

LUKE 1

Introduction to Luke

There are three scriptures where the name of Luke is mentioned:

1. Read Colossians 4.14

- What does this indicate?** That he was a Gentile, a Greek (a Greek name)
- We know that in his writings Jewish terms are avoided or explained
- There are not many quotes from the Old Testament in his works
- He dates events by the Roman Emperor or governor
- We also see that his profession was a doctor (the "*beloved doctor*")

Luke likes to record information that a doctor would notice:

- Acts 3.2, 4.22* – the lame man
- Acts 9.18* – scales on Paul's eyes
- Acts 12.23* – eaten by worms
- Acts 28.8* – fever and dysentery

Read *Gospel Advocate*, June 14, 1973, p. 374ff

2. Read 2 Timothy 4.9-14 – This shows his faithfulness as a Christian

3. Read Philemon 24 – A fellow-worker with Paul in Rome

Luke was a very careful and meticulous writer; if we (correctly) assume that Paul did not write *Hebrews*, then Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other person (about one-fourth)

Characteristics of the Gospel of Luke:

1. Emphasis on women and children

- Examples: Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Mary and Martha, etc.

2. Love for the poor – *Luke 14.12-14* – Invite the poor to eat

- Luke 18.25* – The rich and the eye of a needle

3. More gentle in dealing with the weaknesses of the apostles

- Some of the more damaging incidents involving the apostles are omitted from *Luke* (Peter's denial is handled very mildly)

Luke is believed to have been from Antioch of Syria, possibly the brother of Titus (Titus is not mentioned by name in *Acts*)

2 Corinthians 8 – The unidentified brother is not named, but is probably Luke

-Read 2 Cor. 8.18-19

Remember the four "we" passages in *Acts* – Luke's name is never mentioned, but a pronoun shift takes place (from "they" to "we")

Luke 1.1-4

V1 – Many sources, but not Matthew, Mark, or John, but this is a reference to uninspired accounts of the life of Christ

- Why would a written record of the life of Christ be necessary?** Because the eye-witnesses

were dying

-Many had tried to write down the facts, but had evidently failed to do a good job

V2 – What sources did Luke use? *"Eyewitnesses...from the beginning"* – from the birth of John the Baptist

-*"Word"* – Jesus, according to *John 1.1*

V3 – Reason for this book? He had access to the eye-witnesses; he could check out the facts with those people

-He investigated everything carefully from the beginning

-How would the book be arranged? In consecutive order

-Theophilus – literally: *Friend of God* (a proper name)

-Use of "most excellent" – **Read Acts 23.26, 24.3, 26.25**

-This title was especially used for Roman government officials

-Read Acts 1.1-2 – more on Theophilus

V4 – Purpose: To get the facts straight

-A classic Greek introduction (used by Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, and others)

Luke 1.5-7

V5 – Luke didn't waste any words in getting into his subject

-It is a very straight-forward, forceful beginning here

-Herod – same as mentioned in *Matt. 2.1* ("Herod the Great")

-Father of John the Baptist? Zacharias, of the tribe of Levi

-There were 24 divisions of priests to minister in the Temple (to divide the work up)

-See *1 Chronicles 24.1-10* – the eighth division

-Mother? Elizabeth, also from the Tribe of Levi

-Luke is showing that John the Baptist was of the priestly tribe on both sides of his ancestry

V6 – Describe the moral character of the parents of John the Baptist: Outstanding

-They were kept the ceremonial laws, etc.

-See the apostle Paul – *Phil. 3.6* (similar background)

V7 – Did Zacharias and Elizabeth have any children? No

Luke 1.8-17

V8-9 – There were 24 divisions, but in each division, lots were cast to see who would do what job

-The lot fell to Zacharias to burn the incense

V10 – A very sacred occasion – People were praying silently, and the incense was going up just outside the veil of the Most Holy Place

V11 – Remember that the Holy Spirit had not spoken to a human being in 400 years (since the prophecy of Malachi)

-An angel now appears

- V 11* really marks the beginning of the New Testament revelation
- Notice the specific details, as if Luke is in front of or to right of the altar

V 12 – Fear – a natural human reaction

V 13 – **What had Zacharias been praying for?** A child
-**What did the angel prophesy about John the Baptist?**
-A son, to be named John ("Jehovah shows grace")

V 14 – To bring joy and gladness to Zacharias and Elizabeth
-*V 14b* – Many would rejoice at his birth
-**Why? Read Isaiah 40.3, Malachi 4.5-6**

V 15 – To be great in the eyes of the Lord
-A Nazarite (no wine or liquor, could not cut hair, etc.)
-See *Numbers 6.1-21* – **Read Num. 6.1-8**
-He would be filled with the Holy Spirit (set aside even before birth)
-**What does this tell us about how God views the unborn children?** As human beings (not just a glob of protoplasm or a pre-human)

V 16 – The world would change for many Jews for the better

V 17 – A quote from *Malachi 4.5-6*
-**Purpose of John the Baptist?** To prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah
-**How were John the Baptist and Elijah similar?** Rugged dress, liked wilderness preaching, full of zeal, both denounced a wicked king and queen

Luke 1.18-23

V 18-19 – **Why was Zacharias not able to believe the angel?** Their age (too old for a child)
-Similar to Abraham and Sarah
-It seems as if God disciplined Zacharias for questioning the angel – God's word ought to have been enough for Zacharias (as it should be for us today)

V 20 – **The punishment?** He could not speak until the birth of John

V 21 – People wondered what had happened to Zacharias

V 22 – He made signs with his hands

V 23 – He went home at the end of his duty

Luke 1.24-25

V 24 – Elizabeth remained in seclusion (for the sake of modesty)

V 25 – Maybe hid herself for the first 5 months of the pregnancy, so that people could then clearly see

that she was pregnant (See *Beacon Bible Commentary* for more details on this verse)

Luke 1.26-38

V 26 – What was the time difference between John the Baptist and Jesus? 6 months

-Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth at this time (not Bethlehem)

V 27 – A reference to what Old Testament prophecy? *Isaiah 7.14*

-Mary was to be a virgin; the engagement was binding (*Deut. 22.13, 23*)

-What tribe was Joseph from? Judah (tribe of David)

V 28 – The greeting given by Gabriel

-How do Catholics view Mary? Able to impart favors

V 29 – Mary was disturbed by this greeting

V 30 – Same words as to Zacharias ("Do not be afraid...")

