

The Year Of Luke

2015 An Adult Study
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What do we have left?

Autographs (original copies) of Luke and the other Gospels have not been preserved; the texts available to us today are copies of copies of copies, with no two identical.

The earliest witnesses (the technical term for written manuscripts) for Luke's gospel fall into two "families" with considerable differences between them, the Western and the Alexandrian, and the dominant view is that the Western text represents a process of deliberate revision, as the variations seem to form specific patterns.

The oldest witness is a fragment dating from the late 2nd century, while the oldest complete texts are the 4th century **Codex Sinaiticus** and **Vaticanus**, both from the Alexandrian family; **Codex Bezae**, a 5th- or 6th-century **Western text-type** manuscript that contains Luke in **Greek** and **Latin** versions on facing pages, appears to have descended from an offshoot of the main manuscript tradition, departing from more familiar readings at many points.

Whatcha Think?

Was the Gospel of St Luke 'written' by MARY? Jesus' mother recounted events recorded in biblical text, claims writer

- **Dr Adam Bradford believes third Gospel was originally a legal document**
- **He says it was written by Luke, a Greek physician, as a letter of support for St Paul who was imprisoned for the political crime of supporting Jesus**
- **Details about Jesus' childhood could only have come from Mary, he claims**
- **He argues feminine words in the scripture give away the true author**
- **While the Gospel of Mark has a feminine word content totalling 116, Luke has more than double that at 247**

The Gospel of St Luke was actually written by Jesus' mother, Mary, making it the first female book in the Bible, a writer has claimed.

Dr Adam Bradford believes the document people have come to know as the Third Gospel began life as a legal defense document in a trial.

Luke, a Greek physician, was tasked with writing a letter of support for St Paul who was imprisoned in Rome for the political crime of supporting Jesus.

Dr Bradford, who also works as a GP and lives in Blackheath, London, claims Luke needed to find out

who Jesus of Nazareth was and turned to the one person who would know, Jesus's elderly mother Mary. His claims emerge in the most sacred week of the Christian calendar, Holy Week, when believers reflect on the days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

The amateur historian said: 'Key information about Jesus' birth and childhood in the Gospel of Luke could only have come from Mary'.

'As she was the only surviving eye-witness of those events when Luke was writing.

'Records at that time were almost exclusively male, yet Luke's manuscript is overwhelmingly female, and his early information was witnessed by one person and one person only, Mary, the mother of Jesus.

'All of the other players were long since dead.

'Only Mary had the knowledge and only Luke's Gospel provides them.

'Luke, a Roman physician, must have gone to the mother of Jesus.'

Dr Bradford drew his conclusions after studying and comparing the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures.

In his book, 'Luke's Gospel - as told by Mary', he claims that the number of feminine words contained in the scripture give away the true author.

The doctor, who runs an NHS practice in inner-city London, added that the writing also suggests Mary was far from being an uneducated peasant girl and was instead well-educated.

'Of the Gospel biographies of Jesus, Luke's stands head and shoulders above the others in terms of feminine references,' he said.

'While the Gospel of Mark has a feminine word content totaling 116, Luke has more than double that at 247.

'Luke was being informed by a woman, and given the number of "widow" references - nine as compared to John's Gospel's none - most likely a woman who had been widowed.'

'Luke's opening content points to one widow in particular, Mary, the wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus.

'Far from being an uneducated peasant girl, Dr Bradford's analysis of Mary's song "The Magnificat" in the original Greek manuscript reveals separate quotations from each section of the Bible of her day, numbering ten in total, showing that she had, unusually for the time, been well-educated.'

His newest book follows on from his revolutionary claims that Jesus was the son of a middle-class, highly educated architect, disputing the previous theory he worked as a carpenter.

Dr Brandord added: 'The first-century was a male-dominated world. My aim is to give Mary the credit she deserves. Without her Luke would have had much less of a story to tell.'

Again, Whatcha think?

Heilsgeschichte

German, 'salvation history'. A term employed by the Biblical Theology movement to describe the story of the Bible as that of God's redemptive work in the events of history.

Let me tell you a story, an old, old story. A very long time ago, before the internet, before smart phones, and even before computers, before cars, before the horse and buggy, even before the horse...

In the beginning, God longed to be in relationship, so God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. And after breathing life into all of creation, God called all of creation good. But it wasn't good was when creation started to reject God, the creator. It started with a serpent and a piece of fruit, but quickly escalated to murder and a world full of sin.

