

## Gospel of Luke

Luke was born in Antioch from gentile parents (cf. Col 4:10-11). Luke is mentioned as Paul's companion and friend in Col 4:14." This is the same Luke who authored the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. At the time this letter was written, he is primarily known as a medical doctor and traveling companion of Paul. Luke is mentioned as a co-worker during many of Paul's travels recorded in Acts.

Luke was with Paul in his second Missionary journey (Acts 16: 10.11) in third missionary journey (c. 58 ce). (Acts 20: 20, 5- 8) and in his prison life in Rome ( Acts 27;1; 28;16; 2 Timothy 4;11; Phil 24).

### I. AUTHOR of Gospel

#### A. Early church tradition

1. Irenaeus (a.d. 175-195, Against Heresies, 3.1.1; 3.14.10) says specifically that Luke recorded in a book, the gospel preached by Paul.
2. Anti-Marcion Prologue to Luke (a.d. 175) says Luke was the author of the Gospel.
3. Tertullian (a.d. 150/160-220/240 in Against Marcion 4.2,3; 4. 5,3) says Luke wrote a digest of Paul's gospel
4. Muratorian Fragment (a.d. 180-200) names Luke as the author and calls him a physician companion of Paul. Also it says that he wrote his account by hearsay (meaning he interviewed eyewitnesses).
5. Origen, quoted by Eusebius from his commentary on Matthew (Hist. Eccl. 6.25.6), asserts Luke's authorship of the Gospel.
6. Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. 3.4.2,6-7) also affirms Luke's authorship of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

#### B. Internal evidence for Luke's authorship

1. If Luke-Acts is a two volume set, which seems true from the similar introduction, then the "we" sections of Acts (cf. Luke 16:10-17; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) imply an eyewitness account of Paul's missionary activity.

2. The introduction to Luke (cf. Luke 1:1-4) states that Luke interviewed and researched eye witness accounts in order to write a historical approach to Jesus' life, which shows he was a second-generation believer. The Introduction to Luke also covers Acts. Luke and Acts slightly overlap in time (i.e., post-resurrection events).

## II. LUKE, THE MAN

A. Anti-Marcion Prologue to Luke (a.d. 175) says of him that he

1. was a native of Antioch of Syria
2. was a physician
3. was single
4. was a follower of Paul
5. wrote from Achaia
6. died at age 84 in Greece

B. Eusebius of Caesarea (a.d. 275-339) in Hist. Eccl. III.4.2 says of him that he

1. was from Antioch
2. was a missionary companion of Paul
3. wrote a Gospel and Acts

III. It is dedicated to Theophilus (cf. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). There are several theories as to his identity:

1. a Roman governmental official because Luke calls him "most excellent" in Luke 1:3, the same title he uses for Felix (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3) and Festus (cf. Acts 26:25)
2. a wealthy patron (Theophilus was a common name among Jews and Greeks) who helped pay the expenses of writing, copying, and distributing Luke and Acts.
3. his name means "God loved," "lover of God," so it is possibly a cryptic reference to some Christian

## IV. PURPOSE(S) OF LUKE'S WRITINGS

Luke uniquely mentions the mission of the Seventy (cf. Luke 10:1-24). For the rabbis, 70 was the number denoting the languages of the world (cf. Genesis 10). By Jesus sending out 70 preachers of the good news would communicate that the gospel is for all people.

## VIII. THE UNIQUENESS OF LUKE

A. The first two chapters are unique to Luke and may have come from Mary, as may the genealogy of Luke 3:23-28.

B. Miracles unique to Luke

1. son of the widow of Nain resuscitated, Luke 7:12-17
2. sick woman in synagogue healed on the Sabbath, Luke 13:10-17
3. sick man in synagogue healed on the Sabbath, Luke 14:1-6
4. ten lepers healed; only one, a Samaritan, returns to give thanks, Luke 17:11-18

C. Parables unique to Luke

1. the good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37
2. the persistent friend, Luke 11:5-13
3. the rich fool, Luke 12:13-21
4. the lost coin, Luke 15:8-10
5. the two sons, Luke 15:11-32
6. the unrighteous steward, Luke 16:1-8
7. the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31
8. the unrighteous judge, Luke 18:1-8
9. the Pharisee and Publican, Luke 18:9-14

D. Parables in Luke that are also in Matthew, but in a different form and context

1. Luke 12:39-46 (Matt. 24:43-44)
2. Luke 14:16-24 (Matt. 22:2-14)
3. Luke 19:11-27 (Matt. 25:14-30)

E. Other unique accounts

1. the events of the first two chapters

2. Zaccheus the tax-collector, Luke 19:1-10
3. Jesus sent to Herod by Pilate to be examined, Luke 23:8-12
4. the two on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-32

F. The most unique elements in Luke are found in Luke 9:51-18:14. Here Luke does not rely on Mark or "Q" (i.e., sayings of Jesus possibly written by Matthew). Even similar events and teachings are put into a different form. The unifying theme (literary structure) of this section is "on the way to Jerusalem" (cf. Luke 9:51; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28), which is really His journey to the cross.

