

## Lesson 29

# LUKE

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### THE MAN

Even though the Bible doesn't tell us much about Luke, based on three clear references to him in Paul's letters, and three extended passages in Acts where Luke writes in the first person "we," his identity emerges.

In Colossians 4:14 Paul calls him "the beloved \_\_\_\_\_[a]." The term "physician" in the first century didn't speak primarily about one's expertise or training as the term does in our day. Surgeries were occasionally performed in the first century, but medical practices at that time mostly involved herbal \_\_\_\_\_[b] and traditional \_\_\_\_\_[c]. There were no standardized medical curriculums or accrediting boards. When a person was known as a "physician," it really said more about his character and "calling"; a physician was someone who had devoted himself to helping the sick and had studied under a more experienced practitioner to learn the field. So, Luke almost certainly would have received a good education as he studied "medicine" from another seasoned "physician." As a physician he no doubt would have ministered to \_\_\_\_\_[d] medical needs on his second missionary journey and during Paul's imprisonment in Rome. He also would have helped in the work of preaching the gospel. Think of Luke as the first "\_\_\_\_\_ [e] missionary."

A second reference to Luke in Paul's letters is in 2 Timothy 4:11. There, just before he was executed in Rome, Paul said, "only Luke is with me." This passage, along with Colossians 4:10-14 and Philemon 24, clearly suggests that Luke was part of Paul's \_\_\_\_\_[f] team. The third and final reference to Luke in Paul's letters is Philemon 24 where Paul lists him among "my fellow \_\_\_\_\_[g]" along with Mark, Aristarchus, and Demas.

And that brings us to the three "we-sections" of Acts. If we take those at face value—and I do—Luke represents himself as a companion of Paul. According to the **first of these three "we" passages (Acts 16:10-17)**, it seems that Luke first encountered Paul in the seaport city of \_\_\_\_\_[h] during the apostle's second missionary journey. Paul and Silas' mission team were in Troas when God directed Paul in a vision to \_\_\_\_\_[i] and Greece. After that vision Luke said, "*we* immediately sought to leave Macedonia" because they concluded that "God had called *us* to preach the gospel to them" (Acts 16:10). Their

first major stop there was the Roman colony of \_\_\_\_\_[j], and there Luke said, “as *we* were going to . . .” (Acts 16:16), and he then described how \_\_\_\_\_[k] “prevailed upon us” to stay with her after her conversion. He also described how a woman with a spirit of divination “met us” and followed “Paul and us” (Acts 16:16-17). This suggests that Paul met Luke in \_\_\_\_\_[l]. We don’t know, however, if Luke was a believer before encountering Paul. His readiness to join Paul’s mission team (Acts 16:10) may suggest that he was already a Christian.

It seems, then, that Luke was left to minister in \_\_\_\_\_[m] while Paul and other team members continued on into \_\_\_\_\_[n] because Luke stops writing about “we” and “us” as he described the work of Paul after Philippi. Then, during Paul’s \_\_\_\_\_[o] missionary journey, after several months of ministry in Greece, Paul intended to sail directly home from Cenchrea (a port city near Corinth), but a plot to kill him changed the plan. Paul then retraced his steps through Philippi (Acts 20:2-5), and that’s where the **second of the “we” passages (Acts 20:5-21:18)** appears. Luke wrote, “*we* sailed from Philippi . . . and came to them [the rest of the mission team] at Troas . . . and there *we* stayed seven days” (Acts 20:6). The “we/us” then continues until they get to \_\_\_\_\_[p] (Acts 21:17-18).

Finally, the **third of the “we” passages (Acts 27:1-28:16)** follows Paul from his \_\_\_\_\_[q] in Jerusalem to his \_\_\_\_\_[r] in the palace of Herod Agrippa, then along the journey to \_\_\_\_\_[s], and on through his two years of house arrest awaiting trial. We can’t know with certainty where Paul went after he was released, but within a couple of years, he was back in Rome and back in \_\_\_\_\_[t]. And, as he wrote his final letter of the New Testament, as mentioned earlier, he told Timothy that only Luke remained by his side (2 Tim 4:11).