Things got so bad that people even tried to build a tower to the heavens to make a name for themselves. God's good creation had fallen.

Relationships were broken. God wept. But God is a relentless God. God did not give up on creation!

God promised to make things right again, to restore right relationships between people, creation, and God...

To do this, God chose a people to be a blessing for the entire world. This people would become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation: God's missionary people.

However, becoming that people wouldn't be easy. God's people faced many hardships along the way: barren wives, disputes over birthrights, slavery in Egypt...

These barriers, however, were no match for our relentless God. With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, God freed his chosen people from slavery. And as a free people, God entered into covenant relationship with them again, promising to always be their God if they promised to always be God's people: a missionary people for the benefit of the world.

But, wouldn't you know it, the people messed up, and I'm not just talking about one time back in high school, they messed up over and over again, turning away from God, rejecting God's covenant...it got so bad that they actually asked for a human king to replace God on the throne!

God had been rejected by his own people. Dethroned, forgotten. But our God is a relentless God.

Even when the kingdom divided, God kept on, sending prophets to turn the people back. When the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians, God pressed on, loving the people through the judgment.

And when the Southern kingdom fell to the Babylonians, the people lost all hope: they were exiled from their land, forced to live as foreigners. But God pressed on, promising to renew the people again into right relationships with God, each other, and creation.

After a terrible exile, the people did return to the land. Hope began to rise again. But that pesky sin problem still needed to be dealt with once and for all.

So God tied up his bootstraps and came once again to the earth, to walk with the people and show them the way of life. God, the living Word, showed all people the way of radical love, love that is even willing to die for the benefit of others.

And God's life is stronger even than the greatest enemy of death. So God rose up again and raised the people up as well, commissioning them once again to be a missionary people for the benefit of the world. In commissioning them, God promised to always be with them.

So God did not leave the people alone, but rather sent the Holy Spirit to enliven the people of the way,

God's way. And over the centuries, God has continued to enliven God's missionary people, all the way up to today.

So you see, this story is an old, old, story, but it is also fresh as the sunrise each new morning.

This is the story of God's relentless pursuit to address the sin problem by bringing redemption, reconciliation, and restoration to all of creation. This is God's story full of love for the world even in the midst of brokenness and despair.

In the German language it is called "Heilsgeschichte" and it means God's plan of salvation.

I tell you, it is a good thing that God is willing to go with the flow, because we continue to throw him "curve balls" and sometimes, "sliders..."

Luke's gospel, for the record is called the Gospel of Heilsgeschichte...from beginning to end, it is all about God's great plan of salvation...

It is a must read!

“For You, A Savior: The Gospel of Luke”
OUTLINES AND THEMES
WORKING PREACHER LECTIONARY STUDY – LUTHER SEMINARY,
APRIL 2013

OUTLINE OF LUKE

I. Preface: Statement of purpose: 1:1-4	<i>That you may know the truth...1.4</i>
II. Birth and Infancy Narrative: 1:5-2:52	<i>Today a Savior born for you...2.11</i>
III. Preparation for Ministry: 3:1-4:13	<i>All flesh shall see God's Salvation...3.6</i>
John / Baptism/ Genealogy/ Temptation	<i>Anointed to bring good news...4.18</i>
IV. Ministry in Galilee: 4:14-9:50	<i>His face set for Jerusalem...9.51</i>
V. Journey to Jerusalem - "Lukan Travel Narrative": 9:51-19:48	<i>The kingdom of God is near...21.31</i>
VI. Ministry in Jerusalem before Passion: 20-21	<i>Truly, this man was righteous...23:47</i>
VII. Passion and Death. 22-23	<i>Forgiveness for all nations...24.47</i>
VIII..Resurrection Narrative: 24	

OUTLINE OF ACTS

The Gospel in Jerusalem and Palestine (1-12)

- A. Pentecost and the Church in Jerusalem (1-5)
- B. Stephen and the first persecution (6:1-8:3)

In the first book...1:1
You will receive power...witnesses...1:8
Do not hold this sin against them...7:60
They returned..proclaiming the good news...8:25
He is instrument I have chosen...9:15
Who was I to hinder God?... 11:1

C. Gospel spreads to Samaria and beyond (8:4-40)

D. Conversion of Saul; preaching of Paul & Peter (9:1-43)

E. Beginning of Mission to the Gentiles (10:1-12:25)

Even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life...11:18

The Gospel from Antioch to Rome (13-28)

