galilee (1 Cor 15:6)
- Those whom Jesus ministered to

## Special eyewitnesses

Those were present with, intricately involved in, and carried out the ministry of Jesus

### The Disciples:

- Mark (traveled with Paul along with Luke-Philemon 24)
- Matthew (during Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24:27).
- Possibly other Gospel Manuscripts (Matthew, John, Mark?)

Note: The disciples were those who would later become  
*“Servants of the Word”*



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# Luke the historian (Luke 1:1-3a)

## Luke's investigative process (3)

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- 1) *Examination- "investigation"... "faithfully follow"*
- 2) *Detailed- "careful".... "detail and completeness"*
- 3) *Exhaustive- "everything"... "whole", "entire", in "totality"*
- 4) *Complete- "from the beginning"*

*His careful and thorough research gave him a precise understanding of Jesus Christ's life and ministry. As a result, he was uniquely qualified to write this gospel narrative under the Spirit's inspiration. Luke's acknowledgement of his use of source material must not be misconstrued as a disclaimer of divine inspiration for his gospel. The process of inspiration never bypassed or overrode the personalities, life experiences, vocabularies, or writing styles of the Bible's human authors; their unique traits are indelibly stamped on all the books of Scripture. The Spirit used Luke's knowledge, gave him additional information, guided his selection of material, and controlled every word so that he wrote exactly what God wanted written Therefore, his original account is infallibly and inerrantly true. (MacArthur)*

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# Luke the historian (Luke 1:1-3)

## Luke's Systematic Theology (3b)

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- Much of the book is chronological
- It is also arranged thematically...**ex:** The order of Jesus' Temptations (Luke 4:1-13), Jesus Teaching in His home town (Luke 4:16-30), The placement of John's arrest (John 3:19-20)
- Luke gives us a systematized defense of God's plan of redemption

*"the order is redemptive-historical. Luke is concerned to trace the progress of God's redeeming work in Jesus, especially by highlighting His teaching and the rise of opposition to Him." (Bock)*

### Theme of Luke: "Jesus as the Son of Man"

#### "Son of Man"

- This phrase is used some 88 times in the gospels
- This is how He mostly refers to Himself in the gospel writings

***Daniel 7:11-13 (NASB95) — 11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. 12 "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.***

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# Luke the historian (Luke 1:1-3)

## Luke's Systematic Theology (3b)

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What does Luke want his readers to understand in His gospel?

- God's sovereign plan was that Jesus was to come into the world and die as a substitute (19:10; cf. 9:22–23; 17:25; 18:31–34; 24:25, 26, 44).
  - Emphasis on Christ's person and work to accomplish salvation (18:14; cf. 7:36–50; 15:11–32; 19:1–10).
  - God's salvation was available to all peoples, not just to the Jews (Acts 10:34–48; 14:24–27; 15:12–19).
  - We see over and over in the gospel of Luke Jesus compassion towards women, Samaritans, Gentiles, tax collectors, sinners, and other outcasts
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## Theme of Luke

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*“Through his careful investigative process, Luke, in a detailed and accurate way, presents Jesus Christ as the Son of Man whose work of salvation is the culmination of God’s redemptive plan not only for Jews, but for all those who believe”*

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## The Author's Audience

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“most excellent Theophilus”

- We don't exactly know who Theophilus was
  - He was Gentile
  - Possibly a Roman dignitary
  - Written to one person...implications for all gentiles
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## The Author's Purpose (4)

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“so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught”

- We don't know what circumstances Theophilus found himself in
- Maybe he was a young believer
- Or Maybe he wasn't a believer after all

His heart towards Theophilus: To assure him of God's plan of redemption in Christ

*“In the remarkable providence of God, the Holy Spirit ensured that the book Luke wrote initially to one man would be disseminated around the world. The beloved physician, historian, theologian, and pastor had the privilege of becoming the instrument God used for the salvation and edification of millions throughout history” (MacArthur)*

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# Conclusion

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**Be Confident in the Word of God**

**Be Thankful for God's Redemptive Plan in Christ**

*This is the compelling and glorious story of how God purposed in eternity past to save lost sinners from eternal hell. His gracious, loving plan was to send His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all who put their faith in Him. (MacArthur)*

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