## Analysis of the text

**9: 9** - Herod tried to see him:

**9: 10-17:**

**9: 10 Bethsaida.** It comes under the region governed by Herod Philip (Luke 3, 1). Bethsaida is a fishing city in the northern bank of the Sea of Galilee and the native place of apostles Peter, Andrews and Philip (John 1, 44 ; 12, 21). Jesus curses this city since it had rejected him (Luke 10, 13).

9:16 taking: this term reminds the institution of Holy Eucharist (22, 19) . (Matthew 14, 19)

**9: 18-22:** Luke wrote this passage basing on Mark 8, 27 -33. But Luke deleted the narration of Peter's disagreement to Jesus' sufferings (Mk 8, 32) and Jesus' rebuke to Peter (Mk8, 33).

**9: 26 when he comes in his glory:** Jesus is appointed as the heavenly judge over the world ( Mathew 25, 31 – 46; 2 Cor 5, 10). One who is ready to accept him will be saved and one who reject him will be rejected ( 2 Timo 2, 11 – 13), ( Mk 8, 38)

**9: 27** before they see the kingdom of God: Jesus states that The Kingdom of God will be realized with this generation. That means: the Kingdom installed according to the the Old covenant will be expired ( The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 Luke 21, 31 -32 ) and the inauguration of the new Kingdom ( Birth of the Church Luke 22, 28-30).

9, 28 – 36 The narration of the Transfiguration. This narration is followed by the first prediction of the passion and resurrection. This indicates that the passion and crucifixion will be ended in Glory. There are three significances for the transfiguration narrative: 1. To overcome the fear

created on the disciples by the passion prediction (9,22); 2. It seems to be a revelation of Trinitarian presence; 3. It states that Jesus is fulfilment of the law and prophets.

**9: 27 went up on the mountain to pray:** Luke presents mountain as a place of prayer (6,12 ; 22, 39 – 41). Mountain is a symbol of going away from the world and coming nearer to the heavenly Father.

**9, 31 his exodus:** The Greek word *exodos* indicates Israel's exodus towards the Promised Land. The death, resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem are Jesus' Exodus.

**9, 32 they ... saw his glory:** the glory as God himself (24, 26). We can notice a change in the attitude and dress of Jesus (9, 29). The experience of disciples is as same as that of Israelites who heard the voice of God in the Mount Sinai (Deut 5, 24).

**9, 33 let us set up three tents:** Peter experiences the same Joy as that of the festival of Harvest during the feast of Booths.

**9, 35 “This is my Son, my Chosen; :** this is one among the declarations on Jesus as Son of God ( 3,22; 4, 41; 8, 28) ( Is 42, 2- 7). This recalls the verses of the son servant hymn on the Servant of the Lord in Is 42, 2 – 7.

**“Listen to him!”** this instruction reminds Deut18, 15, where Israelites are asked to listen Moses the prophet. And now one should listen to Jesus who is the fulfilment of the law and prophet. (Acts 3, 22), (Luke 3, 22; 9, 37-43; Mk 9, 14-29).

**9, 41 “perverse generation”:** this term is derived from the Hymn of Moses in Deut. This term can be seen in (Deut 32, 5.20). This can be seen in Mt 12, 43-45. This term is used to criticise the unfaithfulness.

**9,51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up:** Jesus' death on the cross, Resurrection and ascension are indicated by this words ( Acts 1,2.11). There is a Jewish tradition that when Moses and Elijah were taken into heaven, a share of their power was given to their disciples (Deut 34,9; 2 Kings 2, 9-15). The same way when Jesus will be ascended to heaven the disciples will receive the Spirit (Acts 1, 8.9)

**9, 52 Samaritans :** Samaria is seen on the west of river Jordan and situated in between Judea and Galilee. There exists enmity between Samaritans and Jews due to religious and racial reason ( John 4,9)

**9, 54 “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?: In certain manuscripts we see an addition; ”**Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them *as Elijah did?* ( 2 Kings 1, 9-16).

**9, 62 and looks back:** delaying discipleship is equal to the refusal of discipleship. In 1 Kings 19, 19-21 Elijah allowed Elisha to kiss their parents and say good bye. But the discipleship of Jesus is much more radical and urgent.