A couple more things we can say about Luke is that he was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4), and he was a \_\_\_\_\_[u]. In fact, he’s the only non-Jewish writer of Scripture. Why can we conclude he was a Gentile? There are several reason, but I’ll mention only two: (1) in Colossians 4:10-11 when he’s listed among Paul’s mission team, he’s not listed along with the team members of whom Paul says: “these are the only fellow workers . . . who are from the circumcision”; and (2) he refers to “the Jews” in the third person, and his reference to “their [the Jews] own language” (Acts 1:19) implies he wasn’t Jewish.

## THE RECIPIENTS

The “most excellent \_\_\_\_\_[v]” is the identified recipient. “Theophilus” means “one who loves \_\_\_\_\_[w].” Some think this might be a nickname of a noteworthy Christian official who preferred to

remain anonymous (either for the sake of humility or safety). I think it's more probable that it's a real name of someone of high rank in Roman government. It's quite possible that he may even have been Luke's patron; that is, he may be the one who is funding Luke's writing of this Gospel account as well as the book of \_\_\_\_\_[x].

Obviously, though, Luke intended his readers to go far beyond Theophilus, and clearly it was to a largely \_\_\_\_\_[y] audience that Luke wrote. We know this for several reasons: (1) he dedicates the work to Theophilus, most likely a Gentile; (2) he writes in polished Greek, which would appeal to Greek readers; (3) he uses Greek and Roman terms when other Gospel writers use Hebrew ("teacher" for "rabbi;" "lawyer" for scribe;); (4) he refers the Jews in the third person; (5) he traces Jesus' ancestry back, not just to Abraham, but to \_\_\_\_\_[z]; and (6) he makes comparatively infrequent use of the Old Testament.

## THE CONTENT

Luke's goal was to arrange his message about Jesus "in consecutive order" (NASB) (Luke 1:3). A better rendering, I believe, would be "an orderly account" (ESV, NIV). The Greek word means "orderly" or "in sequence according to time, space, or *logic*." Luke set out, then, to share the ministry of Jesus in a \_\_\_\_\_[aa] order. And the logical order that he chose was a "\_\_\_\_\_ [bb] order." After relaying the stories surrounding Jesus' birth, childhood, and preparation for ministry (Luke 1:1-4:13), he portrays the ministry of Jesus as based in or near \_\_\_\_\_[cc] (Luke 4:14-9:50). Then, Luke places several episodes within the framework of Jesus' journey \_\_\_\_\_[dd] after the Lord "determined to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51-19:27). Finally, Luke describes the culmination of Jesus' mission in \_\_\_\_\_[ee] (19:29-24:53).

While Luke's narrative logically moves from Galilee to Jerusalem, he highlights the \_\_\_\_\_[ff] nature of Jesus' mission on earth. From the very outset, Jesus is recognized as a "light of revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). For Luke, the Son of Man is the Savior for all mankind: Jews; Samaritans; Gentiles; poor and rich; respectable and despised; tax collectors and religious leaders; women and children. Luke reinforces his thesis that Jesus is the Savior of all mankind by extending Jesus' genealogy all the way back to our universal common ancestor, \_\_\_\_\_[gg] (Luke 3:23-38).

Luke presents Jesus as the embodiment of God's concern for helpless humanity through many stories from Jesus' ministry and many parables that only appear in Luke's Gospel: the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); the woman healed of her eighteen-year infirmity (Luke 13:10-17); the healing of a man with dropsy (an abnormal swelling of the body)

(Luke 14:1-6); the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin (Luke 15:1-10), the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the greedy rich man and godly Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31); the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19); Jesus at the house of the outcast, Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10); the story of Jesus literally weeping over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41); the penitent thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43); and the faith of the disillusioned believers restored on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Luke painstakingly presents Jesus as the Great \_\_\_\_\_ [hh] who has come to deliver us from the realities of living in a sin-sick world.

