

**NAME**

The name "Luke" means "light giving" or "luminous."

**AUTHOR**

**Authorship:**

The third Gospel is attributed to Luke (Colossians 4:14). Lukan authorship is not seriously questioned.

1. External Evidence

Several early Church Fathers, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, ascribed the book to Luke. Lukan authorship has been affirmed by the whole Christian church throughout the ages (with but few exceptions in modern times).

Mitchell:

This external evidence is even more imposing when we consider that Luke's name attached to this gospel to give it prestige could hardly have been the motive, else a more prominent personage (and probably not a Gentile) would have been selected.

2. Internal Evidence

Lukan authorship is based upon the close affinity of this Gospel with the Book of Acts (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Hence, once authorship of Acts has been determined, the authorship of this Gospel automatically follows: 1) He was a companion of Paul - note the first person plural "we sections" (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21; 18; 27:1-28:16); 2) He was with Paul in Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16; Colossians 4:7-17; Philemon 23,24); and 3) The interest in sickness and use of medical terms manifested in the two works (Luke 4:38-39; Acts 16:19-26; 22:44; Colossians 4:14)

**Biography of Luke**

Luke's name is mentioned only three times in the New Testament. He is called the "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), Paul's "fellow laborer" (Philemon 24), and Paul's companion in the hours preceding his martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:11). All three passages also mention Mark which indicates that Mark and Luke worked together. Luke was a close friend and fellow worker of Paul. He was with Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40); he joined him at Philippi (Acts 20:1-17) on the return from the third missionary journey, remained with him at Caesarea and accompanied him to Rome (Acts, 20-28).

Mitchell:

From the context of Colossians 4:14 we learn that he was a Gentile. In fact of all the writers of the Bible he is probably the only one who is a Gentile. From the preface of this Gospel (Luke 1:1) we learn that he was not an actual eye-witness of what he wrote. He is thought to be "the brother" whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches (2 Corinthians 8:18), and, by tradition, is always declared to be a Gentile and proselyte. All Greek grammarians attest to the fact that he was the most cultured of all the Gospel writers.

**DATE**

Mitchell:

Because the Gospel of Luke is the first of a two-volume work (Luke and Acts), its date is closely connected with the second volume. The abrupt ending of the book of Acts indicates to many that Luke concluded his writings at the end of the imprisonment (else why not continue to tell of the death of Paul, etc.). This would place the writing of Acts around 60-62 A.D. Most conservatives place the writing of Luke during the Jerusalem-Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 24:27). This would suggest a date of around 58-59 A.D.

Halley (page 586):

Luke's two-year stay in Caesarea (58-60 A.D.) would have afforded him abundant opportunity to get firsthand, accurate information concerning all details of the record of Jesus from the original companions of Jesus and the founders of the church - the apostles.

Caesarea was less than 60 miles from Jerusalem. Jesus' mother may have been still alive, living at John's home in Jerusalem. Luke may have spent many hours with her, listening to her reminiscences of her wondrous Son. And James, bishop of Jerusalem, Jesus' own younger brother, could have supplied Luke with full details of the whole account of Jesus' life.

Mitchell:

The allusion to a siege and capture of Jerusalem (Luke 32:20-24) has been interpreted by those who deny predictive prophecy to mean that it must have been written after 70 A.D. But such is not at all demanded by the evidence, and once Biblical supernaturalism is granted, it presents no problem. Besides, the book was obviously written before Paul's death which is usually set at 68 A.D.

**THEME**

Halley (page 44): *"Jesus the Son of Man"*

Mitchell: *"Jesus Christ as the perfect God-Man, Who after a perfect ministry provided a perfect salvation for sinful humanity."*

Jesus the perfect man the Savior of imperfect man.

Mitchell:

While Mark presents Jesus as the Servant of God who is obedient to God's will in all things, Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man in His relationship to men. Christ's helpfulness to man is shown. He is one with man in His suffering. Throughout His ministry, Christ is carefully identified with man. Jesus Christ is shown to be qualified to represent men in the work of redemption because of His true humanity. Luke wishes to show men that they have a true representative in Jesus Christ because He was truly human. Instead of emphasizing mighty works (as does Mark), his Gospel contains many discourses and parables. Luke, in attempting to give a more complete historical account, begins with the announcement of John the Baptist and even goes beyond Christ's ascension to the joy of the apostles. Constantly, Luke attempts to show Christ in His manward aspect and throughout the historical narratives of places and events His helpfulness and sympathy to man in general is emphasized. The importance of Christ's humanity can be seen in the large place Luke gives to the birth narrative. He traces His genealogy right back to Adam, thus

showing Him as truly related to the human race. In the suffering of Christ the humanity of Jesus is again evident as seen in the garden, the incident with Simon bearing the cross, and the detailed description of the entombment.

