

The Gospel of Luke

Author

Internal evidence for the authorship of the Gospel of Luke includes the following. Luke names Theophilus as its recipient (Luke 1:3). Theophilus is also named as the recipient of a continued book in Acts 1:1. The two books indicate that the writer acquired his knowledge through research rather than first-hand experience. This eliminates any of the disciples.

External evidence (anti-Marcionite prologue) names Luke as the writer and provides the following description.

“The holy Luke is an Antiochene, Syrian by race, physician by trade. As his writings indicate, of the Greek speech he was not ignorant. He was a disciple of the apostles, and afterward followed Paul until his confession, serving the Lord undistractedly...He, when the gospels were already written down, that according to Matthew in Judea, but that according to Mark in Italy, instigated by the holy spirit, in parts of Achaea wrote down this gospel, he who was taught not only by the apostle, who was not with the Lord in the flesh, but also by the other apostles, who were with the Lord, even making clear this very thing himself in the preface, that the others were written down before his, and that it was necessary that he accurately expound for the gentile faithful the entire economy in his narrative, ... they slip away from the truth.”¹

Irenaeus notes Luke’s message as a trustworthy account not only having listened and learned of Paul but also having preached in his presence.²

Luke, a gentile (Col 4:10-14), physician (Col. 4:14), and companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 10:5-15 etc.) has strong support both internally and externally as the writer of our third Gospel.

Recipients

Internal evidence indicates very clearly that Theophilus is the primary recipient of the letter. His name means “*one who loves of God*” and apparently an individual. Luke

¹ <http://www.textexcavation.com/latinprologues.html>. Accessed May 9, 2012

² “As Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these (particulars) proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise, and that he was not ignorant of the truth. That he was not merely a follower, but also a fellow-laborer of the apostles, but especially of Paul, Paul has himself declared also in the Epistles, saying: “Demas has forsaken me, . . . And is departed to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.” From this he shows that he was always attached to and inseparable from him. And again he says, in the Letter to the Colossians: “Luke, the beloved physician, greets you.” But surely if Luke, who always preached in company with Paul, and is called by him “the beloved,” and with him performed the work of an evangelist, and was entrusted to hand down to us a Gospel, learned nothing different from him (Paul), as has been pointed out from his words, how can these men, who were never attached to Paul, boast that they have learned hidden and unspeakable mysteries?” Irenaeus “Against the Heresies” 3.14.

described Theophilus as “most excellent.” This title further supports the idea that the book was written to an individual and also suggests that he was a man of possible status.

While the evidence indicates that the letter was primarily written to an individual it by no means indicates that the letter did not have a secondary audience. Luke’s genealogy indicates that the letter was written for a broader perspective than Jews. His genealogy traces Christ’s lineage to Adam emphasizing His worldwide association. Luke’s avoidance of ‘rabbi’ and the use of ‘teacher’ indicates a predisposition to an gentile audience. His use of emperors and governors to date events also indicates a gentile audience.

Place and Date

Internal evidence provides several clues to the dating of Luke. First, the book of Acts opens with this statement. “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). This verse indicates that Luke wrote his text before the whole book of Acts. Acts ends with the first imprisonment of Paul which date is accepted as 60-62AD. As Paul’s associate (Col 4:14), Luke would have needed time to complete and such a work. Paul was in Ceasarea in prison from about 57-59AD. This would have provided an excellent opportunity for Luke to write his letter.

External Evidence from the anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke indicates that Luke wrote from Achaea “instigated by the Holy Spirit, in parts of Achaea wrote down this gospel, he who was taught not only by the apostle....” The region of Achaea would include the area of Corinth. Paul was in Corinth around 56AD for a period of one and one-half years. This would have afforded Luke an opportunity to pen his Gospel. Whichever date is taken, both internal and external evidence can be collated to represent a late 50’s dating to Luke.

