

Notes & Outlines

LUKE

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GOSPEL OF LUKE

WRITER:

Luke was the “beloved physician” of Colossians 4:14. He used more medical terms than Hippocrates, the father of medicine. The choice of Luke by the Holy Spirit to write the third Gospel reveals that there are no accidental writers of Scripture. There was a supernatural selection of Luke. There were “not many wise” called, but Luke belongs to that category. He and Paul were evidently on a very high intellectual level as well as a spiritual level. This partially explains why they traveled together and obviously became fast friends in the Lord.

Dr. Luke would rank as a scientist of his day. He wrote the best Greek of any of the New Testament writers, including Paul. He was also an accurate historian. According to Sir William Ramsay, Dr. Luke was a careful historian of remarkable ability.

A great deal of tradition surrounds the life of Dr. Luke, which is needless for us to examine in a brief analysis. He writes his Gospel from Mary’s viewpoint, which confirms the tradition that he got his information for his Gospel from her. Surely he conferred with her. Also there is every reason to believe that he was a Gentile. Most scholars concur in this position. Paul, in Colossians, distinguishes between those “who are of the circumcision” (Colossians 4:11) and the others who are obviously Gentiles. Luke is in the list of Gentiles (Colossians 4:14). Sir William Ramsay and J. M. Stifler affirm without reservation that Luke was a Gentile.

References to Luke: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; also the “we” section of Acts — Acts 16:10-17; 20:6; 21:18; 27:1; 28:16.

THEME: “Behold the Man”

Jesus is the *second* man but the *last* Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47). God is making men like Jesus (1 John 3:2), therefore Jesus is the *second* man — for there will be the third and even the millionth. He is the *last* Adam, as there will *not* be another head of the human family. Jesus was “made like his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17) that His brethren might be made like Him.

THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH:

Each Gospel presents Jesus from a different viewpoint. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus was born the Messiah. Mark emphasizes that Jesus was the Servant of Jehovah. Luke stresses the fact that Jesus was the perfect Man. John presents the fact that God became a man, but not from the scientific approach.

Dr. Luke states that he examined Jesus of Nazareth, and his findings are that Jesus is God. He came to the same conclusion as John, but his procedure and technique were different.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Although the Gospel of Luke is one of the synoptic Gospels, it contains many features omitted by Matthew and Mark.

- Dr. Luke gives us the songs of Christmas.
- Dr. Luke has the longest account of the virgin birth of Jesus of any of the Gospels. In the first two chapters he gives us an unabashed record of obstetrics, and a clear and candid statement of the virgin birth is given. All the way from Dr. Luke to Dr. Howard Kelly, gynecologist of Johns Hopkins, there is a mighty affirmation of the virgin birth, which makes the statements of pseudo-theologians seem rather puerile when they unblushingly state that the virgin birth is a biological impossibility.
- Dr. Luke gives us 20 miracles, and 6 of them are recorded in no other Gospel.
- He likewise gives us 23 parables, and 18 of them are found nowhere else. The parables of the prodigal son and the good Samaritan are peculiar to the third Gospel.
- He also gives us the very human account of the walk to Emmaus of our resurrected Lord. This proves that Jesus was still human after His resurrection. Dr. Luke demonstrates that the resurrection was not of the spirit but of the body. Jesus was “sown a natural body...raised a spiritual *body*” (1 Corinthians 15:44). A definite human sympathy pervades this Gospel, which reveals the truly human nature of Jesus as well as the big-hearted sympathy of this physician of the first century who knew firsthand a great deal about the suffering of humanity.

COMMENT:

Chapter 1 — Historically, Dr. Luke begins his Gospel before the other synoptic Gospels. Heaven had been silent for over 400 years when the angel Gabriel broke through the blue at the golden altar of prayer to announce the birth of John the Baptist. Luke gives us the background as well as the births of John and Jesus. Neither Joseph nor Mary was God's accidental choice. They both possessed certain noble human character traits. Joseph was an unselfish, humble and dependable man of high ideals. Mary possessed the same character traits. She was obedient and uncomplaining, with a definite knowledge of the Old Testament. Long before medical science gave any attention to heredity, Dr. Luke placed a great emphasis upon it.