A. Paul "1st Mission Journey", Apostolic Council (13:1-14:28)

B. Apostolic Council in Jerusalem (15:1-36)

C. Paul "2nd Missionary Journey" Macedonia, Achaia, Asia (15:36-18:22)

D. Paul "3rd Missionary Journey" Ephesus, Macedonia, Jerusalem (18:23-21)

E. Paul Arrest, Prison at Caesarea and Rome (21-28)

By Jesus everyone who believes is set free...13:39

It seemed good to Holy Spirit and us.. 15:28

Come to Macedonia and help us...16:9

Showing by the scriptures that the

Messiah is Jesus...18:28

Testifying to the kingdom of

God..salvation to the Gentiles...28:23, 28

For we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will...15:11

OUTLINE: Birth and Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52) **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Dating 1:5

Setting & Characters 1:5-7

Announcement by Angel 1:8-13

NAME(John="God's gracious gift") 1:13

HYMN (Angel) 1:14-17

"How will I know this?" 1:18

Sign 1:19-22

Response 1:23-25

CENTRAL INTERLUDE 1:39-56

Elizabeth & Mary

JESUS

Dating 1:26

Setting & Character 1:27

Announcement by Angel 1:26-31

NAME (Jesus="the Lord is Savior")1:31

HYMN (Angel) 1:32-33

"How will this be?" 1:34

Sign 1:35-37

Response 1:38

At greeting baby leaps in womb
HYMN ("Magnificat") 1:47-55

BIRTH OF JOHN

Dating: Time fulfilled 1:57
Birth of John 1:57-58 (brief)
NAMING (circumcision) 1:59-64
Response/Expectation
"What will this child be?" 1:65-66
HYMN ("Benedictus") 1:67-79
Child grew / strong in spirit 1:80

BIRTH OF JESUS

Dating (precise dating) 2:1
Birth of Jesus 2:1-20 (greatly expanded)
Announcement by angels
HYMN - Glory to God in Highest
Response of shepherds - worship
Response of Mary - kept in heart
NAMING (circumcision) 2:21
Response/ Expectation - Simeon & Anna
"What will this child be?" 2:22-38
HYMN ("Nunc Dimittis") 2:29-32
Child grew/strong in wisdom/favor of God 2:40
Epilogue:Example from Jesus' boyhood 2:41-51
"increase in wisdom/stature/favor with God and human beings" 2:52

Material Unique to Luke

Partial List of "L" Material	1:1-4
Dedication to Theophilus	
Promised Birth of John	1:5-25
Announcement of Jesus' Birth to Mary	1:26-38
Mary's Visit to Elizabeth	1:39-56
Birth of John the Baptist	1:57-80
Birth of Jesus (with shepherds, manger)	2:1-20
Presentation in the Temple	2:21-38
Childhood Visit to Jerusalem	2:41-52
John's Reply to Questions	3:10-14
Genealogy of Jesus (to Adam)	3:23-38
Good News to the Poor	4:14-23, 25-30
Miraculous Catch of Fish	5:1-11
Widow's Son at Nain	7:11-17
Encounter with Homeless Woman	7:36-50
The Ministering Women	8:1-3
Rejection by Samaritan Village	9:51-56
Return of the Seventy	10:17-20
Parable of Good Samaritan	10:29-37

Mary and Martha	10:38-42
Parable of Friend at Midnight	11:5-8
Parable of Rich Fool	12:13-21
Parable of Barren Tree	13:1-9
Healing of Woman on Sabbath	13:10-17
Healing of Man with Dropsy	14:1-6
Lessons for Table Guests and Hosts	14:7-14
Counting the Cost	14:28-33
Parable of Lost Coin	15:8-10
Parable of Lost Son	15:11-32
Parable of Dishonest Steward	16:1-12
Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus	16:19-31
Cleansing of Ten Lepers	17:11-19
Parable of Widow and Judge	18:1-8
Parable of Pharisee and Tax Collector	18:9-14
Story of Zacchaeus	19:1-10
Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem	19:41-44
The Reason for Peter's Denial	22:31-32
The Two Swords	22:35-38
Jesus before Herod	23:6-12
Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent	23:13-16
Sayings Associated with Jesus' Death	23:28-31,34, 43, 46
Appearance on the Road to Emmaus	24:13-35
Appearance to the Disciples	24:36-49
The Ascension	24:50-53

"SALVATION" in LUKE

From the repeated use of the terms "save/salvation" at important points in the gospel narrative, it is clear that for Luke the theme of "salvation" is an especially important frame for understanding what God is about in the life and ministry of Jesus. This use is often linked closely with Luke's emphasis on the Spirit and power of God.

