

Note

Luke – Part 1 of 1

Summary

Luke - Part 1 of 12

The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as synoptic Gospels – they make reference to similar events but are presented in different sequence or style. Luke, the author, wrote the books of Luke and Acts. While Luke focuses on Jesus Christ as Saviour of the World, Acts focuses on the works of the Apostles, especially Paul.

Key Points:

- Who is Luke, the author?

Luke is the only gentile author in the bible. He is a physician by profession and a believer in Jesus Christ. Among other attributes, most importantly, he was a historian accompanying, interviewing and documenting Apostle Paul's spiritual journey while the latter was imprisoned.

- What is his core message in the book of Luke?

i. Jesus is the Saviour of the world

ii. Jesus is 100% man as He is 100% God

iii. Jesus' ministry seeks out everyone, especially the rejects of the society; the poor, the outcast and the lowly.

iv. His believers are to bring His message of salvation to all, through leading a life that mirrors Jesus' - living a simple, humble and generous life

- How does Luke differ from Matthew and Mark?

Matthew is an essential read for new believers. Written with Jews in mind, it emphasises Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the fulfilment of God's promise to the Jews. Mark builds upon this revelation to equip new believers for missional work with the knowledge of Christ through concise recordings of His missional life and works. Luke completes the Good News – Salvation, through the finished work of Christ on the Cross, is for everyone!

Transcript

Luke – Part 1 of 1

We come to the Gospel according to Luke.

Luke is the only Gentile author of the 40 or so authors in the entire Bible. Now, God chose a Gentile to write this book because Luke presents Christ as Savior of the world. Now, remember Matthew presented Christ as King of the Jews. So the right person, Matthew. Matthew was the first gospel put in the Bible because most of the early believers were Jews, but it was not the first written. Also, the book of Matthew is the best gospel for new believers. The second book of the gospels is Mark. Mark was written like a tract: very concise, very exciting to read. And it's ideal for unbelievers. The new believers were supposed make disciples straightaway in Matthew. Not like today's Christianity where you learn and learn and learn. No, no, the moment you became a believer, your mission was to make disciples and you needed a book and Mark was that perfect book.

Then we come to Luke telling us now that not only you make disciples, but you broaden your horizon and make disciples of the whole world. Jesus is Savior of the world. So that's the theme of this book - not just beyond Israel, not just beyond the Jewish believers, but geographically into the world. And also you'll find the book of Luke stretches our mission field, not just geographically, but also to reach what we would call 'outsiders'. You'll find this book also focuses a lot on people you and I would have thought to be unlikely disciples, like lepers, bankers, prostitutes, tax collectors. They are highlighted in this book. So it's Jesus, Savior of the world, the whole world geographically, and of all strata. Not just the good guys or religious guys, which is generally our thinking. The best prospects to us are the religious, good people, but that's not true actually.

Luke was a Gentile who came from the city of Antioch. Antioch was the first Gentile city to have a Christian church. In fact, the word “Christian” was coined by people in Antioch, north of Israel. Now you think doctors didn't exist in those days? They did. A Greek man wrote the doctors' oath which we still take today, called the Hippocratic Oath. So medicine isn't a new thing. It's been one of the oldest professions because if people get sick, they look for a physician. Luke was a physician and that's mentioned in Colossians 4:14. And he, obviously was an educated person, and was trained to be observant. In those days, physicians didn't have MRI and lab tests and they had to use their eyes to observe. They had to do a lot of interviews -we call it taking patients' history. So he was very good at interviewing, getting the facts out of people, and recording them. That was his skill. Basically, that's what a physician has to do: see what you can see, get facts out of someone and then record it precisely. So actually he was trained for this job of writing this gospel.

Now, you must remember he was not an eyewitness of Jesus Christ, and yet he's writing about Jesus Christ. So how in the world did he get this information? In Colossians 4:14, it also says that he was a co-worker, and maybe a better word, a co-traveler. He was like the young man who came along with Paul on his missionary journeys. And he was with Paul in his imprisonments; Paul had two long spells of imprisonment. One in Caesarea where he spent 2 years, that was when he was first arrested and kept there waiting for his trial in Rome. And during this time, Luke had all the time to interview Paul. And then, thereafter, Paul was brought to Rome and spent another two years in house arrest in Rome. He couldn't go out, he was quarantined. And so Luke again had another two years to interview and record what Paul knew of Jesus; Paul himself was not an eyewitness. So here we see, Luke was a historian interviewing and it is thought that during the two years in Caesarea, he wrote this the Gospel according to Luke, and then in a Rome, he wrote the book of Acts.