Dr. Luke makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is virgin born. No other conclusion can be drawn from the definite, direct, and dogmatic statements of the angel Gabriel to Mary. Until man knows more about the origin of life, he is in no position, scientifically, to refute dogmatically the statement of Dr. Luke. A true scientific approach is that of humble inquiry and patience.

Three songs are in this chapter:

- (1) Elisabeth's greeting of Mary, vv. 42-45;
- (2) The magnificat of Mary, vv. 46-55;
- (3) The prophecy of Zacharias, vv. 67-79.

Chapter 2 — This is the careful historical record of the birth of Jesus tied into the record of the Roman government. The simple record of the visit of the shepherds is tied into the sublime record of the visit of the heavenly host.

Jesus was brought to the temple when 8 days old to be circumcised according to Mosaic Law:

But, when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4, 5)

As a result of this visit to Jerusalem, we have the songs of Simeon and Anna.

The one isolated incident from the boyhood of Jesus is recorded by

Dr. Luke to let us know that Jesus had a normal human childhood (see vs. 52).

- (1) Jesus increased in wisdom (mental),
- (2) in stature (physical),
- (3) in favor with God and man (spiritual).

Chapter 3 — Luke, with a true historian's approach, dates the ministry of John the Baptist with secular history (see vv. 1, 2).

Luke places the emphasis upon John's message of repentance as the condition for the coming of the Messiah. From the Mosaic system of washing in water, which was a common custom of immersion in that day, John baptized those who came to him as merely a preparation — a moral reformation — for the coming of Christ. Jesus would baptize by the Holy Spirit — a real transformation.

The genealogy in this chapter is Mary's, which reveals two facts. First, it goes back to Adam, the father of the human family. Jesus was truly human. Matthew, in presenting Jesus as king, traces the genealogy back only as far as Abraham. Luke, in presenting Jesus as man, goes back to Adam. In the second place, Mary was descended from David through another than Solomon; that is, from David's son Nathan (v. 31; compare 1 Chronicles 3:5).

Chapter 4 — Jesus is tempted as a man by Satan. They were human temptations such as come to all of us. They cover the entire spectrum of human temptations, and are threefold:

(1) Make stones into bread to satisfy needs of the body. There is nothing wrong with bread; it is the staff of life. The body has need of bread and Jesus was starving. What is wrong? To use His great powers to minister to Himself would be selfish. He must demonstrate the truth of the great principle, "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4). This is contrary to the thinking of this crass materialistic age that lives only to satisfy the whims of the body. Modern man in our secular society says, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." And as far as man is concerned, that ends it all. Selfishness is the curse of a creedless secular society. Our Lord, in meeting this temptation, refuted the popular philosophy of the world.

(2) The nations of the world derive their power through brute force and political intrigue. War is a way of life. Hate and fear are the whips that motivate the mob. This is satanic, and Satan offers the

kingdoms of the world on these terms. Men must be changed to enter God's kingdom: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The answer of Jesus has a note of finality, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8; see Deuteronomy 6:13).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds), casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

(3) The temptation to cast Himself down from the temple seemed a logical procedure for Jesus to impress the crowd as to His person and mission. But Jesus followed no easy way to the throne. He had to wear the crown of thorns before He wore the crown of glory. Stifler states succinctly, "There are two ways of despising God, one is to ignore His power, the other is to presume upon it." Both are sin. It is easy to do nothing and then mouth pious platitudes about God providing for the sparrows and that He will take care of us. But God says, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). The missionary to a foreign land will have to study to learn the language, and then God will help him. We are partners of God, not puppets.

