

Introduction to Luke

Author, Date and Recipients

Luke was a physician and a travel companion of the apostle Paul ([Col. 4:14](#)). He wrote this Gospel and its sequel, the book of [Acts](#). The earliest possible date of Luke–[Acts](#) is immediately after the events that Luke recorded in [Acts 28](#), which would have been c. AD 62. Both Luke and [Acts](#) are addressed to “Theophilus” ([Luke 1:3](#); [Acts 1:1](#)), about whom nothing more is known. Luke’s broader audience consisted primarily of Gentile Christians like Theophilus.

The Gospel in Luke

Luke informs us from the beginning ([1:1–4](#)) that his is not the only Gospel to have been written nor the only Gospel account that could be written (cf. [John 21:25](#)). Nevertheless, the church has always recognized the great gift that the third Gospel is to us. There are many beautiful and essential teachings of Jesus and pictures of the gospel that come to us from Luke alone.

While the historical and theological witness of all four Gospels contains many consistent themes, Luke describes for us the gospel and its application in several specific and important ways. At the broadest level we learn from this Gospel account that the gospel is multi-faceted and full-orbed. That is, the gospel is explained and applied as being about our whole lives, physically and spiritually, externally and internally, for now and for the future, in our relationship with God and with others. The gospel is not simply a message about religion and the “religious” portion of our lives. Rather, Luke’s presentation helps us see clearly that the gospel of Jesus is about the comprehensive *blessedness* of God available to us through Jesus Christ.

At a more specific level Luke retells the stories and teachings of Jesus in a way that consistently emphasizes that the gospel is a matter of the heart, the inner person, not mere external religion. Jesus constantly reveals the heart motivations behind our actions and pushes us toward opening our hearts in humility toward God. As a result, the gospel in [Luke](#) is often presented as a call to reevaluate everything in the world according to God’s perspective, not ours. This means valuing humility over prestige, mercy over justice, favor with God over favor with people, and—especially challenging to us—valuing a rich relationship with God over the power of money.

To emphasize this comprehensive understanding of the gospel, Luke uses a variety of complementary images to describe it. The gospel includes the message of peace, the offer of forgiveness of sins through repentance, the promise of inheriting eternal life, the invitation to enter the kingdom of God, and the joy of being with Jesus as a disciple. In all of this, the gospel is *good news* because it announces the grace and peace that have now come to sinners in Jesus Christ.

Outline

Mark displays a two-part structure. Part 1 concerns the expansive presentation of Jesus' authority, while Part 2 narrates the severe test and ultimate affirmation of Jesus' authority, as well as the salvific necessity of his suffering.

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