Luke also painstakingly presents Jesus as perfect, ideal \_\_\_\_\_ [ii]. He shows us an all-powerful creator taking on the fragile nature of human beings. Luke gives us the most complete account of Christ's ancestry, and birth. Only in Luke is Jesus pictured passing through the various stages of human existence. Only in Luke's account do we see Jesus as a helpless \_\_\_\_\_ [jj] lying in a manger. And only in Luke's account do we see Jesus as a \_\_\_\_\_ [kk] when He matches wits with the top theological minds of the day.

Luke is distinguished from the other Gospels by several features:

- Luke seems almost biased towards the \_\_\_\_\_ [ll]. For example, he records Jesus' words, "Blessed are you who are poor" and "Woe to you who are rich." In general, the poor are elevated as especially protected by God (Luke 1:53) while the selfish wealthy are struck down (Luke 1:51-52; 12:13-21).
- Luke shows a particular interest in \_\_\_\_\_ [mm]. Mary and Martha are prominent. He writes of the woman touching the hem of Jesus' cloak, and the healing that then took place. No other writers comment on the women weeping for Jesus as He is carried to the cross. Luke names the wealthy women who supported Jesus' ministry financially. He mentions thirteen women not mentioned in any of the other Gospels.
- Luke writes about Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ [nn] more than any other Gospel writer. Between Luke's first reference to Jesus praying at His baptism (Luke 3:21) and Jesus' last prayer uttered on the cross (Luke 23:46), Luke records nine occasions on which Jesus prayed, and seven of those are unique to Luke.
- There is more about the Holy \_\_\_\_\_ [oo] in Luke than in Matthew and Mark combined. Luke presents the Spirit as an important participant in Jesus' life. He receives the Spirit at His baptism (Luke 3:22), is full of the Spirit when He is tempted (Luke 4:1), and begins His ministry in Galilee in the power of

the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14). Luke's interest in the Spirit continues into his second volume, Acts, with more frequent references.

### LESSONS FROM LUKE

- We must have a deep interest in people's \_\_\_\_\_[pp]
- \_\_\_\_\_[qq] and \_\_\_\_\_[rr] should characterize us in our daily life.
- \_\_\_\_\_[ss] is relentless.
- Face \_\_\_\_\_[tt] with \_\_\_\_\_[uu].
- If Jesus is your \_\_\_\_\_[vv], \_\_\_\_\_[ww] Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_[xx] is essential for discipleship.
- Don't lose sight of the \_\_\_\_\_[yy]—seek and save the \_\_\_\_\_[zz].

### KEY PASSAGES FROM LUKE

- Luke 2:11
- Luke 6:46
- Luke 15:25-26
- Luke 17:33
- Luke 18:1
- Luke 19:8-10
- Luke 23:39-43

## FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] physician	[ss] Satan
[b] remedies	[tt] trials
[c] therapies	[uu] tenacity
[d] Paul's	[vv] Lord
[e] medical	[ww] obey
[f] missions	[xx] Prayer
[g] workers	[yy] mission
[h] Troas	[zz] lost
[i] Macedonia	
[j] Philippi	
[k] Lydia	
[l] Troas	
[m] Philippi	
[n] Greece	
[o] third	
[p] Jerusalem	
[q] arrest	
[r] confinement	
[s] Rome	
[t] prison	
[u] Gentile	
[v] Theophilus	
[w] God	
[x] Acts	
[y] Gentile	
[z] Adam	
[aa] logical	
[bb] geographical	
[cc] Galilee	
[dd] south	
[ee] Jerusalem	
[ff] global	
[gg] Adam	
[hh] Physician	
[ii] humanity	
[jj] infant	
[kk] child	
[ll] poor	
[mm] women	
[nn] prayers	
[oo] Spirit	
[pp] needs	
[qq] love	
[rr] compassion	