Dr. Edward Judson, after considering what his father, Adoniram Judson, suffered in Burma, said, "If we succeed without suffering, it is because others have suffered before us. If we suffer without success, it is that others may succeed after us." Jesus rejected a false and phony spiritual stance. His answer was devastating: "Ye shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as ye tested him in Massah" (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Actually, Jesus began His public ministry in His hometown of Nazareth where He was rejected and ejected. It was in the synagogue where He announced the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1, 2. He broke off the reading before He came to "the day of vengeance of our God" (compare Isaiah 61:1, 2 with Luke 4:18-20).

Chapter 5 — Dr. Luke carefully records the cleansing of the leper and the healing of the paralytic.

Chapter 6 — He records in detail the healing on the sabbath of the man with the paralyzed hand. He repeats the so-called Sermon on the Mount down on the plain (see v. 17). Jesus must have repeated His most important teachings again and again.

Chapter 7 — This chapter opens with another meticulous record of healing. In this case it is the centurion's servant. Although Jesus had no personal contact with the servant, he was made well.

Dr. Luke alone records the raising from the dead of the son of the widow of Nain. He is the only Gospel writer who records Jesus' raising of two persons from the dead, the other being Jairus' daughter (8:54, 55).

Also in this chapter is the first of 18 parables that Luke alone records. It grew out of Jesus' visit to the home of a Pharisee where a woman anointed His feet with ointment. The simple parable of the two debtors reveals that this woman of the street was better in God's sight than Simon, the Pharisee.

Chapter 8 — This chapter records events that are in the other synoptic Gospels.

Chapter 9 — This chapter also records events found in Matthew and Mark. All three record the transfiguration. John does not record it, as the transfiguration sets forth the perfect *humanity* of Jesus rather than adding proof to His deity, and John emphasizes the *deity* of Jesus. Verse 29 may give the impression that the light was shining upon Him as a spotlight, but that is not Luke's intention. Mark 9:3 reads, "And his raiment became shining, exceedingly white like snow, as no fuller on earth can whiten them." The light came from within. This was probably the original condition of Adam and Eve. The word for transfigured is from the Greek *metamorphoom*. The English derivation is metamorphosis. Metamorphosis can be upward or downward:

- (1) Upward — the ugly larva in the cocoon that became a beautiful butterfly,
- (2) Downward — death.

In the transfiguration it is upward.

There are three steps in the life of Jesus:

- (1) Innocent and holy — born without sin;
- (2) Holy in the sense that He met temptation and overcame it (Adam did not meet this test);
- (3) Transfigured — this is the goal for humanity. In the transfiguration of Jesus we see the hope of humanity.

Dr. Luke alone elaborates upon this detail, as he does upon the contrasting condition — the demon-possessed boy at the foot of the mountain (vv. 37-43). What a contrast!

Dr. Luke also gives much attention to demon possession. In chapter 8 he records Jesus' visit to Gadara and the man in the tombs possessed with demons. This man and the boy at the foot of the mount are extreme cases. He also records other cases, and from these we can draw certain conclusions:

- Casting out a demon is the first miracle recorded by Luke (4:31-35).
- Demons recognized Jesus (4:41).
- Demonism is distinguished from diseases (4:40, 41).
- Demonism is a reality, as real as cancer or fever.
- Demons disturb men physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.
- They destroy the lives of men and bring about inevitable eternal doom.
- Demonism is synonymous with unclean spirits.
- They control the lives of those whom they possess. Victims do not abide by rules and customs of society.
- A demon-possessed person cannot discipline himself — the will is destroyed, leading to strange conduct (e.g., nudity).
- He is abnormal but not necessarily insane.
- The personality is degraded and debased. Ultimately he will be caused to do frightful and terrifying acts (8:27-29; 9:39, 42).
- Demons belong to the spiritual world, not the physical.
- They are behind false religion (1 Corinthians 10:20).
- Demons desire to inhabit persons. Many occupy one person.
- They dread the bottomless pit — would rather go into pigs — pigs would rather die.
- Only Christ can deliver from the power of demons, as it is the power of Satan (8:28; 9:42, 43).