**10, 1-12 :** Only in Luke we find this second missionary journey. In the first missionary journey Luke 9, 1-6 basing on Mark 6, 6-13 twelve disciples are sent but in the second missionary journey Jesus sends seventy two.

**10, 1 seventy-two:** Other ancient authorities read *seventy*. Moses appointed seventy elders as leaders in Israel ( Numbers 11, 24.25). Sanhedrin was a Jewish judicial and legislative assembly comprised of 71 sages. This number 71 comes from 70 elders and Moses. And in Genesis chapter 10 we read seventy which signifies that the world comprises 70 nations. Thus ministry of seventy indicates the ministry over the world which comprises of seventy nations (24, 27).

**In pairs :** this was the tradition in early Church ( Acts 8,14; 15,39.40)

**12, 2 The harvest:** the harvest is the symbol of people of God who are ready to enter into the Kingdom of God ( Mt 9,37; Jn4,35). The same image can be seen in Is 27, 12.13.

**10, 4 Carry no purse... greet no one on the road :** it indicates the urgency and concentration. Elisha gives the same instructions in old testament ( 2 KINGS 4,29)

**10,5 'Peace to this house!'** – Mt 10,13

**10, 7 the laborer deserves to be paid :** The community should support the ministers ( 1 Cor 9, 14; 1 Timothy 5,18)

**10, 13 Chorazin Bethsaida:** are two cities of Galilee which rejected the message of Jesus.

**Tyre and Sidon:** two gentile cities on the Mediterranean coast which could to hear or see Jesus and his message.

**10,15 Capernaum :** the house of Jesus in Galilee was here. They rejected Jesus and his message.

**Hades :** the place of the dead (Acts 2,27.31). This is used as opposite to heaven (Mt 11, 23).

**10,18 "I watched Satan fall from heaven":** this is the effect of the ministry of the seventy two. By establishing the Kingdom of God Satan and his works will be destroyed. This is the end of Satan's authority over the world and humanity. (11, 20; 13, 16; Rev 12, 7-9)

**10,30 from Jerusalem to Jericho:** It is a journey of 27 kilometers towards east. It is a steep downward road around 3200 feet. Since it is geographically dangerous, there is risk of robbers.

**10, 35 two denarii** : it is equal to wage of two days.

**10, 38 a certain village** : In the Gospel of John this village near to Jerusalem is Bethany where the house of Lazar was situated.

**11,3 daily** : this Greek **epiousios** term is rare in the Bible. We can see this in Mt 6, 11 too.

**11, 11 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish?** : Other ancient authorities add *bread, will give a stone? Or if your child asks for*

**11, 15 : Beelzebul** : it is a term used to call devil with contempt. This term **Beelzebul** is related to the idol of Beelzebub (the Lord of the Flies) who is adored in the city of Ekron. The king Ahaziah sought help from this idol 2 Kings 1, 2-6 for the healing. Mt 10, 25

**11, 19 your exorcists** : In Jewish religion there are certain persons who perform exorcism by the power of God. It is mentioned in Acts 19, 13-20. And can be seen the same in Mt 12, 27.

**11, 20 finger of God**: this refers to Holy Spirit (Mt 12, 8). In Ex 8, 19 we find the same usage. Jesus had the highest power more than anybody Luke 4, 36.

**11,26 last state** : cf 2 Peter 2, 20-22 ; Mt 12, 44-46

**11, 29-32 Jonah and Solomon**: both gave word of God to Gentiles. Jonah to the Assyrians in Nineveh (Jonah 3) and Solomon to the Queen of Sheba (I kings 10). In Luke the symbol of Jonah reminds us the message of conversion from a distant prophet whereas in Matthew it refers to the Death and resurrection of Jesus. Mt 12, 38-42

**11, 44 unmarked graves** : it is forbidden to touch the dead body, bones and the graves for a Jew ( Numbers 19, 6). The Pharisees who are more concerned about the law became like unmarked graves, a source of impurity.