Now, he was a historian, there's no question about that. In fact, he was possibly the only historian of the 40 authors in the Bible. In the Bible, people wrote on the inspiration of God. People wrote letters to address problems. Prophets got messages to address certain problems. Why do you think Luke wrote this? It is stated very clearly in Luke chapter 1.

Luke 1:1 ESV

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely, for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

So he says, a lot of people have written but I felt I needed to write an orderly account - that's a physician! For a man called Theophilus. Later when we study the Book of Acts we realize that Luke and Acts were actually part of one unified volume. In fact, it should have been called Luke-Acts, one book, not two separate books because you can see very clearly they were like two volumes of one biography or one history. Maybe we can call it the history of Christianity Volume 1-about Jesus; Volume 2-about the apostles, especially Paul. So basically, how Christianity started with Jesus - Volume 1 and how it spread – Volume 2. So you could call it the early history of Christianity - Volume 1 and 2. So he was a historian, the only one in the Bible, in a very strict sense of the word. Because others recorded history too but their goal was not exactly to record history. Luke was a physician, a co-traveller with Paul, a historian, but most important - he was an evangelist. His goal was to see that the gospel spread to the world, that the world would know that there is a Savior, and He is Jesus Christ. He came to save all throughout the entire world, from the poorest to the richest. I think that was his goal, you will see that in this book.

Now, you have already read Matthew, Mark, and Luke. So, I'm not going to go through a lot of things because there's a huge amount of overlap. In fact, I believe that Luke took a lot of stuff from Mark. Mark was the first writer and Matthew took a lot from him, the framework seems to be very much like Mark. Mark was concise, short, and crisp. Matthew added the Jewish part. Luke used the same framework and added the "Savior of the world" part. Matthew wanted to emphasize "Jesus is King of the Jews". Luke wanted to emphasize "but he's also Savior of the world". So they used the basic framework of Mark and expanded it. So I don't need to repeat a lot of things except to say that there are 5 unique things about this book that makes it different from the other Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Let's see the 5 unique things in the book of Luke.

Number 1, it seems that Luke focuses a lot on the poor. Now, you see up to this point, religion was usually for the religious. Nobody really bothered with the poor. They were not very literate, cannot read or cannot remember doctrines, don't have money to go to the temple and make sacrifices, don't have spare time to do that. They're just struggling. Almost all religions are for religious leaders. And generally, religions pray for the king, for the safety of the king. Now, Luke wanted to stretch that, that Jesus is Savior of the world. And the world is basically made up of poor people; we call it the pyramid. I always say I like to work at the BOP, the bottom of the pyramid. And there are always more poor people who are usually neglected by religions because religions are generally expensive, time-consuming, and need some kind of understanding and education. On the other hand, the poorest who get to the gospel. So he seems to emphasize the poor; that's one unique point.

Let's look at Luke chapter 1 and see when Mary was having this baby in her. After the angel came to Mary to tell her she will have a baby, she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Let's see what Mary's prayer is like in Luke 1:46. We call it "The Magnificat"-Mary's song of praise.

Luke 1:46.

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is His name. And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel...."

Now I hope you see this. First, he used Mary to carry Jesus. I mean, that's not the best way to come into the world. Probably the worst. I mean, a teenage, unmarried girl, pregnant, carrying the Son of God. No, no, no. Couldn't you choose someone better?

So that's number 1. And then she said some of the things that sound like, "You allowed me to carry this baby because You wanted to scatter the proud, bring them down and lift up the poor". That sounds a little bit unnecessary to me. I mean, can't you just lift up the poor without bringing down the rich.

Then we see, when Jesus was born, the angels came and it's only recorded in Luke and revealed themselves to shepherds in the field. Now shepherding in those days, was a really low kind of job. The angels didn't reveal the birth to scholars, the rabbis, or even the decent people in Jerusalem but to shepherds out in the fields at night. It's all recorded in Luke only.