1.31 He shall be called "Jesus" (the Lord is salvation)

1.47 My Spirit has rejoiced in God my savior (Magnificat)

1.69 God...has raised up a horn of salvation for us ...

1.71 ... that we should have salvation from our enemies ...

1.77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of sins

2.11 A savior has been born to you who is Christ the Lord

2.30 My eyes have seen your salvation (Nunc dimittis)

3.6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God (reading of Isaiah 40.5 in the Septuagint/Greek OT, whereas Hebrew OT reads "all flesh shall see it ...

6.9 Is it lawful to save life or destroy it on the sabbath?

7.3 Centurion asks Jesus: Come and save my slave.

- 7.50 To the woman with ointment: Your faith has saved you; go in peace
- 8.12 Explanation to Parable of Sower; Luke alone reads: "...that they my believe and be saved."
- 8.36 Story of demoniac reports that though possessed by demons he was now "saved"
- 8.48 To woman with flow of blood: Your faith has saved you; go in peace
- 8.50 Regarding ruler's dead daughter: Only believe and she shall be saved
- 9.24 Whoever wishes to save life will lose it and whoever loses life for my sake will save it
- 13.23 Will those who are saved be few? one asks
- 17.19 To the leper: Rise, your faith has saved you
- 18.26 About the rich man, the disciples ask: Then who can be saved?
- 18.42 To the blind man: Receive your sight, your faith has saved you
- 19.9 Zacchaeus story: Today salvation has happened to this house (cf. the angel's announcement to shepherds in 2.11)
- 19.10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost
- 23.35 As Jesus hangs on cross, the mockers deride: He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ!
- 23.37 If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself
- 23.39 Are you not the Christ, save yourself and us

HOLY SPIRIT in LUKE

As Luke tells the story, the Holy Spirit is present at crucial points in Jesus' life and ministry and in the early Christian mission. Thus Luke emphasizes the conviction that God is active in Jesus' life and ministry, and that God continues to act to bring about salvation in mission to all the world.

I. Birth and infancy narrative:

- 1.15 -angel tells that John will be filled with Spirit
- 1.35 -Mary told that Holy Spirit will come upon her and power of most high overshadow her
- 1.41 -Elizabeth is filled with Spirit at Mary's visit
- 1.67 -Zechariah is filled with Spirit to sing "Benedictus"
- 1.80 -the boy John grew strong in the Spirit
- 2.26f -Simeon told by Spirit he would not see death; he came to the temple at Jesus' circumcision by Spirit

II. At Jesus' Baptism

- 3.16 -He will baptize you with the Spirit and with fire
- 3.22 -Holy Spirit descended in bodily form to announce Jesus as God's chosen instrument for salvation.
- 4.1 -Jesus returned from Jordan full of the Spirit

III. Temptation

- 4.1 -Jesus led by Spirit into wilderness to be tested

IV. Spirit as mark of Jesus' ministry

- 4.14 -Jesus returned to Galilee from wilderness temptation in the power of the Spirit and stood up to teach ...
- 4.18 -"the Spirit of the Lord is upon me (cf. Isaiah 42.1; 58.6; 61.1)
- 5.17 -the power of the Lord was with him to heal
- 6.19 -power came forth from him and healed

8.46 -for he perceived that power had gone forth from him

V. Crucifixion and Resurrection

23.46 -"into your hands I place my Spirit"

24.49 -disciples charged to wait in the city until they are clothed with power from above

VI. Early Christian Mission

Acts 1.8 -"you will receive power when Holy Spirit comes upon you"

Acts 2 -Pentecost: story of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the church begins Vol. 2 of Luke's work and signals the extension of the message of salvation to "all people."

Acts 6.5 -early mission: Stephen is full of faith and the Holy Spirit

Acts 10f. -Peter & Cornelius: Holy Spirit came on all who listened

Acts 15.28 -Jerusalem Conference on mission of church: It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us;

"RIGHTEOUSNESS/JUSTICE" IN LUKE-ACTS

In the opening verses Luke describes Zechariah and Elizabeth as righteous before God. At Jesus death on the cross, the Centurion pronounces that this man was truly righteous. In his ministry Jesus announces that he has come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Throughout Luke and in the book of Acts, the theme of righteous or just (the words are the same in the original) is a repeated theme.