Key Word (Nelson's): Jesus the Son of Man - Luke portrays Christ in His fullest humanity by devoting more of his writing to Christ's feelings and humanity than any other gospel.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

*"It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write and orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught."* (Luke 1:3,4)

*"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."* (Luke 19:10)

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 15 - Captured in the three parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son is the crux of this Gospel: that God through Christ has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

### Outline:

- I. The Son of Man Introduced 1:1-4:13  
Prologue, revealed by Advent, revealed by presentation
- II. The Son of Man Ministering 4:14-9:50  
The presentation of the Son of Man, the demonstration of Authority, the fellowship of His ministry, the ministry of the Son of Man
- III. The Son of Man Rejected 9:51-19:27  
The progress of rejection, the instruction in view of rejection
- IV. The Son of Man Suffering 19:28-23:56  
The presentation of the Son of Man, the possession of the Temple by the Son of Man, the public ministry of the Son of man, the promise to betray the Son of Man, the preparation of the Son of Man, the Pronouncements against the Son of Man, the Passion of the Son of Man
- V. The Son of Man Authenticated 24:1-53  
By the open grave, by the opened Scripture, by the opened understanding, by the opened heavens

### **RECIPIENTS**

Mitchell:

The obvious destination of the Gospel was Theophilus, who was probably a Gentile of high standing (cf. the salutation of Acts). Nothing is known of him directly beyond the two allusions in Luke and Acts. But all agree that beyond Theophilus, the book was destined for a Greek readership. Its presentation of "the Son of Man" (the ideal man) made its appeal to the Greek mind. In addition, such factors as the human interest features, the stress on the universal nature of the Gospel and the fine Greek style all point to a Greek audience.

For more on Theophilus see notes on Acts: Recipient.

Halley (page 585):

Greek civilization represented culture, philosophy, wisdom, reason, beauty, education. Therefore, to appeal to the thoughtful, cultured, philosophic Greek mind, Luke in a complete, orderly, and classical account, depicts the glorious beauty and perfection of Jesus, the ideal, universal man. In addition, Luke includes more references to various classes of people and identifies women and children more than any of the other Gospel writers.

### **CONTRIBUTION TO CANON**

Halley (page 585):

The special emphasis of Luke is the humanity of Jesus. Representing Jesus as the Son of God Luke shows His kindness toward the weak, the suffering, and the outcast.

(Halley's use of the title "Son of God" is interesting since the focus on the Gospel appears to be on the humanity of Jesus - see Theme above)

### **Unique Features:**

Mitchell:

1. It is a Gospel of song and praise. There are a number of songs, such as the Song of Mary (1:46-55), the Song of Zacharias (1:68-79), the Song of the angels (2:14), and the Song of Simeon (2:29-32). There are many expressions of praise (e.g., 2:20; 5:26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47).
2. It is a Gospel of prayer. Jesus prays at His baptism (3:21), after cleansing the leper (5:16), before calling the Twelve (6:12), at the transfiguration (9:28), before teaching the disciples to pray (11:1), for His murderers as He was on the cross (23:34), with His last breath (23:46). Luke gives us Jesus' command to pray (21:36) and two parables, the friend at midnight (11:5-13) and the unjust judge (18:1-8) to show the certain and blessed results of continued prayer.
3. It is the Gospel of womanhood. No other Gospel gives women anything like the large place they enjoy in this Gospel. Much of the first three chapters deal with women (cf. 1:42-2:36-38). Other passages include the widow of Nain (7:12-15), Mary Magdalene (7:36-50), the woman with the issue of blood (8:48), Mary and Martha (10:38-42), "daughter" of Abraham (13:16), "daughters" of Jerusalem (23:28), et. al.
4. It is the Gospel of the poor and outcast. More than any other evangelist, Luke reports Jesus' work of blessing the poor, neglected, and vicious. Note the oft repeated references to publicans; 3:13; 5:27; 29, 30, et. al. In addition, the Gospel makes frequent references to such ones as harlots, beggars, poor, maimed, halt, and blind.
5. It is an artistic Gospel. A.T. Robertson says, "The charm and style and the skill in the use of facts place it above all praise." The delicacy and accuracy, picturesqueness and precision with which he sets forth the different incidents are manifestly the work of a trained historian. His Greek shows the highest touches of culture of all the Gospels.
6. It is the universal Gospel. Because of various references to Samaritans and Gentiles, Luke has been called the universal Gospel. Note that the lineage of Jesus is traced back to Adam (3:38). Note also the absence of Hebrew words found in the other Gospels.
7. It is the fullest Gospel. One thing that makes this Gospel so fascinating is the fact that at least 61 items of information which are not found in the other Gospels are listed. The birth of John the Baptist (1:5-25;57-80), and the birth and childhood of Jesus (1:26-56; 2:1-52), the genealogy (3:23-38), the preaching at Nazareth (4:10-30), the summons to Peter (5:8-10), six miracles, nineteen parables, the Zacchaeus story (19:1-10), Herod's mocking (23:8-12), the Emmaus incident (24:13-35) are all major additions in Luke's Gospel. There are many other

features peculiar to Luke which are too detailed and too numerous to catalog here. (see Ungers Bible Handbook)

New Living Translation Study Bible - Introduction to Luke: Setting:

Luke was written in the context of the growing conflict between the church and the synagogue in the mid-to-late first century A.D..... Who are the true people of God? Are they the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles who believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Or are they the Jews who reject Jesus as a false messiah? Luke addresses this question and demonstrates that Jesus is indeed the Messiah Who calls all people, Jew and Gentile, to put their faith in him.

## **RESOURCES**

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Robert H. Gundry, Ph.D., *A Survey Of The New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

*Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts*, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelein, General Editor, Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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