



Luke

Luke's Gospel, like all of the gospels, tells the story of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Luke's Gospel is often said to have been written for a more Gentile audience, though it is important to recognize that the author knew a lot about Jewish traditions and scripture. The story of Luke begins and ends in the Temple in Jerusalem, first with Zechariah's encounter with the angel and finally with the disciples praising God there. The intervening chapters tell of John the Baptist's and Jesus' births; the life and ministry of Jesus and then his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. One striking characteristic of Luke is his storytelling style, in which he takes particular care to weave stories together in the most effective way possible.



How long will it take?

Reading time: 2½ hours
Short of time? Just read 1.1-2.40; 4.1-30; 23.26-24.53



Genre

Gospel – accounts that tell the story of the life of Jesus Christ and the good news he came to bring.



Anything tricky?

Not really.



Inspiring quotes

"My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,⁴⁸ for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed."
(Luke 1.46-48)

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."
(Luke 2.29-32)

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."
(Luke 4.18-19)



About the Author

This Gospel, like the other three, is anonymous. The name Luke was only associated with it by later Christian tradition. It is believed, due to similarity of style and theology, that the same person wrote both Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

Many modern scholars would argue that when writing the Gospel the author had Mark's Gospel (and/or a hypothetical document they call Q containing the earliest traditions about Jesus) in front of him as well as a store of his own stories.

What do we know about him?

Traditionally it was widely believed that Luke, the author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the

Apostles, was a physician and a companion of Paul (mentioned in Philemon 1.24; Colossians 4.14; and 2 Timothy 4.11). Tradition identifies his birthplace as Antioch, but the place where he lived, when not travelling with Paul, as Troas.

There is much discussion about whether Luke was a Gentile or not. He certainly knew, and was able to quote from, the Jewish scriptures. This might suggest that he was a God-fearer.

From his writings we can tell that he was a keen historian and laid out both the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in a style reminiscent of historical accounts of his day.



About the times

Many scholars would date Luke's Gospel to around the ad 80s.

What were people feeling?

There is very little in Luke's Gospel to indicate how the first recipients might have been feeling at the time.



What kind of Book is it?

It's a Gospel – a story about the life of Jesus with the intended aim of persuading its readers of who he was.

Luke's focus in his Gospel is, as he makes clear in 1.1-4, to tell the story of Jesus in such a way as he persuades his audience of the truth of what has been said about him.



How is it structured?

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 1.1-4 | Prologue |
| 1.5-2.40 | The announcement and the births of John the Baptist and Jesus |
| 2.41-4.13 | Events leading up to Jesus' ministry |
| 4.14-9.50 | Jesus' ministry in Galilee |
| 9.51-19.27 | Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem |
| 19.28-21.38 | Jesus in Jerusalem |
| 22.1-23.56 | The Last Supper, Jesus' arrest, trials and crucifixion |
| 24.1-53 | Jesus' resurrection and ascension |



Look out for...

People often say that Luke's Gospel is a gospel for the marginalized and the poor. Look out for this theme as you read – would you agree with this as a description of the Gospel?

Look out for the many different titles used of Jesus in the Gospel (e.g. Son of Man, Messiah, Saviour etc...). What do these titles tell us about who Luke thought that Jesus was?

One of Luke's particular features are the longer parables (e.g. the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son) not found in any other gospel. Look for these as you read and ask what they add to Luke's account of Jesus.



What could this mean for me?

As you read, ask yourself about the Jesus you meet in the story. What kind of person is he in the Gospel of Luke? What more can you learn about him as you read?



Discussion group questions

- Were there any parts of the book that you particularly liked or which inspired you?
- Were there any parts of the book that you disliked or which troubled you?
- What did *you* think the book was about?
- Talk about the parables in Luke. Which is your favourite and why?
- How would you describe the Jesus of Luke's Gospel? If you know the other gospels, was he the same or different than the Jesus of the other gospels?
- Many people love the story of the road to Emmaus – discuss this well-known story. Did you notice any new emphases in it after you had read the whole Gospel?
- Did you read anything in the book that touched you, expanded your faith or made you think more deeply about your life and how you live it?



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