There is evidence of demon possession today. After World War II,

with its bloodbath and atrocities in which the finer sensibilities of men had been degraded and deadened, demonism moved into this vacuum. Dr. Kurt Koch, who made a special study, gives many case histories.

Verse 51 is the turning point in the ministry of Jesus. He begins His march to Jerusalem and the cross.

Chapter 10 — Luke alone records the familiar parable of the good Samaritan. The final interpretation is that Jesus is the Good Samaritan who found mankind wounded by sin on the side of life's highway where religion and the Law went by, indifferent and incapable of helping.

Chapter 11 — The two parables on prayer are recorded only by Luke. Most parables illustrate by comparison. These illustrate by contrast. The insistent friend and the sleepy neighbor who would not answer his door at midnight certainly do not illustrate the reluctance of God to answer prayer. God is willing to answer, and He is not asleep; it is we who are not insistent and persistent in prayer. In the second parable, a human father never gives his son a stone as substitute for bread, and surely God is as good as a human father. He is much better! These parables illustrate by contrast.

Chapter 12 — Luke alone gives us the parable of the rich fool who built bigger barns in this life but made no provisions for his soul in the next life.

The parable of the steward, who abused his servants because his lord seemed to delay his return, also is unique in this Gospel.

Chapter 13 — Luke alone records the incident of Jesus healing the crippled woman in the synagogue on the sabbath.

Chapter 14 — Luke alone records the delightful occasion of Jesus going to dinner at the home of one of the chief Pharisees. He gave His host and guests a lesson in etiquette in the devastating parable of the ambitious guest. There are two other parables in this chapter that are in no other Gospel — the building of a tower and a king preparing to make war.

Chapter 15 — Luke alone records the most famous parable of all, labeled the prodigal son. Actually, there are three parables in one:

- The parable of the lost sheep — the work of God the Son in restoring a sinning son;
- the parable of the lost coin — the work of God the Holy Spirit; and
- the parable of the lost son — the work of the Father in restoring a sinning son.

Chapter 16 — There are 2 parables here that are not found elsewhere. The parable of the steward who used his position to further his selfish ends is another parable by contrast. The children of this world are clever and crooked in the use of money. They do it for their own selfish purposes. In contrast, the children of light do not exercise the same wisdom in the use of money for the cause of Christ in the world.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable but an actual happening. The name of the poor man is given here, and it is highly unlikely that our Lord would have made up a name and then, in the same account, introduced Abraham by name. Perhaps all His parables are actual incidents. Our Lord follows these two men from this life through the doorway of death and gives a record from the other side — after death.

Chapter 17 — Luke alone records the two parables here: the brief story of dedicated service that belongs to the master, and the healing of the 10 lepers with the attendant thanklessness of the 9.

Chapter 18 — The parable of the unjust judge is another teaching on prayer by contrast. God is not an unjust judge who has to be prodded into action by the insistent pleadings of a widow who makes herself a nuisance.

The parable of the Pharisee and publican who went up to the temple to pray shows the different attitudes of people when they pray.

Chapter 19 — Jesus detours through Jericho to reach a man in a sycamore tree. Luke alone records this account of Zacchaeus, the publican of Jericho. (See author's booklet, *The Fruit of the Sycamore Tree*.)

Chapter 20 — Luke records the incident (as do Matthew and Mark) of the encounter of Jesus with the religious rulers in the temple area in Jerusalem.

Chapter 21 — Luke records the answer to the first of the three questions asked by the disciples, “When shall these things be?” (v. 7).