Luke 2:8-15.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shown around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

See here the focus: shepherds (nobodies), out in the field by night (not a nice environment), told about a baby born in a manger. Now that's where you keep animals, not babies! Babies don't get born in a manger. So we see here that the whole focus is on the poor. And then the news is Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace. Not on Israel, but peace on Earth. He is the Savior of the world.

Then, we see Luke 2:22. All this is not recorded elsewhere. Jewish babies had to be brought for dedication, and this little detail is shown here.

Luke 2:22

And when the time came for the purification, according to the Law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now, normally you would bring sacrifices, lambs or other sacrifices, but the poor were given an allowance to bring something very, very cheap: two birds, not two animals. Now, the fact that Mary knew this birth was special (the angel had told her), you would think they would dedicate this baby to God with everything they have, but what did they bring? Two pigeons. Well, that's the minimum. Now, I don't think Mary or Joseph was stingy or trying to save money, I think they were just poor. Plain poor. So here we see a kind of hint. I'm not saying all these things are clear, but it hints.

In Luke, you'll see a lot of things that are not mentioned elsewhere, like Lazarus.

We all know the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus is a beggar, but Lazarus is the one who gets to heaven. All these are unique in Luke. So basically, point number 1 is: Luke emphasizes a lot on the poor.

Point number 2 - When we think of the poor, we think of no money, but actually, the word "poor" also includes "outsiders." In Luke's account of the gospel we see a lot of outsiders. We find, for example, the story of the 10 lepers coming to Jesus. Not one, but 10, and then the story ends by saying that one leper came back to thank Jesus, the other 9 didn't bother, and that one leper was a Samaritan. Now, to you and me, it is no big deal that this is a Samaritan but to the people who read this book in the early days, a Samaritan? They are the worst -the Jews really despised the Samaritans. If they had to walk from Jerusalem and they had to cross Samaritan country, they would make a huge detour, so that they don't have to enter the Samaritan country. That's how much they despised the Samaritans. But it tells us the good guy here was a Samaritan. In fact, the story of the Good Samaritan is only found in Luke. You say that to an Israelite in those days or to people of those days, "good" and "Samaritan" don't mix, the two words cannot be put together. But in Luke, he mentions that the good guy is a Samaritan. What's Luke trying to say? The gospel is even for outsiders. And then, you have a lot of prostitutes here; and the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector is only found here, nowhere else. We know this story but

we don't know why it's only in Luke. Because he's a tax collector, despised. Then, you find a lot of females mentioned in Luke. You must understand females were looked down in those (days). For religious things: not females, males must dominant. So unique point number 2: a lot of outsiders in Luke. As you read, see words like the paralyzed, the prostitute, the bedridden - all these people we don't have time for.

Number 3, you'll find the word "Holy Spirit" used far more in Luke than in the other gospels: Matthew, Mark or John. That wouldn't surprise you because he also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles is a very bad title; should be the Acts of the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul and Peter. Now, of course, you cannot be an evangelist to the world in your own strength! Impossible! So if Luke wanted Jesus to be known in the world as Savior of the world, the Holy Spirit is critical. When you read the book of Acts later, you will find how much the emphasis is on the Holy Spirit, bringing Jesus to the world.

Number 4 unique point is - prayer. Mentioned many times. More than in the other gospels. Now, of course, how do you bring Jesus to the world without prayer?

Number 5 - The word "joy" or "rejoice" in Luke outnumbers the other gospels. So these are the 5 unique things as you listen or read the book of Luke. In the Gospel according to Luke, you see things regarding poverty, the outcasts, Holy Spirit, prayer, and joy. After you become a new believer, you read Matthew, then you use Mark to help others come to know Christ. But then, as you want to expand your ministry, and go beyond your circle of friends and the few people you want to share the gospel to, then you have to read Luke. I hope you see the sequence, the beautiful way God

puts it all. It's not just three repetitive books or three slightly different books thrown into this jumble, and we read can in any sequence we like.

