

2020 VISION: BEHOLD JESUS

LUKE

(Overviewbible.com by Jeffrey Kranz, <https://overviewbible.com/luke/>)

Luke is the story of Jesus Christ—exactly as it happened. It's written by Luke, the physician.

Luke is the third Gospel (an account of Jesus' life and ministry) in the New Testament. Luke tells Jesus' story in extensive detail, more so than any other Gospel. Luke records miracles, sermons, conversations, and personal feelings (Lk 2:19). The writer is a thorough historian who researched everything (Lk 1:3). And Luke's attention to detail shows: not only is his the longest of the four gospels, but it's also the longest book of the New Testament. That's a lot of content!

The book of Luke shows us Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10). We learn all about the God-man in whom we've placed our faith. We see how He lived, how He died, and how He rose again.

Luke's Gospel is written in ways that Jewish and non-Jewish people can understand and appreciate. In Luke, Jesus is indeed the long-awaited Messiah; He is also the saviour of the nations (Lk 2:30–32). Whereas Matthew traces Jesus' ancestry to Abraham (Mt 1:1), Luke charts His lineage all the way back to Adam (Lk 3:38). This isn't surprising—after all, Luke spent a great deal of time with the apostle Paul, who shared the good news with both Jewish and Gentile audiences.

Why Luke was written

Luke states his purpose right away: this book is meant to give believers an accurate, chronological understanding of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Luke investigated the events of Jesus' life by speaking with eyewitnesses (Lk 1:2), giving Theophilus (and us) a thorough record of the things Jesus did and said.

Luke is written to a Christian with little education in the life of Christ, making this book a terrific starting point for believers interested in studying His life today.

Key Text: Luke 19:10

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Key Term: Saviour

The saving activity of Jesus, both in his ministry and in his death, is the focus of this book. Because his mission was to save others, he did not save himself (Lk 23:35).

One-Sentence Summary

Jesus not only lived and ministered as the perfect human, but he also died and rose to new life as the Savior for sinners.

Christ in LUKE

Luke writes primarily for Gentiles and focuses on Jesus as offering salvation to Jew and Gentile alike. Luke shows Jesus' compassion for the poor and the oppressed.

Outline of LUKE

1. The Prologue (1:1–4)
2. The Infancy Narrative (1:5–2:52)
3. Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus (3:1–4:15)
4. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee (4:16–9:50)
5. The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27)
6. The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (19:28–21:38)
7. The Suffering and Death of Jesus (22:1–23:56)
8. The Resurrection of Jesus (24:1–53)

2020 VISION: BEHOLD JESUS

ACTS

(Overviewbible.com by Jeffrey Kranz, <https://overviewbible.com/luke/>)

Jesus lived, Jesus died, Jesus rose, and Jesus ascended into heaven. Acts tells us what happens next.

Acts tells us how the Holy Spirit came upon the church, and how the gospel spreads from Jerusalem to Rome. The book picks up where the Gospels (four accounts of Jesus' life and ministry) leave off. The book of Acts begins with the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and goes on to show how the apostles preached Christ to the world. Peter and Paul are the primary human actors in this story. While Peter emerges as the leader among Christians at Jerusalem, Paul becomes the key missionary to Jews and Gentiles across the Roman Empire. With their leadership under the Holy Spirit, the church expands from a group of believers small enough to fit in one house (Ac 2:2) to a worldwide fellowship said to have turned the world upside-down (Ac 17:6).

Acts is the second book from Luke, who also wrote the Gospel that shares his name.

Why ACTS was written

Acts is the follow-up to the Gospel of Luke (Ac 1:1-2). Luke carefully records the spread of Christianity in the Roman world, sometimes as an eyewitness.

Acts shows us that Jesus was true to His word: the Holy Spirit came to the disciples and empowered them to work miracles and preach the good news throughout the world.

Key Text: Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Key Term: "Spirit"

This book records what the apostles and early Christians accomplished as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. The author understood that none of this would have been possible apart from the Holy Spirit.

One-Sentence Summary

Christianity spread from Jerusalem to Rome and from Jews to Gentiles by the power of the Holy Spirit, working especially through Peter and Paul.

Christ in ACTS

Jesus, triumphant over death, spends forty days in conversation with his disciples. He then ascends to the Father and sends, ten days later, the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower believers. Acts is an account of what Jesus continued to do through his church in the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit.

Outline of ACTS

1. The Christian Mission to the Jews (1:1-12:24)
 - a. The Church in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7)
 - b. The Church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (6:8-9:31)
 - c. Advances in Palestine and Syria (9:32-12:24)
2. The Christian Mission to the Gentiles (12:25-28:31)
 - a. Paul's First Missionary Journey and the Apostolic Council (12:25-16:5)
 - b. Paul's Second and Third Missionary Journeys (16:6-19:20)
 - c. Paul's Final Travels to Jerusalem and to Rome (19:21-28:31)
 - d.

