

BOOK OF LUKE

Luke was the only Gentile author (amongst the 40 or so authors) in the Bible because of the theme of this book.

1. The book of Luke presents Christ as Saviour of the world.
2. The book of Matthew presents Christ as King of Jews. Matthew was placed in Bible as the first book of the New Testament because most early believers were Jews and the Gospel of Matthew was meant for new believers. The second book, the Gospel of Mark, was written as a tract for unbelievers and meant for new believers to quickly go and make disciples.
3. The book of Luke is not only about making disciples but also to broaden this mission to the whole world! The book of Luke went beyond the Jews and geographically beyond Jerusalem to reach outsiders (not just the educated and religious people). Hence, the book of Luke focuses a lot on outsiders, poor outcasts, prostitutes, tax collectors, etc.

Who is Luke?

1. The author, Luke, came from the city of Antioch which is North of Israel. Antioch was the first city to have a Christian church. The word "Christian" was coined by people in Antioch.
2. Luke was a physician (Col 4:14). He was educated and trained to be observant as doctors take patients' history by interviewing and recording. He was suitably trained for writing this Gospel though he was not a disciple but only a co-traveller of Paul. Luke recorded what Paul had told him during the two long spells of Paul's imprisonment (which was 2 years in prison in Caesarea and another 2 years under house arrest in Rome).
3. Luke was a historian and was the only historian in the Bible.
 - a) Luke 1:1 says that Luke wrote this book for Theophilus as an orderly record. Excellent Theophilus most likely referred to a judge. It is likely that Luke wrote this document to fight the court trial for Paul.
 - b) The books of Luke and Acts are one unified volume which details the History of Christianity. We can see the book of Luke as:
 - Volume 1 (Gospel of Luke) is about Jesus and the start of Christianity.
 - Volume 2 (Book of Acts) is about the apostles and the spread of Christianity.
 - c) Luke was an evangelist and his goal was to see the Gospel spread worldwide because Jesus came to serve all the people from the poorest to the richest.
 - d) Luke took a lot of stuff from the Gospel of Mark. Matthew then added to Mark too. So, Mark was the base framework upon which both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were built.

What is unique in the Book of Luke?

There are 5 unique things about this book versus the other two Synoptic Gospels (Matthew and Mark).

1. The book of Luke focuses a lot on the poor and uneducated.
 - a) The poor has no time and no money to go to the temple etc. Most religions pray for the kings ("God save the king" is used in some national anthems but

the world is mainly poor at the bottom of the pyramid and often neglected by religious leaders.

- b) When the poor understands the Gospel, it benefits them extensively!
 - c) We see Luke's emphasis on the poor from the following:
 - i. Luke 1:46-55 is Mary's prayer (also known as the Magnificat). This is Mary's magnifying song of praise.
 - Luke 1:48. Mary declared her own humble state as His maid servant
 - Luke 1:51- 52 say God scatters the proud, puts down the mighty ones and exalts the lowly
 - ii. God arranged for the Son of God to be carried in a virgin, unmarried teenage girl! It is not the best choice from the human point of view.
 - iii. Why can't God bring up the poor without bringing down the rich? (It seems unnecessary to us but it's not.)
 - iv. The angel announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds (which is a low status job) and not to the rabbi or scholars. This is recorded only in the book of Luke (see Luke 2:10-14).
 - v. Baby Jesus was born in a manger where animals were kept.
 - The focus is on the Poor!
 - Luke 2:14 says "Peace on Earth" and not just Israel! It emphasizes that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.
 - vi. Luke 2:22 describes the dedication ceremony of Jesus. In Luke 2:24, Jesus' parents brought only a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Joseph was poor and could only offer these as their sacrifice, and not an animal, even though Mary knew that Jesus was special.
 - vii. The story about the Rich Man and Lazarus (the Beggar) is also unique in the book of Luke.
2. The "Poor" include outsiders. The book of Luke included the following stories:
 - a) The story of Ten Lepers in which only 1 leper came back to thank God and he was a Samaritan. To the Jews, Samaritan is considered the worst and despised people. The Jews will detour in their travels to avoid the Samaritan country. The story of the Good Samaritan is also found in Gospel of Luke only. To the Jews, the words "Good" and "Samaritan" cannot co-exist.
 - b) The Gospel is also for the outsiders like
 - i. Zacchaeus who was a short tax collector who climbed the Sycamore tree
 - ii. Females who were not in the religious focus
 - iii. Paralyzed, etc. who were people whom most religious people usually do not have time for.
 3. The word "Holy Spirit" is found in Luke more than the other Gospels and the author, Luke, also wrote the book of Acts (of the Holy Spirit). It emphasizes that we cannot be an evangelist on our own strength. The Holy Spirit is critical in evangelism.
 4. The word "Prayer" is also found many times in the Gospel of Luke compared to the other three Gospels. Without prayers, we cannot bring the Gospel to the world.
 5. The words "Joy" or "Rejoice" outnumber that in the other three Gospels too.