1:6 Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.

1:17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

1:75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

5:32 I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;

7:29 (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism.

7:35 Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

10:19 See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.

10:29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

12:57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?

12:58 Thus, when you go with your accuser before a magistrate, on the way make an effort to settle the case, or you may be dragged before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you in prison.

13:27 But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!'

14:14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

15:7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

16:8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

16:10 "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

16:11 If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

16:15 So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

18:3 In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.'

18:5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming."

18:6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says.

18:7 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?

18:8 I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

18:9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:

18:11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

20:20 So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor.

21:22 for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.

23:41 And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."

23:47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

23:50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council,

1:18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.

3:14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you,

4:19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge;

7:24 When he saw one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.

7:26 The next day he came to some of them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you wrong each other?'

7:27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?'

7:35 "It was this Moses whom they rejected when they said, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' and whom God now sent as both ruler and liberator through the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

7:52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers.

8:23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness."

10:22 They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say."

10:35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

13:10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"

13:38-39 Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses

17:31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

18:14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews;

22:14 Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice;

24:15 I have a hope in God-- a hope that they themselves also accept-- that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

24:20 Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council,

24:25 And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you." 25:10 Paul said, "I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know.

25:11 Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor."

25:15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him and asked for a sentence against him.

28:4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

THEMES OF LUKE

" **Righteousness** re-imagined

" **Salvation** as the keyword of promise

" **Today** is the day of salvation

" The **necessity** of God's promises

" The presence and **power of the Spirit**

" For **Witness** and Mission

" **Message**: God raised Jesus from the dead

" The Promise of God is **for all peoples**

" A **new community** breaks down walls of division

(the poor, the oppressed, the outcast, are the special objects of God's mercy)

Luke

Of the four evangelists – or gospel writers, Luke (or the author) writes the best Greek, and unlike the other three, he himself was almost certainly a Greek speaking Gentile himself who put his gospel together for a completely Gentile audience, translating Jewish names and explaining Jewish customs when he thought they wouldn't be understood if he didn't. So he does. :-P

Who knows, maybe he needed all that Greek for all the prescriptions he wrote. They are all just a bunch of pill pushers, you know? Maybe they really work for the pharmaceutical companies...and always have...

To be honest, we do not know who wrote any of these gospels – they were all four written anonymously. The names were later additions based on tradition – and you know what I think of tradition...

You remember bald headed, big nosed, boring-rambling Paul, the self-proclaimed apostle? That guy, yeah, he wrote this letter to the Colossians, and in it – he refers to somebody as “Luke the beloved Physician,” --- and without stretching things too far --- you could point to three blocks of material in Luke's gospel, omitted from the others, which might suggest that he was the same man. Huh?

Yep people attributed this writing to the good doctor. Did he write it? Who knows... Did someone else write it? We don't know. We don't think so...(based solely on tradition)...but does anyone know for sure? Of course, not! It is a shot in the dark!

There are three blocks of material in Luke's gospel that for whatever reason – they were ignored by the other gospel writers.

In some way, people thought that these three blocks of material...might tell us something about the original author. This is what we find in Luke....that we find no place else.

First of all, there's the parable of the "Prodigal Son."

Please excuse my language.

Secondly, there is also the account of the supposed whore who washed Jesus' feet. Was she a whore? Who would know? This was the dame with the great gams. She used her hair as a drying towel. Why would Jesus or any man – allow this whore to touch him. It was believed, that when you were touched by someone, you actually became covered or tainted by their sin...

She may have been anointing...but Jesus was being made unclean. Just her touch...contaminated him.

Lastly, Jesus was yakking on the cross, even as he is hanging there dying. He was a yakker. He liked to talk. Imagine conversing while in all this pain...

OMG – that poor prodigal, smelling of cheap gin that cost \$.25 a gallon, he comes stumbling home, bleary eyed and dead broke...with a hangover to die from...but his father is so glad to see him...that he hikes up his robes exposing his bare legs and goes running off to meet his wayward boy.

Oh, the shame, the disgrace, of it all.

So, Jesus tells old Simon the blue-nosed Pharisee who thinks his stuff doesn't stink...guess what? It does stink. It all stinks...as a matter of fact you are kind of in - a stinky business.