**11, 45 experts in the law**: Mk 2, 6

**11, 51 the blood of Abel ... the blood of Zechariah**: In genesis 4,8 we can find the first murder in the OT. And Zechariah's murder is narrated in 2 Chronicles 24, 20-22. Mt 23, 35

**12, 5 hell**: It is same as *Gehenna*. Mt 5,22 ; 10,28; Mk 9,43

**12, 6 two pennies**: The value of Roman bronze coin Asarion is one sixteenth of a denarius. (The Latin word for Asarion is "As"). Lk 7, 41

**12,7 even the hairs of your head :** nothing is hidden from God (Ps 139, 1-6). God will look upon every single suffering. Not even a single one he will left out ( 21, 18 Acts 27, 34)

**12, 10 blasphemes against the Holy Spirit:** In the early church there had a thinking that those who are against the teachings and revelations of the spirit are not against the Church but against the Holy spirit. (Acts 5, 3; 7, 51; cf 5, 32; 15 28)

**12, 19 eat, drink, be merry:** immersed in the worldly happiness ( Tobith 7, 9; Ecclesiastes 8,15; Is 22,13)

**12, 20 fool:** one who disregard God and his Law ( Ps 14, 1; 53, 1proverbs 1,7)

**12, 21 but are not rich toward God:** here we find a Greek usage "Eis Theon Plouton" which indicates a movement. Trust in God makes one rich in the treasures of heaven.

**12, 12 span of life :** the idea of span of life can be interpreted as height as well.

**12, 38 during the middle of the night or near dawn:** Jews divided night into three watches or parts (Judges 7, 19 while Romans into four (Mk 13, 35)

12, 39 he would not have let his house be broken into: Other ancient authorities add He *would have watched* and not have not have let his house be broken into.

**12, 49 fire :** This symbol can give different indications: 1. Symbol of God's presence and love (2. Exodus 3,2; Acts 2,3) Symbol of God's judgment on sinners ( Gen 19,24, Lev 10,2; Deut 4,24; Mt 22, 7). 3. Symbol Divine sanctification ( Jer 23, 29; Lk 3, 16; 1 peter 1, 7). 4. Symbol of Divine zeal ( Jer 20,9; Sirach 48,1).

12, 50 baptism: this is an indication of Jesus' experience of his passion. He will be immersed in the sufferings and Death and will be resurrected to the new life (Mk 10,38; Rom 6, 4)

12, 59 until the very last penny: The Greek term used is "lepton" (the smallest bit of coin). In Mathew 5, 26, he used the term "kodrantēs"

13, 1 Outside of Lukan narration we can find the killings of Galileans. But according to the narration of the character of Pilate by Jewish historian Josephus it is possible to have this incident. It is said that according to the order given by Pilate certain Samaritans were killed in Mount Gerizim (Josephus, Antiquities, 18, 4, 1. 86-87). And in another time certain Jews were killed who prepared some revolt against Pilate who took money from the Temple fund to construct an irrigation tunnel ( Josephus, Wars, 2,9 4. 175-177; Josephus Antiquities 18, 3, 2.60-62).



**14, 1-6** : 13, 10-17

**14, 5 child or an ox**: Other ancient authorities read *a donkey* instead of child.

**14, 16 great dinner**: it is a symbol of Joy and blessings which reassured by the New Covenant (cf Is 25, 6-9; rev 19, 9). The dinner always has an importance in the Bible as it is the symbol of covenant with man and with God (Gen 26, 28-31; 31, 44-54; Ex 24, 9-11; 2 Sam 3, 20.21).

**14, 26 not hate father and mother**: The Greek word "miseio" in LXX is used in the context of the comparison between two persons. ( Gen 29, 31 Leah and Rachel; Mal 1, 3 Jacob and Esau;). It is in the sense of "love little". In the Discipleship of Jesus, family has only a second place. (9, 59-62; Mt 10; 37).

**15; 8 ten silver coins**: Drachma literally means a Greek silver coin.

**15, 15 to feed the pigs** : it is animal impure and forbidden ( Lev 11,7). One is not observing the Sabbath if he works under a gentile master. (Ex 20, 8-11).

**15, 20 put his arms around him**: the meaning of "falling into one's neck" is given in Greek language. This action of the Father reminds us the encounters of the Patriarchs in OT (Gen 33, 4; 45; 14; 46; 29)

15, 21 I am no longer worthy to be called your son: Other ancient authorities add *Treat me like one of your hired servants*

**15, 22 robe... ring** : They are the symbols of honour and authority (Gen 41,42; Esther 3,10; I Mac 6,15).

**Sandals**: Servants walk without sandals. By wearing sandals the prodigal is elevated to the fullness of the son-ship.

**16, 6 A hundred jugs of olive oil**: around 800 gallons of oil. The manager gave subsidy of 50 percent.

**16, 7 A hundred containers of wheat**: around a thousand bushels of wheat. The manager gave subsidy of 20 percent.

**16,20 Lazarus** : Lazarus is the diminutive form of the name Eleazar which means "God has helped"

**16, 22 Abraham's bosom**: this points to the eternal familial bond existed in between the faith community.