

# God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

## SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

A Quick Look at the Gospel According to Luke

Luke, a physician, writes with the compassion and warmth of a family doctor as he carefully documents the perfect humanity of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Luke emphasizes Jesus' ancestry, birth, and early life before moving carefully and chronologically through His earthly ministry. During Paul's two-year Caesarean imprisonment, Luke may have traveled in Palestine to gather information from eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry.

### **READ LUKE and You'll see Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World**

- Luke's Gospel describes how God entered human history. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was born of a virgin (2:1-7), grew and matured as a human boy and young man (2:52), resisted Satan's temptations (4:1-13), taught and ministered among the people (4:14-21:38), was betrayed by Judas and deserted by his closest followers (22:1-62), was convicted and executed as a common criminal (22:63-23:56), rose from the dead (24:1-49), and ascended into heaven (24:50-51). Jesus is an exemplar for all people. After a perfect ministry, he provided a perfect sacrifice for our sin so that men and women of all races and nations could be saved.

### **READ LUKE and You'll see History**

- Luke was a medical doctor and historian. He put great emphasis on dates and details, connecting Jesus to events and people in history. Luke made sure that what he was writing was historically accurate, in every detail. He wanted believers, especially Theophilus, to be confident and secure in their faith. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Luke faithfully recorded God's message for his first-century audience and for believers throughout the ages. Christians today can believe in the reliability of Luke's history of Jesus' life. Even if approached as a secular document, this Gospel presents solid evidence for its historicity and accuracy.

### **READ LUKE and You'll see Jesus Reaching Out to Women**

- Luke seems to have made a point of highlighting this aspect of the Lord's ministry. Luke 8:1-3, for example, lists several women as close followers and supporters. This fits, of course, with Greek and Roman culture where women were active participants in business, politics, and household management (see, for example, Acts 16:13-15; 17:4, 12). It would have been almost scandalous, however, in Jewish culture where men and women were separated in the synagogue and only men could be taught by the rabbis.

### **Fast Facts on Luke:**

**1. Who?** Dr. Luke, a personal assistant of the Apostle Paul.

**2. When?** 58-60 AD

**3. Why?** To present Jesus as the Perfect Man.

**4. Key Verse:** Luke 19:10

**4. Key Phrase:**  
*Jesus Christ is the Perfect Man*

### **More Facts:**

- 59% unique material.
- Luke interviewed people during 2 year imprisonment of Paul.
- Gospel was intended for a non-Jewish audience (unlike Matthew).
- Lineage from Mary (back to Adam)
- Obviously interviewed Mary ("Mary pondered these things in her heart")

**READ LUKE and You'll see Social Concern** - As a *perfect human*, Jesus showed tender sympathy to the poor, the despised, the hurt, and the sinful. No one was rejected or ignored by him. Jesus healed the sick, diseased, and crippled. His compassion reached across racial lines and broke with convention. Jesus' compassion shows that he is more than an idea or teacher; he tenderly cares for each person. Know that only his kind of deep love can satisfy you. Whatever your need, bring it to the Savior.

**READ LUKE and You'll see the Ministry of the Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus' birth, baptism, ministry, and resurrection. Jesus lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit. This emphasis is carried over into Luke's sequel, the book of Acts, where we see Christians thoroughly immersed and motivated by the Holy Spirit.

#### INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT LUKE'S GOSPEL:<sup>1</sup>

1. Luke's Gospel is the only one that tells us about the salvation of the dying thief who was crucified with Jesus.
2. Luke's Gospel gives us the most complete account of Christ's birth, childhood, and ancestry.
3. Luke has been called the "Gospel of Womanhood" because he emphasizes the role of women, referring to them 43 times.
4. Luke's account is viewed as being by far the best literary work of the four Gospels. This is evidenced by the instance when French rationalistic critic and notorious nonbeliever, Ernest Renan, once said that Luke's Gospel was "the most beautiful book ever written."
5. Luke's Gospel is the most socially-minded of the four Gospels, with more recorded instances of Jesus' dealings with the poor, strangers, and so on.
6. Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14); therefore, he uses many medical terms in his writing.

#### EXTRA MATERIAL ON LUKE:

1. **Luke was a Medical Doctor.** Colossians 4:14 uses the title of "doctor" for Luke. Many have attempted to prove Luke's authorship of this Gospel by identifying medical terminology in it. In a few places, Luke presents more exact descriptions of diseases than Matthew or Mark. For instance, a fever is said to be "high" (4:38—compare this with Mark 1:30 in the Greek), and an advanced case of leprosy is described (5:12). Also, only this Gospel mentions a woman spending all of her money on doctors (8:43).
2. **Luke was a Precise Historian.** Although Luke's historical accuracy has been called into question by critical scholars on certain points (especially the census of Quirinius in 2:1-2 and references to the priesthoods of Annas and Caiaphas in 3:2), it is clear that Luke, more so than Matthew and Mark, took great pains to verify the historical accuracy of the accounts that he was retelling. In fact, the first few sentences present this as his express purpose: "Having carefully investigated all of these accounts from the beginning, I have decided to write a careful summary for you" (1:3 nlt). Historical references abound in the Gospel. For example, Luke dated Jesus' birth by mentioning the reigning Roman emperor and the local governor (2:1); he even dated the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry in the same way (3:1). This Gospel, along with the numerous details in Acts, reveals the careful and diligent research of a precise historian.
3. **Luke was a Traveling Companion.** Acts 16 is where Luke seems to have joined Paul, for "we" begins to be used to refer to Paul and company.
4. **Parables Unique to Luke:** Two debtors—7:41-50; The Good Samaritan—10:25-37; The persistent friend—11:5-10; The rich fool—12:13-21; The barren fig tree—13:6-9; The foolish builder—14:28-30; The foolish king—14:31-33; The lost sheep—15:1-7; The lost coin—15:8-10; The lost son—15:11-32; The shrewd manager—16:1-8; The rich man and Lazarus—16:19-31; The humble servant—17:7-10; The persistent widow—18:1-8; The Pharisee and the tax collector—18:9-14

**Origen (185-254; Homilies on Luke 1):** "For Matthew did not 'take in hand' but wrote by the Holy Spirit, and so did Mark and John and also equally Luke... For there is also the gospel 'according to Thomas,' and that 'according to Matthias,' and many others. ... **BUT THE CHURCH OF GOD ACCEPTS ONLY THE FOUR.**"

**Clement of Alexandria (150-215AD)** – "...the earliest written gospels were those containing genealogies..."

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Highway 66* by Jeff Lasseigne.