Almost like he feels he has to justify himself, Jesus tells the ol' Pharisee - that the whore's sins are forgiven her...which of course, would be a whoa---moment, because who is this Jesus to forgive sins...and yet he says, it, yup – her sins are forgiven.

But as to the ol' Pharisee – well that just might be a different story...

The ol' whore was chocked full of love...Simon, not so much. She knew the meaning of the word - Simon

wouldn't know it or understand it even if he had a Webster's 29th Edition...on his desktop.

Then there was Dismas or Gestas the thieves on the cross.

The names Dismas and Gestas do not come from the Early Christian Writings, but are taken from a [pseudepigraphal book](#) not included in the Early Christian [canon](#). As a result, whether Dismas and Gestas were the true names of the two men crucified at the time of Jesus is unknown. No big surprise there!

The names Dismas and Gestas are first found in the apocryphal writing entitled "The Gospel of Nicodemus" that historians typically agree was written in the 4th century or the 300's. Since this document was written over two centuries after the events and is found in a book containing other disputable information, few argue that much certainty can be attached to these two specific names.

Finally, it should be noted that Dismas (sometimes spelled Dysmas) was the name associated with the good thief who asked Jesus to remember him in paradise ([Luke 23:43](#)), while Gestas was the one who taunted Jesus along with the crowd. In the Roman

Catholic tradition, Dismas was canonized as a saint whose feast is celebrated March 25. A lot of people do not know “that” either!

Gestas doesn't get a date on the liturgical calendar...I bet Jesus would disagree with that decision. It is not very Christian...nor is it very inclusive!!!

When Dysmas (Dismas) asked Jesus to remember him, he winked and said no problem...he would see to it that they both walked those golden streets of heaven together, sooner than either one of them might like to realize. Paradise sometimes is closer than we sometimes think.

Then Jesus caught the eye of Gestas and gave him a nod of the head and a wink of the eye as well.

It was gonna be all good...all good. The Jesus guy had it all covered and worked out, despite the fact that he was covered with blood, sweat and tears and he was losing the battle with each passing minute.

So what the heck is going on here?

Three very different stories...a no – good son, a cheaply perfumed whore and a couple of second story men who got caught and who thought they had no way out of it – this time.

What can these stories possibly tell us about the author?

They certainly can't confirm his being a medical practitioner or that his name might be Luke or Bud or Jerry for that matter.

So, why the inclusion of these three stories?

What do they say to you, about the author?

Different as they are all – in some strange way – it's not hard to see that they all make the same general point, which is that though he could give them all hell – when he felt like it, Jesus had such a soft spot in his heart for the scum of the earth – that you would have almost thought – he considered them to be the salt of the earth---by the way he sometimes treated them.

But that still doesn't tell us why Luke included them, does it.

Luke is the one who goes out of his way to make it perfectly clear that Jesus was big on prayer and praying. For Jesus praying was huge. Prayer was everything.

Jesus prayed often according to Luke. Jesus prayed regularly. Jesus is a man of prayer. Jesus prayed before he was baptized and after he healed the leper and the night before he called the twelve disciples.

Luke is the only one to mention these specific times of prayer...and others, just like them. He also is the only one to have Jesus pray from the cross. As a matter of fact, his last words ever – according to this evangelist – were a prayer.

“Father into thy hand I commend my spirit.”

Nice words... to be remembered and savored.

It is also thanks to this evangelist that there's a record of the jokes that Jesus tells. Well, they are not really jokes...per se...but rather, the kinds of stories that people would smile about and remember later.

Luke tries to humanize Jesus. Matthew, you may remember tried to place the disciples in a better light. Matthew thought that Mark had demonized them. By the time we get to John's gospel – he makes Jesus walk ten feet off the ground.

This same author also has an obsession about Jesus and the poor. According to this evangelist-no one cares for the poor like Jesus does. The poor are ever on his mind and in his heart. He is more than just concerned for their well-being. He feeds them, he preaches to them he walks and lives among them. Jesus is a friend to all those who live on the margins of society. The poor seemingly have a special place

in his ministry. Luke also tells stories about the rich and the poor.

Luke, as we also know is the only gospel writer to have Mary sing a canticle or a psalm about the poor being filled with good things...while the rich are sent away empty.

The author lifts up the poor and the needy whenever possible.

As we stated at the beginning – no one knows his name for sure...nor does anyone know his profession. He was obviously a man of letters – a man with a command of the Greek Language. Nowhere does he utilize medical abbreviations. If he had, it would have helped confirm his profession.