Therefore, after a New Believer has read the book of Matthew and learns to evangelize to friends in Mark, he is able to expand his circle of evangelism to the poor and outcasts in the society as per the book of Luke. Hence, these are not just 3 repetitive books.

Structure of the Book of Luke

1. Chapters 1 and 2 - Introduction

- a) A message about peace on Earth was introduced by the angel.
- b) Simeon at Jesus' dedication (Luke 2:29-32) said that he could now depart because his eyes had seen Jesus who is a light for the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). God used Simeon to introduce Jesus as the Light of the world.
- c) These chapters introduce us to the life of Jesus as a boy from Luke 2:41 (this is unique in the book of Luke)
 - i. Jesus, at 12 years old, had a Bar Mitzvah (coming of age) ceremony. This is when boys become adults and they start to take responsibility and obey God's Law. In this passage, Jesus' father assumed that He was with His mother and His mother assumed otherwise, forgetting that He had become an adult. The women travelled ahead of the men on the way to Jerusalem and back so that they could set up tents and prepare the food. So, both parents did not notice that Jesus was missing on their return journey.
 - ii. Jesus said He must be about His Father's business. All Jews automatically apprentice to their fathers at the age of 12. E.g. Jesus is a carpenter. Hence, Jesus became an apprentice to Joseph. But, Jesus said that He must be an apprentice under God because God is His Father. So, in effect, He was saying that, "I am the Son of God!"
 - iii. Jesus went back to Nazareth with His parents and was submissive to Joseph as a carpenter.
- d) Jesus grew up like a normal boy. Jesus is therefore 100% man in the book of Luke while the book of John shows that Jesus is 100% God. Jesus grew cell by cell physically and acquired head knowledge fact by fact slowly. Hence, Jesus is also like any human who feels fears and pains at the Cross.
- e) It is not that Jesus is God masquerading as man!
- f) The introduction says Jesus is not only the Saviour of the world but also 100% man.

2. Chapters 3 to 9 - Jesus' Mission in Galilee

- a) Chapter 3
 - i. Genealogy is given all the way back to Adam unlike in the book of Matthew, in which the genealogy stops at Abraham. This is because Luke is emphasizing on Jesus as the Saviour of the world and mankind, hence the genealogy has to trace all the way back to Adam.
 - ii. The genealogy in the book of Matthew is taken from Joseph's side (which is the Jews' method of only accounting for the man's side). This is to show that Jesus is a descendant of David, as promised by God.

- iii. The genealogy in the book of Luke, however, is from Mary's side. Mary is also a descendant of David. Therefore, Jesus is Man (biologically 100% man although Joseph was not Jesus' genetic father. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit).
- b) Chapters 4 to 9
 - i. Jesus launched His mission by reading Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue, saying that He came to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2 (Jesus came to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour. He came to proclaim good news to the poor (i.e. poor in status, money, etc.).
 - ii. Jesus came to proclaim liberty (or freedom) and this also coincided with the year of Jubilee which Jews have to observe according to the book of Leviticus where they have to set their slaves free. Jesus is here to set us free, we are no longer slave of sin!
 - iii. He launched His mission in Galilee, instead of Jerusalem. This is where the poor people were and He transformed their lives.
- 3. Chapters 10 to 19 – Jesus' long journey to Jerusalem: training His disciples and teaching them truths
 - a) Give to the poor. He trained them on generosity.
 - b) Don't need too much possessions.
 - c) Lead a simple lifestyle.
 - d) Only then, can we be missionaries to the world.
- 4. Chapters 20 to 24 – Last week of Jesus' life

The following events are uniquely captured in the book of Luke:

 - a) Luke 23:42. A thief, who was hung alongside Jesus on the Cross, was saved. Jesus invited a convict into the Kingdom of God.
 - b) Luke 24:45-47. – Jesus' message, (after His resurrection and before His ascension) to His disciples was to proclaim the Gospel to all the nations but they had to first wait for the Holy Spirit to be given to them which would only happen later on, on Pentecost Day in Acts Chapter 2.

Question: Are we living a simple and generous life so that we can bring the Gospel to the whole world?