So basically chapters 1 and 2 are the introduction. It starts with the angel saying, "Peace on Earth". This peace is going out to spread through the Earth, that's Luke 2:14. This is in chapters 1 and 2 - the introduction part. When Jesus is brought to the dedication, His parents brought two simple birds for His dedication. There was a man who was waiting, his name was Simeon. He was waiting in the temple for a long time because God told him to wait there, "I'm going to show you something before you die". And so when Jesus was brought in the temple, Simeon was excited and we see what Simeon says in Luke 2:29 - 32.

This what Simeon says, Luke 2:29.

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for the glory of Your people, Israel."

What did Simeon say about Jesus? He's the light for the Gentiles. He is for the Gentiles. Now, this is very important. It tells you God uses Simeon to introduce Jesus as the light of the Gentiles. Now Luke chapter 2 also shows a very unique part, not found in other gospels. It shows the life of Jesus as a boy. Now, all the other gospels have either his baptism or nothing about his childhood. Nothing about him as a boy, except in Luke. And I'll just read it because it's unique. I also want to emphasize a point here.

Luke 2:41-52

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was 12 years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy

Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it but supposing Him to be in the group, they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem searching for Him. After three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when His parents saw Him, they were astonished. And His mother said to Him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold Your father and I have been searching for You in great distress?" And He said to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house? And they did not understand the saying that He spoke to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man.

Now, this is unique in this gospel, not mentioned anywhere else. What is all this about? Jesus was 12 years old. Now a Jew, when he's 12, becomes an adult. They have a ceremony called a Bar Mitzvah, still happens today. Now at a Bar Mitzvah, a 12 year old boy is given a passage of the Jewish scripture, the Old Testament to read. From that day onwards, he's a full-fledged adult. Before that, anything he does wrong, it's his parents' fault, not his, but from that day, anything he does wrong, it's his fault. And he's supposed to then learn to obey God's Law. So, when Jesus was brought at 12 years old, he probably had His Bar Mitzvah in His synagogue in Nazareth, He goes to Jerusalem. He's an adult already now. Of course, His mother forgets that. So after they go to the Passover, they all travel, with the whole village to go together. And generally, the women would walk ahead because they had to set up tents and prepare the food. So women and girls and children went ahead. Then the men came behind and so normally, Jesus because when He was a little boy, He will go with His mom and then come back with His mom. But now, He had His Bar Mitzvah, He is an adult now. And so, on that occasion when He was 12, the mother left with all the women thinking that Jesus was with His papa. He's a man now. And then His papa's group, all the men, leave after that. And Jesus is not with His papa and His papa thinks, "Oh, Jesus with His mama", because that's where He always goes every year and comes up that way. And so

both of them assumed where He was and then when dinner time came, they couldn't find him. And so they rush back to Jerusalem to look for Him. And they find Him after three days. Of course, the last place they expected to find Him was with the PhDs of the Law. I mean, He's 12 years old, what's He doing there? So they run around, looking at all the alleys where the kids play and sing and have fun. Finally they find Him, in the least expected place -with these scholars. And He's sitting and asking, listening, and asking questions. And they said, "What are you doing?" "I must be about My Father's business." He's a man now.

You see in the Jewish way when you become 12, you join your father's profession. That's why He became a carpenter. Everybody, just automatically, at the age of 12, apprentices to his father, no more under the mom but under the dad already. So dad's a carpenter, you are a carpenter; dad's a fisherman, you're a fisherman; so you apprentice. And so He stays in Jerusalem, He's going to apprentice under God. "Don't you know I must be about My Father's business, I'm an adult now." You see, his real father was not Joseph. His real father was God. But then it's interesting. It goes on to say that He went back to Nazareth with them and was submissive to His parents. To His dad, for example, He became a carpenter because Joseph was a carpenter, he built door frames. But what I want you to see here is: it showed Him growing up. You notice in the last verse, "And Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man". He grew up like a normal boy. I think this is very important because the next book is going to show Jesus as Son of God, and sometimes we forget that Jesus is 100% man, like you and me. As man, He had to grow cell by cell, His mind had to be filled – knowledge, fact by fact, just like you and me, growing up normally. And yet as God, He is also 100% God. This is the mystery of Christ. You keep forgetting these things, you think Jesus is God so when He suffered on the cross, what's the big deal? As God, He can't suffer. No, no, no! He's 100% man. He feels fear like us, He feels pain like us. Because He's a man. So I think this was put here to balance our view as we move on to the book of John when he presents Jesus, "The beginning was the Word, the Word was with God." You think Jesus was God just masquerading as a man? You know a lot of religions, God came down in the appearance of man - Theophany, they call it. No, Jesus is really 100% man. He had to grow up like us, struggling, except no sin, that's

all. So I hope this helps us to understand, because all the gospels balance one another up, there's a purpose. The introduction in chapters 1 & 2 says the Savior of the world was also a man.

