

Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 14*

Scripture: *Luke 1:1-4*

Gospel of Luke: Writer and Date

- This gospel was written by Luke the beloved physician (Col. 4:14). This gospel was originally written in the most refined Greek, comparable to the Book of Hebrews.
- Luke was the only Gentile writer of any books in the Old and New Testaments.
- Luke wrote this gospel and the Book of Acts (Lk. 1:3; Acts 1:1). Theophilus means “lover of God” and could represent believers in general, but most likely he was a person of high social standing (“most excellent Theophilus”). The style and language of Luke and Acts are similar. The combined length of Luke’s two books is greater than those of any other New Testament writer, including Paul and his 13 epistles.
- Luke joined Paul’s mission team at Troas where Paul received the call to preach the gospel in Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10). This fact is established by the “we” passages, indicating that Luke was part of the team.
- Luke relied on eyewitness testimonies to the life and ministry of Christ in writing this gospel (Lk. 1:1-2).
- Luke wrote an orderly and accurate account of Christ’s life and ministry (Lk. 1:3-4). He was determined to establish the certainty of historical facts about Christ. It has been said that certainty is the hallmark of the Christian faith (see Pr. 22:20-21).
- The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.

Unique Features of Luke

- Luke is the longest book in the New Testament and is the most comprehensive and detailed of the four gospels.
- Luke has a special interest in the miraculous births of John and Jesus (Lk. 1-2).
- Luke stresses the humanity and compassion of Jesus. He gives the most complete record of Christ’s ancestry, birth, and development. Luke provides a glimpse of Christ’s life at age 12 (Lk. 2:41-52).
- Luke alone contains four beautiful hymns known as: the *Magnificat* of Mary (Lk. 1:46-55); the *Benedictus* of Zacharias (1:67-79); the *Gloria in Excelsis* of the angels (2:13-14); and the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon (2:28-32).
- Luke gives special attention to people not found in other gospels (Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Zacchaeus, and Cleopas).
- Luke has a special emphasis on women. He mentions them 43 times, almost as much as Matthew and Mark combined. Here are some examples: the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Lk. 4:38-39); the raising of the widow’s son at Nain (7:11-18); the

forgiveness of the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with tears (7:36-50); the naming of the women who financially supported Him and the apostles (8:1-3); the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter (8:40-56); the hospitality of Mary and Martha (10:38-42); the healing of the crippled woman (13:10-13); the woman searching for her lost coin (15:8-10); the warning about Lot's wife (17:32); the widow and her two mites (21:1-4); the daughters of Jerusalem lamenting as He walked to Calvary (23:27-31); the presence of women at the cross (23:49) and at Christ's burial (23:55-56); and the resurrection reports to the women (24:1-12).

- Luke highlighted the prayer life of Jesus as a mark of His humanity. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him while He was praying after His baptism (Lk. 3:21). He often went into solitary places to pray (5:16). Before He selected the twelve apostles, He spent all night in prayer (6:12-13). He prayed in the presence of His disciples before asking them about His identity (9:18). His transfiguration took place while He was praying (9:29). When the seventy returned from their preaching assignment He prayed and thanked the Father (10:21). His prayer life caused the disciples to ask Him to teach them to pray (11:1). When He warned Peter about Satan's desire to sift him (test him), Jesus assured Peter that He had prayed for him that his faith would not fail (22:31-32). He prayed in Gethsemane as He faced the cup of suffering (22:39-46). Two of His cries on the cross were to the Father in prayer (23:34, 46).
- Luke stressed the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of Mary (Lk. 1:35), Elizabeth (1:41), Zacharias (1:67), Simeon (2:25-27), and John the Baptist (1:15). The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism (3:22), led Him into the wilderness temptation (4:1), and empowered Him for ministry (4:18-19). After His resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus predicted that the apostles would carry out the Great Commission in the power of the Holy Spirit (24:49).
- Luke recorded 17 parables not found in other gospels (including the good Samaritan, the rich fool and his barns, the excuses for not attending the great supper, the lost coin, lost sheep, and lost son, and the parable of the Pharisee and publican).
- Luke mentioned 6 miracles not found in other gospels (catch of fish (Lk. 5:1-11), raising of the widow's son (7:11-18), healing of the woman with an 18-year long infirmity (13:10-17), healing of a man with dropsy (edema, excess fluid, 14:1-6), healing of ten lepers (17:11-19), and restoration of Malchus' ear (22:50-51).
- Luke included several passages not found in other gospels (including the rich man and Lazarus, conversion of Zacchaeus, and conversion of the dying thief on the cross).

Seven Statements of Jesus from the Cross

- 1) Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do (Lk. 23:34).
- 2) Verily I say unto you, today you will be with me in paradise (Lk. 23:43)
- 3) Woman, behold your son.... Behold your mother (Jn. 19:26-27)
- 4) My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Mt. 27:46)
- 5) I thirst (Jn. 19:28).
- 6) It is finished (Jn. 19:30).
- 7) Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Lk. 23:46).

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