Purpose

Luke seems to have two purposes for writing his gospel. His first purpose is clearly stated in chapter 1 verses three-four... *“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”* Luke stated that his explicit purpose for writing the gospel was to provide an orderly accounting of the life of Jesus. Other purposes for writing the book are give more implicitly. Luke wrote to present Christ as the worldwide Savior. His genealogy back to Adam and his concern for the tax collector (18:9-14) and sorrowful thief (23:39ff) indicate an audience beyond the Jews.

Message

Through His suffering the Son of Man provides joyous victory over sin for the whole world.

Theme

The Son of Man

Outline of Luke

I. Writer's Introduction 1:1-4

II. Jesus' Beginnings and Childhood 1:5-2:52

- A. Jesus' Forerunner Announced 1:5-25
 - 1. Angels appear to Zechariah announcing John the Baptist' Birth 1:5-23
 - 2. The Pregnancy of Elizabeth 1:24-25
- B. Jesus Birth Announced 1:26-56
 - 1. Angelic Appearance to Mary Announcing Jesus Birth 1:26-38
 - 2. Mary's Visit with Elizabeth 1:39-56
 - a) Mary's Arrival and Elizabeth's Response 1:39-45
 - b) Mary's Song of Praise 1:46-56
- C. The Birth and Growth of John the Baptist 1:67-80
 - 1. The Birth of John the Baptist 1:57-66
 - 2. Zechariah's Prophetic Praise 1:67-79
 - 3. The Growth of John the Baptist 1:80.
- D. The Birth and Growth of Jesus 2:1-52
 - 1. Mary and Joseph's move to Bethlehem 2:1-5
 - 2. Mary gives Birth to Jesus 2:6-7
 - 3. Angelic appearance to Shepherds Announcing Christ's Birth 2:8-15
 - 4. The Shepherd's Testimony in Bethlehem 2:16-20
 - 5. The Circumcision and Naming of Christ 2:21
 - 6. Christ's Presentation in Jerusalem 2:22
 - a) Testimony of Simeon 2:22-35
 - b) Testimony of Anna 2:26-38
 - 7. Family's Return to Galilee 2:39
 - 8. Jesus Early Growth 2:40
 - 9. Jesus' visit to Jerusalem Scribes 2:41-50
 - 10. Jesus Continued Growth 2:51-52

III. Preparations for Public Ministry 3:1-4:13

- 1. The Call and Message of John the Baptist 3:1-14
- 2. The Confession of John the Baptist 3:15-18
- 3. Herod's Response to John the Baptist 2:19-20
- 4. Jesus Baptism 2:21-22
- 5. The Genealogy of Jesus 2:23-38
- 6. Jesus Temptation 4:1-13

IV. Jesus Galilean Ministry 4:14-9:50

- A. Initial Works 4:14-5:11-16
 - 1. Initial Amazement of Jesus Luke 4:14-15
 - 2. Jesus Rejected in Nazareth Luke 4:16-30
 - 3. The Healing of the Capernaum Démoniac Luke 4:31-37
 - 4. Miraculous Healings in Peter's Home 4:38-41
 - 5. Jesus' Steadfast Departure 4:42-44
 - 6. Peter's Amazing Catch of Fish 5:1-11
 - 7. Jesus heals man of Leprosy 5:12-16