V 31 – Name the Messiah was to receive: Jesus

-*Matt. 1.21* – Why was he named Jesus? Background: "The Lord is salvation"

V 32-33 – Characteristics of Jesus:

-*V 32* – Will be great

-*V 32b* – Will be called the Son of the Most High

-*V 32c* – Will receive the throne of David his father

-Read **Romans 1.3**

-How could Jesus be a descendant of David but not literally the son of Joseph (according to the flesh)? There is reason to believe that Mary was also from Judah – Read **Luke 3.23-28** – the genealogy of Jesus through Mary

-*Acts 2.30-36* – Christ was on David's throne

-A reference to *2 Sam. 7.12-13* – Solomon to Jesus

-*V 33* – To reign over the house of Jacob (in other words, all of God's people)

-*Galatians 3.7* – Faithful Christians today are the "Jews" in the eyes of God

-He would reign over a kingdom that would never end

V 34 – Not doubt, but a questioning attitude (like a child)

V 35 – Christ – Son of God

-Read the *Gospel Advocate Commentary on Luke*, H. Leo Boles, p. 32

-Read **Galatians 4.4**

-There was no physical contact between the Holy Spirit and Mary, but a "shekinah" of God – The "cloud" of God (as in the Old Testament)

V 36-37 – Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant at this point

V 38 – Summarize Mary's attitude: One of faith

-Any significance? A human mother and a divine father

Luke 1.39-45

V 39-40 – Mary went to see Elizabeth

V 41 – Elizabeth's baby kicked and leaped in the womb

-Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

-**Meaning?** Her words were inspired at this point

V 42 – Same basic message as Gabriel had given

V 43 - Possibly the first time that Jesus was called "Lord"

V 44 – **The significance of the baby leaping in the womb of Elizabeth?** She knew then that Mary would give birth to the long-awaited Messiah

V 45 – It seems to be almost a prayer on behalf of Mary

-Mary had believed; Zacharias had doubted

-Notice that Elizabeth does not show any kind of jealousy

Luke 1.46-56

V 46 – [Sometimes called the "Song of Mary"]

-Similar to songs in the Old Testament

-**Who was the mother who was childless for many years in the Old Testament?** Hannah (*1 Sam. 2.1-10*)

V 47 – "My savior" – This indicates that Mary had sins and needed a savior (contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church!)

V 48 – Very grateful language

V 49-50 – She would now see how God had worked things out

V 51-52 – God controls who rules the world

V 53-55 – God does good things for his people

V 56 – **How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth?** 3 months

Luke 1.57-66

V 57 – Mary must have left shortly before the birth of John the Baptist

V 58 – Seemingly a hopeless case for Elizabeth, but now she was giving birth!

-Her relatives were happy for her

V 59 – Circumcision on the eighth day, according to *Lev. 12.3*

- The purpose of circumcision?** A sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham
- Is it binding on us today?** No – See *Phil. 3.3* – It is the circumcision of the heart that God wants today
- John the Baptist was almost named Zacharias

V 60 – Maybe Zacharias had somehow notified Elizabeth as to what the child would be called
 -It was common in the First Century to at least name one son after the father
 -John = "Yahweh's gift" = a gift from God

V 61 – No relatives had been named John

V 62-63 – Zacharias wrote a note: "*His name is John*" – so the name had already been decided on
 -Relatives had nothing to do about it

V 64 – The name of the child was evidence that Zacharias' faith had been restored (no more doubting)

V 65-66 – **Fear?** Awe at the power of God
 -Notice Zacharias and John's unusual name and the appearance of the angel

V 66 – Really a beautiful little verse (as we find throughout the Scriptures)

Luke 1.67-80

V 67 – The Holy Spirit now is definitely operating again (first since the days of Malachi)

V 68-75 – Blessings on God for the fulfillment of the divine promises
 -**What are some of the prophecies that were fulfilled, according to v 68-75?**

V 76-77 – Thanksgiving for the child John
 -**Note:** *V 78* – A direct reference to *Malachi 4.2*

V 78 – *New International Commentary on Luke*, p. 95:

"The original metaphor here refers to a party of travelers who, before reaching their destination, have been overtaken by the darkness of a pitch-black night and are now sitting terrified and powerless and expect any moment to be overwhelmed and killed by wild beasts or enemies. But all at once a bright light appears to show them the way, so that they reach their destination safely where they enjoy rest and peace.

These words, therefore, point to the awful darkness and misery prevailing among mankind before the coming of Christ. Powerless, panic-stricken and threatened by deadly enemies, mankind finds itself in black darkness. But through the coming of Christ a bright light appears – the darkness is dispelled and those who avail themselves of His light are able to see clearly the path leading to peace. By the path of peace is meant the way of forgiveness of sins, of reconciliation to God through the redeeming work of Jesus, the Messiah-Redeemer – a way which leads to real peace and safety."

V 80 – The childhood of John the Baptist

Revised 2012-12-31