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that its desolation is near. (Luke 21:20)

This section was fulfilled when Titus, the Roman, besieged and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Chapter 22 — Luke records the Passover, Garden of Gethsemane betrayal, arrest and trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, and the denial of Simon Peter. (See notes on Matthew and Mark regarding these events.)

Chapter 23 — Luke follows the other synoptic Gospels in giving the account of Jesus before Pilate, the crucifixion and burial of Jesus (see notes on Matthew and Mark). Luke alone includes the record of Jesus being sent to Herod by Pilate. Jesus’ silence before Herod is startling. Jesus is the final issue of Jacob; Herod is the final issue of Esau. Jesus had no word for Herod. He formerly had called him “that old fox” (see Luke 13:32).

Chapter 24 — Luke records the resurrection of Jesus as Matthew, Mark, and John do.

Luke alone records the journey of the resurrected Jesus down the Emmaus road and His encounter with two disciples. Although Jesus is in a glorified body, He is still human. He walked with these two down a dusty road and ate with them.

Jesus also appears to His disciples in an upper room and eats with them. He is still human, though glorified.

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.... And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. (Luke 24:39, 42, 43)

The most important highlight in both instances is His reference to the Scriptures to substantiate His death and resurrection.

OUTLINE:

- I. **Birth of the Perfect Man and His family**, Chapters 1 — 3
 - A. Announcement of the births of John and Jesus; the birth of John, Chapter 1
 1. Purpose of Gospel, vv. 1-4
(*Periodic sentence*)
 2. Gabriel appears to Zacharias and announces the birth of John, vv. 5-25
 3. Gabriel appears to Mary and announces the virgin birth of Jesus, vv. 26-38
 4. Mary visits Elisabeth, vv. 39-56
(*Hail Mary and Magnificat*)
 5. Birth of John (Zacharias' *Benedictus*), vv. 57-80
 - B. Birth of Jesus; His reception; His circumcision; His journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age, Chapter 2
 1. Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem in a stable, vv. 1-7
 2. Reception of Jesus: angels announce His birth to shepherds; shepherds visit stable, vv. 8-20
 3. Circumcision of Jesus and purification of Mary, vv. 21-24
 4. Incident in temple concerning Simeon, vv. 25-35
(*Nunc Dimittis*, vv. 29-32)
 5. Incident in temple concerning Anna; return to Nazareth, vv. 36-40
 6. Visit of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve, vv. 41-52
(*Dr. Luke says He was growing normally in body, mind, and spirit — v. 52*)
 - C. Ministry of John the Baptist; baptism of Jesus; genealogy of Mary, Chapter 3
 1. Ministry of John, vv. 1-20
 2. Baptism of Jesus, vv. 21, 22
(*Trinity — v. 22*)
 3. Genealogy of Mary, vv. 23-38
(*Mary was also descended from David, v. 31 — see Matthew 1*)

- II. Testing of the Perfect Man; rejection by His hometown, Chapter 4** (“Tempted like as we are,” Hebrews 4:15)
 - A. Temptation of Jesus, vv. 1-13
 - B. Jesus returns to Galilee and Nazareth; rejected by His hometown, vv. 14-30
(Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2 in v. 18)
 - C. Jesus moves His headquarters to Capernaum; continues His ministry, vv. 31-44

- III. Ministry of the Perfect Man in area of Galilee, Chapters 5 — 9**
 - A. Jesus calls disciples for the second time; cleanses lepers; heals man with palsy; calls Matthew; gives parables on new garment and wine skins, Chapter 5
 - B. Jesus defends disciples for plucking grain on sabbath; heals paralyzed man on sabbath; chooses twelve; gives Sermon on the Plain, Chapter 6
 - C. Jesus heals centurion’s servant; restores to life son of widow of Nain; commends John the Baptist; goes to dinner at Pharisee’s house; gives parable of two debtors, Chapter 7
 - D. Jesus gives parables: sower, lighted candle, personal relationships; stills storm; casts out demons at Gadara; heals woman with issue of blood; restores to life daughter of Jairus, Chapter 8
 - E. Jesus commissions and sends forth the twelve; feeds 5000; announces death and resurrection; transfigured; casts out demons from an only son; sets His face toward Jerusalem; puts down test for discipleship, Chapter 9