- B. Initial Confrontations 5:17-6:11
 - 1. Jesus demonstrates authority to Forgive 5:17-26
 - 2. The Call of Matthew 5:27-28
 - 3. Jesus' association with Sinners 5:29-32
 - 4. Jesus as Bridegroom 5:33-35
 - 5. Jesus Parable of Wine Skins 5:36-39
 - 6. Pharisees Question picking Grain on Sabbath 6:1-5
 - 7. Pharisees Question Healing on the Sabbath 6:6-11
- C. Jesus Continued Ministry in Galilee 6:12-7:35
 - 1. Jesus chooses Twelve Apostles 6:12-16
 - 2. Great Multitudes come to Jesus 6:17-19
 - 3. Jesus' discourse to His disciples 6:20-49
 - 4. The Centurion's Great Faith 7:1-11
 - 5. Jesus Raises dead Widows Son 7:11-17
 - 6. Jesus' Answer to John's Inquiry 7:18-23
 - 7. Jesus' Testimony concerning John the Baptist 7:24-28,35
 - 8. Jesus Forgive Sin in Pharisee's Home 7:36-50
 - 9. Jesus Travels Preaching the Kingdom 8:1-3
- D. Jesus' Use of Parables 8:4-11
 - 1. The Parable of the Sower 8:4-8
 - 2. The Reason for Parables 8:9-10
 - 3. Jesus Explains Parable of Sower 8:8-11
 - 4. Jesus Describes His Family 8:19-21
- E. Jesus' Authority Displayed 8:22-55
 - 1. Jesus Calms the Storm 8:22-25
 - 2. The Demonic Cured 8:26-39
 - 3. The Raising of Jairus' Daughter 8:38-55
- F. Jesus' Ministry to the Twelve 9:1-50
 - 1. Jesus Sends out the Twelve 9:1-10a
 - 2. The Feeding of the Multitudes 9:10b-17
 - 3. Jesus' Question concerning Multitudes Opinion 9:18-20
 - 4. Jesus Predicts His Death 9:21-22
 - 5. Jesus' Call to Sacrificial Discipleship 9:23-27
 - 6. Jesus Transfiguration 9:28-36
 - 7. Jesus' Rebuke of Disciples Weak Faith 9:37-43a
 - 8. Jesus' Prediction of His Death 9:43b-45
 - 9. Jesus' Teaching on Greatness 9:46-50

V. **Jesus Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem 9:51-19:28**

- A. Jesus continued Ministry to and Through Disciples 9:51-11:14
 - 1. Jesus' Rebuke of disciples misguided Judgment 9:51-56
 - 2. The Costs of Discipleship 9:57-62
 - 3. Jesus Sends out the Seventy 10:1-20
 - 4. The Father's Wisdom in Revealing 10:21-24
 - 5. The Parable of the Good Samaritan 10:25-37
 - 6. The Need for Personal Growth 10:38-42
 - 7. Jesus' Teaching on Prayer 11:1-14

- B. Jesus Teaching in Light of Opposition 11:14-15:32
 - 1. Jesus' Authority to Cast Out Demons 11:14-26
 - 2. Jesus' Encouragement to Openly Receive His Words 11:27-36
 - 3. Jesus' rebuke of Hypocritical Leadership 11:37-54
 - 4. Jesus' Warning of Pharisee's Influence 12:1-12
 - 5. Jesus' Teaching Concerning Materialism 11:13-34
 - 6. Jesus' Teaching Concerning Proper Stewardship 11:35-48
 - 7. Jesus Divides Family Members 11:49-53
 - 8. Jesus' Rebuke for Lack of Judgment 11:54-59
 - 9. Jesus Warns of Impending Judgment 13:1-9
 - 10. Jesus Exposes Leader's Hypocrisy 13:10-17
 - 11. The Parable of the Mustard Seed 13:18-19
 - 12. The Parable of Leaven 13:20-21
 - 13. Jesus' Encouragement to Solid Faith 13:22-33
 - 14. Jesus' sorrow Over Jerusalem's Lack of Faith 13:34-35
 - 15. Jesus' 2nd Healing in Pharisee's Home 14:1-6
 - 16. Jesus Encourages Pharisees to Humility 14:7-24
 - 17. Jesus' Calls to Complete Discipleship 14:25-35
 - 18. Heaven's Joy over Repentant Sinners 15:1-32
 - a) The Lost Sheep 15:1-7
 - b) The Lost Coin 15:8-10
 - c) The Lost Son 15:11-32
- C. Jesus Warns of Riches 16:1-31
 - 1. Jesus' Teaching on Stewardship 16:1-13
 - 2. Jesus' Rebuke of Greed 16:14-31
- D. Jesus instructions Concerning Relationships and Attitudes 17:1-19
 - 1. A Disciples Right Relationship to Sinning Brother 17:1-4
 - 2. Proper Attitudes Toward Service 17:5-10
 - 3. The Importance of Thankfulness 17:11-19
- E. Jesus' Teaching on the Coming Kingdom 17:20-31
 - 1. The Pharisee's Question concerning Kingdom Timing 17:20-21
 - 2. Jesus Explains Kingdom Timing to Disciples 17:22-31
 - 3. Jesus Encourages Disciples to Steadfastness 17:32-18:8
 - 4. Jesus' Encouragement to Humility 18:9-17
 - 5. Jesus' Teaching on Wealth 18:18-30
- F. Jesus' Prediction of His Death 18:31-34
- G. The Healing of a Blind Man near Jericho 18:35-43
- H. Zaccheus' Faithful Response to Jesus 19:1-10
- I. The Parable of the Minas 19:11-28