He could have dropped it like some kind of secret code: a QD (everyday) here, a AC (Before eating) there, a DNR (do not resuscitate) for good measure and a QH (every hour) just to get our attention, I&O (intake and output) would have been helpful or a PRN (as needed) and not to be forgotten are QID (Four times a day) and QOD (every other day)...but Noooooo he didn't do that...

So your guess is as good as mine, as to who wrote it, and what their profession was...

Is there a doctor in the house?

(What does Tradition say?)

You know that “tradition is huge” especially in the Roman Catholic tradition. Many people place great stock in the realm of tradition. Each of us must judge for themselves.

So, here we go...

It is believed by many scholars that Luke was a Greek physician who lived in the Greek city of Antioch in Ancient Syria, though some other scholars and theologians think Luke was a Hellenic Jew. The vast majority however believe that he was an uncircumcised Gentile. It depends upon who you read and who you believe.

This Luke is mentioned in Paul's Epistle to Philemon(v.24), and in two other epistles which are traditionally ascribed to Paul (Epistle to the Colossians 4:14 and Second Epistle to Timothy 4:11.)

His earliest notice is in Paul's Epistle to Philemon—Philemon 1:24. He is also mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and 2Timothy 4:11, two works commonly ascribed to Paul.

The next earliest account of Luke is in the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Gospel of Luke*, a document once thought to date to the 2nd century, but

which has more recently been dated to the later 4th century (or the 300's.)

Helmut Koester, however, claims that the following part—the only part preserved in the original Greek—may have been composed in the late 2nd century:

Luke, was born in Antioch, by profession, was a physician. He had become a disciple of the apostle Paul and later followed Paul until his [Paul's] martyrdom. Having served the Lord continuously, unmarried and without children, filled with the Holy Spirit he died at the age of 84 years.

Epiphanius an early church father, states that Luke was one of the Seventy Apostles and John Chrysostom indicates at one point that the "brother" Paul mentions in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians 8:18 is either Luke or Barnabas.

If one accepts that Luke was in fact the author of the Gospel bearing his name and also the *Acts of the Apostles*, certain details of his personal life can be reasonably assumed. For the record this a huge leap of faith for a lot of scholars!

WHO IS WE?

While he does exclude himself from those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, he repeatedly uses the word "we" in describing the Pauline missions in *Acts of the Apostles*, indicating that he was personally there at those times.

There is similar evidence that Luke resided in Troas, the province which included the ruins of ancient Troy, in that he writes in *Acts* in the third person about Paul and his travels until they get to Troas, where he switches to the first person plural.

The "we" section of *Acts* continues until the group leaves Philippi, when his writing goes back to the third person. This change happens again when the group returns to Philippi. There are three "we sections" in *Acts*, all following this rule.

Luke never stated, however, that he lived in Troas, and this is the only evidence that he did.

The composition of the writings, as well as the range of vocabulary used, indicate that the author was an educated man.

A quote in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians differentiates between Luke and other colleagues "of the circumcision."

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ... Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Colossians 4:10–11,14.

How Big of an Issue was foreskin in the early church?

This comment has traditionally caused commentators to conclude that Luke was a Gentile.

If this were true, it would make Luke the only writer of the New Testament who can clearly be identified as not being Jewish. However, that is not the only possibility. Although Luke is considered likely to be a Gentile Christian, some scholars believe him to be a Hellenized Jew. The phrase could just as easily be used to differentiate between those Christians who strictly observed the rituals of Judaism and those who did not.

**So, even in the early church
There was “us” and “them!”**

Luke's presence in Rome with the Apostle Paul near the end of Paul's life was attested by 2 Timothy 4:11: "Only Luke is with me". In the last chapter of the Book of Acts, widely attributed to Luke, we find several accounts in the first person also affirming Luke's presence in Rome including Acts 28:16: "And when WE came to Rome..." According to some accounts, Luke also contributed to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But this carries very little if any weight!

Luke died at age 84 in Boeotia, according to a "fairly early and widespread tradition." According to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos ...try saying this while have a mouthful of saltine crackers..... and others, Luke's tomb was located in Thebes, whence his relics were transferred to Constantinople in the year 357.

Most scholars understand Luke's works (Luke-Acts) in the tradition of Greek historiography.

The preface of *The Gospel of Luke* drawing on historical investigation identified the work to the readers as belonging to the genre of history.

There is some disagreement about how best to treat Luke's writings, with some historians regarding Luke as highly accurate, and others taking a more critical approach.