- IV. Ministry of the Perfect Man on way to Jerusalem, Chapters 10 — 18**
 - A. Jesus sends forth the seventy; pronounces judgment on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum; gives parable of Good Samaritan; enters home of Mary and Martha, Chapter 10
 - B. Jesus teaches disciples to pray by using parables of the persistent friend and a good father; accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul; gives parables — unclean spirit

leaving a man, sign of Jonah, lighted candle; denounces Pharisees, Chapter 11

- C. Jesus warns of leaven of Pharisees; gives parables of rich fool, return from wedding, testing of servants in light of coming of Christ; states He is a divider of men, Chapter 12
- D. Jesus teaches men not to judge but repent; gives parable of fig tree; heals woman with infirmity; gives parables of mustard seed and leaven; continues to teach as He goes toward Jerusalem; weeps over Jerusalem, Chapter 13
- E. Jesus goes to dinner at home of Pharisee; gives parables of impolite guests, the great supper, building a tower, king going to war, salt that loses its tang, Chapter 14
- F. Jesus gives parable of lost sheep, lost coin, two lost sons (prodigal son), Chapter 15
(The obedient Son is the One giving the parable.)
- G. Jesus gives parable about unjust steward; answers covetous Pharisees; speaks on divorce; recounts incident of rich man and Lazarus (poor man), Chapter 16
- H. Jesus instructs His disciples on forgiveness, faithful service; heals ten lepers (one Samaritan returns to give thanks); speaks on spiritual nature of kingdom and His coming again, Chapter 17
- I. Jesus gives two parables on prayer; blesses little children; confronts rich young ruler with five of Ten Commandments; heals blind man on entering Jericho, Chapter 18

V. Ministry of the Perfect Man in Jericho and Jerusalem, Chapters 19 — 21

- A. Jesus enters Jericho and home of Zacchaeus; conversion of Zacchaeus; gives parable of ten pounds; enters Jerusalem; weeps over city; cleanses temple, Chapter 19
- B. Jesus' authority challenged; gives parable of vineyard; questioned about paying tribute to Caesar; silences Sadducees about resurrection; questions scribes, Chapter 20
- C. Jesus notes how people give, commends widow; answers question in Olivet Discourse, "When shall these things be?" Chapter 21

VI. Betrayal, trial, and death of the Perfect Man, Chapters 22, 23
(Our Kinsman-Redeemer)

A. Judas plots with chief priests to betray Jesus; Jesus plans for last Passover and institutes Lord's Supper; announces His betrayal, position of apostles in future kingdom; Peter's denial; warns disciples of future; goes to Gethsemane; betrayed by Judas; arrested and led to high priest's house; denied by Peter; mocked, beaten, brought before Sanhedrin, Chapter 22

B. Jesus brought before Pilate and Herod; Barabbas released; Jesus foretells destruction of Jerusalem and prays for His enemies; Jesus crucified; mocked by rulers, soldiers, one thief; other thief turns to Jesus and is accepted by Him; dismisses His spirit; placed in new tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, Chapter 23

VII. Resurrection of the Perfect Man, Chapter 24:1-48

A. Jesus raised from the dead; leaves Joseph's tomb, vv. 1-12

B. Jesus goes down road to Emmaus, reveals Himself to two disciples, vv. 13-34

C. Jesus goes to the assembled disciples, reveals Himself to the eleven; gives commission to go, vv. 35-48

(He is still a man; emphasizes the importance of the Word of God)

VIII. Ascension of the Perfect Man, Chapter 24:49-53

Jesus promises to send Holy Spirit; ascends to heaven in attitude of blessing His own

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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