VI. Jerusalem Ministry 19:29-21:38

- A. Jesus Entry into Jerusalem 19:29-44
 - 1. Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem 19:29-38
 - 2. The Pharisee's Response to Triumphant Entry 19:39
 - 3. Jesus Mourns Jerusalem's Rejection 19:40-44
- B. Jesus Confrontation in Jerusalem 19:45-21:38
 - 1. Jesus Removes Moneychangers from Temple 19:45-48.

2. The Pharisee Inquire of Jesus Authority 20:1-8
3. Jesus' Indicting Parable of Vine Growers 20:9-19
4. The Leaders Attempt to Trap Jesus 20:19-47
 - a) The Pharisee's Question Concerning Taxes 20:19-26
 - b) The Sadducee's Question Concerning the Resurrection 20:27-38
 - c) Christ's Response to the Scribes 20:39-44
 - d) Christ Warns Disciples of Scribes 20:45-47
 - e) The Widow's Mite 21:1-4
 - f) The Timing of the Promised Kingdom 21:5-38
 - (1) Direct Teaching Concerning Kingdom Timing 21:5-28
 - (2) Parabolic Teaching Concerning Kingdom Timing 21:29-33
 - (3) Encouragement to Prepare for Coming Kingdom 21:34-38
5. The Leader's Plot to Destroy Jesus 22:1-6.
- C. The Passover Meal 22:7-22:38
 1. Preparation for the Meal 22:7-13
 2. The Meal 22:14-20
 3. Preparations for His Passion 22:21-38
 - a) The Announcement of His Betrayal 22:21-23
 - b) The Question of Kingdom Greatness 22:24-30
 - c) Predictions of Peter's Denial 22:31-34
 - d) Preparation for Difficulty 22:35-38
- D. Jesus' Prayer Before His Arrest 22:39-46

VII. The Passion of Christ 22:39-23:56

- A. The Arrest and Betrayal of Jesus 22:47-53
- B. Jesus on Trial 22:54-23:25
 1. Peter's Denial of Jesus 22:54-62
 2. Soldier's Early Beating of Jesus 22:63-65
 3. Jesus Condemned by the Council 22:66-71
 4. Jesus Before Pilate 23:1-7
 5. Herod's Contempt of Jesus 23:8-12
 6. Pilate's Judgment on Jesus 23:13-25
- C. The Crucifixion of Christ 23:26-49
 1. Christ's Walk to Golgotha 23:26-32.
 2. The First Three Hours of the Crucifixion 23:33-43
 3. The Second Three Hours of Crucifixion 23:44-49
- D. The Burial of Jesus 23:50-56

VIII. The Women's Testimony of Jesus' Resurrection 24:1-12

- A. Jesus Appearance on the Emmaus Road 24:13-35
- B. Jesus Appearance to the Eleven 24:36-53