Chapters 3 to 9 speaks of His mission in Galilee. Chapter 3 gives His genealogy and His genealogy is interesting. In Matthew, His genealogy goes right back to Abraham and stops there. Matthew showed Jesus as King of the Jews so why do you care about going further than that? Abraham was the father of the Jews. In Luke, His genealogy goes back to Adam, because He is Savior of the world. And the genealogy in Matthew is taken from His father because it's how Jews considered genealogy. Though Joseph was really not His father, but Joseph was also a descendant of David. In Luke, His genealogy goes through Mary, because Mary is His biological mother, and she's also a descendant of David because He is a man. So when we say Luke is the gospel that shows Jesus as Savior of the world, sometimes I also say Luke is the gospel that shows Jesus as 100% man, biologically 100% man as opposed to John showing Him as Son of God.

Then we see He launches His mission in Luke chapter 4. He goes to the synagogue and reads a passage from Isaiah 61:1-2. That's how He launched His mission.

Luke 4:17-19

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the

blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

I want you to see two things here. He said, “I have come to proclaim good news to the poor”. I hope you get it. He's launching, He is telling, “This is what I am coming to do here.” He uses Isaiah and says, “This is about Me; I'm coming to proclaim the good news, the gospel, to the poor”. Of course, the word “poor” in Hebrew is more than just no money. It also means poor in status, poor in education, poor in other things. Basically, the bottom of the pyramid. That's what He came to do it. Number 2, He said, “I'm here to proclaim liberty”. The word “liberty” is taken from Leviticus about the year of Jubilee. The Jews had a law that at the year of Jubilee, every slave is freed, every debt is repaid. No more debt, settled, you have liberty, slaves freed. That's what He came to do: to pay our debt and free us. But to whom particularly? To the poor and the oppressed. So I hope that you just see that he's also telling you in the book of Luke, His focus. We go into the world and missionaries do that, and oftentimes go to the cities, go to the rich people because it's easier, it's neater, it's cleaner, it's more respectable. But that's what we see here.

And then we see in Luke chapters 3 to 9, His mission in Galilee. He spent His time there reaching all kinds of people: bedridden, lepers, people with disabilities, the paralyzed, prostitutes, tax collectors; all kinds of people. He heals them; He transforms their lives.

And then, Luke chapters 10 to 19 roughly, because the chapter divisions are not put in a very nice place. Luke chapters 10 to 19, you see His long journey to Jerusalem, and in the process He's training His disciples, He's teaching them truths. He's teaching them generosity: giving to the poor; He's teaching them you don't need a lot of possessions. We don't need a

lot. We see Him trying to teach them a simple lifestyle. When you read, try to see these things in Luke. And then why is He doing all this? About giving, about having a simple lifestyle, so that we can be missionaries to the world.

And then the final week is the last chapters - chapter 20 to the end. I want you to see one of the last things He did before He died on the cross and said, "It is finished". I am not going to talk about the other things on the cross but just these unique ones which are not recorded in the rest.

Luke 23:42.

And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom". And He said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise".

It's almost the last words He said. And then after that, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit". Who is this whom He invited into heaven with Him? A convict. I hope you see these things, kind of unique, it's not all in the other gospels.

Luke 24:45-49

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, (this is after you rose from the dead) and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I'm sending the promise of My Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

Power from on high. And you're going to bring this message to all nations. All nations. And then the book continues in the book of Acts after that, when they got power from on high and how they went into all the world. So Luke is about Jesus, Savior of the world. Are you bringing that message? Living a simple life, a generous life, you can bring this message to the whole world. This is the message of Luke. God bless you.