

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

PURPOSE: To present an accurate account of the life of Christ and to present Christ as the perfect human and Savior.

AUTHOR: Luke—a doctor (Colossians 4:14), a Greek, and Gentile Christian. He is the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. Luke was a close friend and companion of Paul. He also wrote Acts, and the two books go together.

DATE WRITTEN: Approximately A.D. 60

SETTING: Luke wrote from Rome or possibly from Caesarea.

KEY VERSE: “Jesus responded, ‘*Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*’” (19:9, 10).

KEY PEOPLE: Jesus, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Mary, the disciples, Herod the Great, Pilate, Mary Magdalene

KEY PLACES: Bethlehem, Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem

SPECIAL FEATURES: This is the most comprehensive of the Gospels. The general vocabulary and diction show that the author was educated. He makes frequent references to illnesses and diagnoses. Luke stresses Jesus’ relationship with people; emphasizes prayer, miracles, and angels; records inspired hymns of praise; gives a prominent place to women. Most of 9:51 – 18:35 is not found in any other Gospel.

^a Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,168

¹ Luke affirms Jesus’ divinity, but the real emphasis of his book is on Jesus’ humanity—Jesus, the Son of God, is also the Son of Man. As a doctor, Luke was a man of science, and as a Greek, he was a man of detail. It is not surprising, then, that he begins by outlining his extensive research and explaining that he is reporting the facts (1:1-4). Luke was also a close friend and traveling companion of Paul, so he could interview the other disciples, had access to other historical accounts, and was an eyewitness to the birth and growth of the early church. His Gospel and book of ACTS are reliable, historical documents.

² THE BLUEPRINT

A. BIRTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (1:1—4:13)

Luke gives us the most detailed account of Jesus’ birth. In describing Jesus’ birth, childhood, and development, Luke lifts up the humanity of Jesus. Our Savior was the ideal human. Fully prepared, the ideal human was now ready to live the perfect life.

B. MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (4:14—21:38)

Luke accurately records the actions and teachings of Christ, helping us understand the way of salvation. Much unique material appears in Luke, especially the parables of Jesus. Jesus came to teach us how to live and how to find salvation. How carefully, then, we should study the words and life of our Savior.

C. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (22:1—24:53)

The perfect man was a high ideal in Greek culture. Written with Greeks in mind, Luke’s Gospel shows how Jesus was the perfect man given as the perfect sacrifice for the sin of all people. Christ is the ideal human—the perfect model for us to follow. We must stand in awe of His character, which met humanity’s highest ideals as well as God’s demand for an atonement for sin. He is, at one and the same time, our model and our Savior.

¹ Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,168

² Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,169

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¹ MEGATHEMES in the GOSPEL OF LUKE

JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOR

Explanation – Luke describes how God’s Son entered human history. Jesus lived as the perfect example of a human. After a perfect ministry, He provided a perfect sacrifice for our sin so we could be restored to a right relationship with God.

Importance – Jesus is our perfect leader & Savior. He offers forgiveness to all who will accept Him as Lord of their lives & believe that what He says is true.

HISTORY

Explanation – Luke was a medical doctor and historian. He put great emphasis on dates and details – connecting Jesus to events and people in history.

Importance – Luke gives details so we can believe in the reliability of the history of Jesus’ life. Even more important, we can believe with certainty that Jesus is God.

PEOPLE

Explanation – Jesus was deeply interested in people and relationships. He showed warm concern for His followers & friends—men, women, & children.

Importance – Jesus’ love for people is good news for everyone. His message is for all people in every nation. Each one of us has an opportunity to respond to Him in faith.

COMPASSION

Explanation – As a perfect human, Jesus showed tender sympathy to the poor, the despise, the hurt, and the sinful. No one was rejected or ignored by Him.

Importance – Jesus is more than a good teacher—He cares for you. Because of His deep love for you, He can satisfy your every need.

HOLY SPIRIT

Explanation – The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus’ birth, baptism, ministry, and resurrection. As a perfect example for us, Jesus lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Importance – The Holy Spirit was sent by God as confirmation of Jesus’ authority. The Holy Spirit is given to enable people to live for Christ. By faith we can have the indwelling Holy Spirit’s presence and power to witness and to serve.

² One of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus was that He went where people were. The situations where He encountered people were as diverse as the people. A home, the marketplace, the temple, a meadow, a lake...all were strategic to Jesus. He had the knack (or strategy?) of meeting people on their turf – where they were comfortable. The Gospel records show that wherever Jesus went, He drew a crowd. No one having encountered Jesus could ever be neutral. The reactions were varied: Awe, wonder, anger, resentment, worship...but never neutrality. So magnetic was Jesus that people, having met Him, brought others for a firsthand look. Philip found Nathaniel and said, “*We have found Him of whom Moses wrote...Come and see.*” The Madonna of Samaria, having encountered Jesus at the local watering hole, returned to her relational network and said, “*Come, see a man who told me all the things I have done...*” – With various motives they came. They listened. They watched. Some touched. Some wondered. But having come, no one left the same. Although many have concluded that the church, as they perceive it, has little to say to a contemporary society, they still regard the Bible as relevant. We need a strategy that brings people into contact with the Jesus of the Bible. One that allows Jesus to meet them where they are, on their turf.

¹ Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, p. 2,780

² Design 4 Discovery, Developed by Ron Bennett, Pub. The Navigators, pp. 6-7

(Design 4 Discovery is an evangelistic outreach tool used in our Discipleship track.)