

# Luke: Physician, Historian, Theologian, and Pastor

Luke 1:1-4

## 1. Introduction.

- a. The “Synoptic Gospels.”
- b. Gospel means “good news.” Good news can only come against the backdrop of bad news.
- c. The Gospels are a revelation of the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - i. They are an illustration of how God has made His prophetic mystery known (cf. 1Pet. 1:10-12).
  - ii. Christ is the embodiment of God’s personal revelation.
  - iii. Christ explains (lit. exegetes) the Father (Jn. 1:18).
- d. The Gospels give us a record of salvation.
- e. The Gospels give us a record of God’s faithfulness to His own promise to reconcile all things to Himself.
- f. While God still remains a mystery to us in so many different ways, He has also been made intimately known through the person of Jesus Christ.

## 2. The writing.

- a. Between Luke and Acts, Luke makes up 27% of the New Testament.
  - i. Paul makes up 23% of the New Testament.
  - ii. Between the two, Luke and Paul make up 50% of the entire New Testament.
- b. Luke receives his authority from being a close associate to Paul.
  - i. Matthew and John were Apostles, so their Gospels were considered authoritative by virtue of their office.

- ii. Mark was not an Apostle, but his writing was considered authoritative because he was a close associate to Peter.
- iii. Luke was not an Apostle, but was a close associate to Paul. As such, the early Church regarded both Mark and Luke as authoritative for the Church.

### 3. Luke the Physician.

- a. Not much is said about Luke in the New Testament. He's mentioned only three times (Phile. 24; Col. 4:14; 2Tim. 4:11).
- b. He was a physician by trade and considered beloved by Paul (Col. 4:14).
- c. Most likely a Gentile from Antioch, which is in Syria.
- d. He was a traveling companion of Paul and incredibly loyal.
  - i. The "we passages" in Acts indicate the writer of Acts (i.e., Luke) was present with Paul on his journeys. This makes Luke an eyewitness to Paul's experiences (e.g., Acts 16:10-17).
  - ii. Perhaps functioned as Paul's personal physician during his travels.

### 4. Luke the Historian.

- a. The nature of this introduction (1:1-4) indicates Luke was a historian of notable significance.
  - i. Many secular historians and scholars have tried to discount the veracity of Luke's writing. In their attempts, however, they've simply discovered the legitimacy and reliability of his writing.
  - ii. The first four verses are written in an incredibly high level Greek. In fact, they read in a similar manner as many of the introductions to the contemporary histories written in Luke's day.
  - iii. This indicates Luke set out to do legitimate history.
- b. The process of Luke was journalistic.
  - i. Interviewed eyewitnesses (v.2).

- ii. Compiled sources (v.3).
  - iii. The term for “handed down (v.2)” is a technical term, which speaks of the passing along of an authoritative tradition.
- c. Luke was writing legitimate history that had to stand up under strict scrutiny.
  - i. Many of those he interviewed would have been alive when he finished writing Luke. He couldn’t embellish or make up stories.
  - ii. His claims would have been tested by secular historians and scholars, which is why the Gospel is saturated with historical markers (cf., Luke 3:1-2).
- d. We should not approach the Gospel as a fictitious story, or a strange piece of writing that belonged to a new religious sect, but approach it as legitimate history that possesses an authoritative tradition. He writes so that we might have the “exact truth (v.4).”

## 5. Luke the Theologian.

- a. The term, “compile,” carries the idea of arrangement and order. This concept is repeated in v. 3 (“consecutive order”).
  - i. For the most part, the Gospel is written in chronological order. However, there are times when the chronology breaks for the purpose of drawing out a theological concept (e.g., The Travel Narrative (9:51-19:44) is not in strict chronological order).
  - ii. Example: Theology in the Birth Narrative.
    - 1. Matthew’s theme of Kingship.
    - 2. Luke’s theme of Salvation.
- b. Themes that tie Luke together:
  - i. Salvation/Savior, especially for the Gentiles.
  - ii. Holy Spirit.
  - iii. Joy/Rejoicing.

- iv. Suffering Messiah.
  - v. A focus on the poor, downcast, socially despised, etc.
  - vi. Promise/fulfillment motif.
  - vii. Patience.
  - viii. Boldness.
  - ix. The love of God.
  - x. Persistence in suffering.
  - xi. Hospitality.
- c. Basic structure of Luke.
- i. Formal introduction (1:1-4).
  - ii. Birth narrative and preparation for ministry (1:5-3:38).
  - iii. Ministry in Galilee (4:1-9:50).
  - iv. Travel narrative (9:51-19:44).
  - v. The crucifixion (19:45-23:56).
  - vi. The resurrection/ascension (24:1-53).

## 6. Luke the Pastor.

- a. Writes to Theophilus (an unknown figure).
- b. He writes so that one man might have exact knowledge—a deeper and fuller knowledge. Luke wanted Theophilus to know His Lord.

## 7. Conclusion.

### Small Group Question

1. Share your experience and past study of the Gospels. What stood out to you in your study?
2. What stood out to you in this sermon?
3. Discuss what your hope is for this series through Luke.
4. What questions might you have from this introduction?