Chronology of Paul's Letters

Galatians	48-49AD
1 and 2 Thessalonians	50-51
1 Corinthians	55
2 Corinthians	56
Romans	57
Philemon/ Colossians/ Ephesians	60-61
Philippians	61-62
Titus, 1 Timothy	ca.62
2 Timothy	ca 68

2020 VISION: BEHOLD JESUS

JAMES

(Overviewbible.com by Jeffrey Kranz)

Imagine you grew up learning the Law of Moses, doing good works and observing the commands that God had given to His people Israel. Now, all of a sudden, you're told that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the long-awaited Messiah, the seeking saviour whose death on the cross covers your sin. **And all you have to do is believe in Him.**

Now imagine seeing non-Jews grafted into the people of God (the church). They don't all keep your Sabbaths. They're not circumcised. They don't even know the Law—but they're just as much a part of God's people as you are, because they had faith.

If this were you, you might wonder if God even cared about good works anymore.

The apostle James meets this line of thought head-on: **“faith without works is dead”** (Jas 2:17, 26). He writes a letter to the Christian Jews scattered across the world, encouraging them to keep the faith and press onward to good works. In only 108 verses, James (also a Jew) addresses the trials his brothers and sisters are facing in the world, and sets out very, very practical approaches to Christian living for the people of God.

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30])†		●										
James, brother of Jesus, becomes a believer (30/33)		●										
James sees Paul in Jerusalem (36/37*)			●									
James writes his letter (40–45*)				■	■							
Paul writes letter to the Galatians (48*)					●							
Apostolic council in Jerusalem (48–49*)					●							
Paul visits James in Jerusalem (57*)							●					
James martyred (62)								●				

Author and Date of Writing: James, perhaps around A.D. 45

The author identified himself as “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). James is the English translation of the Hebrew name “Jacob” when it appears in the New Testament, Yakobos in Greek. There were several Jameses in the New Testament, including two apostles (Matt. 10:2–3). This letter was almost certainly written by the James who rose to prominence in the church of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). This was “James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19; 2:9). The son of Mary and Joseph, James had not believed that Jesus his older half brother was the Messiah until after the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to him (Matt. 13:55; John 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:7).

James was an effective leader as Acts and this letter shows. He apparently rose to leadership in the Jerusalem church sometime around the time that Peter left Jerusalem, about A.D. 44 (see Acts 12, especially 5:17). The tenor of his letter is such that it must predate the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49 that opened Christianity officially and fully to Gentiles (Acts 15). Thus, the epistle is likely to be dated between 44 and 49, with the year 45 being a reasonable estimate, perhaps composed in Jerusalem. James was probably the first New Testament book written.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred in A.D. 62. Christian tradition indicates that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple.

First Audience and Destination: Jewish believers living somewhere outside Palestine

This letter was written to Jewish followers of Jesus. Their meeting was called a “synagogue” in the original (2:2), and they were led by “elders” (5:14). They were part of “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (1:1), meaning Jews living outside Palestine. They lived in an unknown city of the Roman Empire where they spoke Greek. No reference is made to Gentiles.

2020 VISION: BEHOLD JESUS

Occasion

No one knows how James came to know about these believers. They had been victims of harassment of some kind and were being taken advantage of by their rich neighbours (1:2; 2:6). He wrote these discouraged disciples to encourage them not to lose heart. They also needed to know that the elements of true religion taught both in the Old Testament and by Jesus—giving, praying, fasting, living a holy life, and caring for widows, orphans, and the poor—were still part of the royal law of love that they were to live by (Matt. 6:1–18; James 1:27; 2:8).

Why James was written

James was originally composed to let (Jewish) believers in Jesus know the importance of having a practical, living, everyday faith. For James, practical faith equalled good works, and those who professed faith yet had no good works could not presume that they were truly God’s people. James also wrote to give good advice about what to do in the presence of temptations, trials, and persecution.

Key Text: James 2:26

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Key Term: “Works”

This book focuses on the importance of good works as the evidence of genuine faith. As such, it perfectly complements Galatians.

One-Sentence Summary

True faith must be lived out in everyday life by good deeds, especially in the face of trials or persecution, and such good works demonstrate the presence of faith and justification before God.

Christ in JAMES

Salvation made James a slave of his half-brother Jesus, the resurrected Lord (1:1). Jesus the Lord shares God’s unique glory (2:1). Looking forward to his return will be a source of patience with the trials and tests of life.

Outline of JAMES

James is noted not only for its similarity to Proverbs, but also for its similarity to the Sermon on the Mount. (It is at least possible that James heard his brother Jesus give this sermon, even though he was not yet a follower.) The following points of connection are noteworthy:

- The poor to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom, James 2:5; Matthew 5:3
- Contrasting plant pairs, such as grapes vs. thorns, James 3:10–12; Matthew 7:15–20
- Blessing promised to peacemakers, James 3:18; Matthew 5:9
- The ease with which earthly riches are corrupted, James 5:2–3; Matthew 6:19–20
- Swearing prohibited (“let your yea be yea”), James 5:12; Matthew 5:33–37

The structure of James is very loose. Each chapter may be characterized by a key term, however:

James 1	trials
James 2	works
James 3	tongue
James 4	wisdom
James 5	patience