Based on his accurate description of towns, cities and islands, as well as correctly naming various official titles, archaeologist Sir William Ramsay wrote that "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy... [he] should be placed along with the very greatest of historians."

Professor of Classics at Auckland University, E.M. Blaiklock, wrote: "For accuracy of detail, and for evocation of atmosphere, Luke stands, in fact, with Thucydides. The Acts of the Apostles is not shoddy product of pious imagining, but a trustworthy

record... it was the spadework of archaeology which first revealed the truth."

New Testament scholar Colin Hemer has made a number of advancements in understanding the historical nature and accuracy of Luke's writings.

On the purpose of Acts, New Testament Scholar Luke Timothy Johnson has noted that "Luke's account is selected and shaped to suit his apologetic interests, not in defiance of but in conformity to ancient standards of historiography."

Such a position is shared by most commentators such as Richard Heard who sees historical deficiencies as arising from "special objects in writing and to the limitations of his sources of information."

However, during modern times, Luke's competence as a historian is questioned, although that depends on one's *a priori* view of the supernatural.

A materialist would see a narrative that relates supernatural, fantastic things like angels, demons etc., as problematic as a historical source.

And it is understood that Luke did not intend to record history.

His intention was to proclaim and to persuade.

Many see this understanding as the final nail in Luke the historian's coffin. Robert M. Grant has noted that although Luke saw himself within the historical tradition, his work contains a number of statistical

improbabilities such as the sizable crowd addressed by Peter in Acts 4:4.

He has also noted chronological difficulties whereby Luke "has Gamaliel refer to Theudas and Judas in the wrong order, and Theudas actually rebelled about a decade after Gamaliel spoke (5:36–7)."

In A Nutshell

Time for a little thought experiment. Which means we all have to put on our thinking caps, implying that thus far along in our study, we may not all be wearing them!!!!

People have been reading the Gospel of Luke for about two millennia, but just imagine if today, for the very first time, monks had discovered the gospel in their monastery. What would the headlines be? How would people react? Enter thought experiment.

New Gospel Discovered. People Everywhere Rethinking Religion.

Two monks charged with cleaning their monastery's cellars have uncovered a shocking manuscript containing an account of the birth, work, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, titled "According to Luke" and written in Greek. Luke clearly knows of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans at the end of the Jewish War in 70 (19:41-44; 21:6, 20-24), seems to

have used the [Gospel of Mark](#) as a source, and explicitly places himself in the second or third generation of Christians (1:1-2).

"What this means," says Professor Doodle of Shmoop University, "is that we've discovered a *really early* gospel written shortly before the close of the 1st century. That makes this text almost as early as Mark and not much later than Matthew. This is a big deal. It's like finding out that Abraham Lincoln *really was* a vampire slayer. By the way, the jury's still out on that one."

Significantly, Luke dedicates his story to a certain "Theophilus" (1:3). People familiar with the New Testament will recognize that this is the very name of the addressee of the Book of Acts, too (Acts 1:1)!!!!

What's more, a great many of Luke's themes and issues are also treated in Acts. "These facts," says Doodle, "indicate that Luke is the long-lost first volume to Acts. This is as exciting as when all of the prequels to *Star Wars* first came out. Don't get me wrong. Luke-Acts is not sci-fi. But it is in keeping with ancient history-writing, which means that with Luke we're dealing with the first installment of a two-volume history of Christian origins."

The discovery is not only making waves among those who are redrawing the story of Christian origins. What truly has the potential to challenge *everyone* (believers and non-believers alike) is the emphasis that Luke's Jesus places on a social ethic—

something that only over-achievers will even try to live out.

Luke's Jesus gives pride of place to those who are otherwise social rejects, such as widows, the poor, the blind, the lost, and "sinners" (4:18-19; 5:27-32; 14:13, 21; 15:1-32).

Jesus also argues that an excessive attachment to possessions leaves the wealthy unprepared for death and/or the sudden arrival of God's kingdom. A big pill for the wealthy to swallow is that they're supposed to sell *all* their things and work on behalf of the poor and society's other outcasts (12:16-40; 16:13-15, 19-31; 18:18-30).

"The ideals of this text put even Gandhi to shame," says Doodle. "Rare is the person, Christian or not, who has or will put what Luke's Jesus demands into practice."

Doodle points out that Luke offers many other valuable gems, even startling new details about what happened at the first Christmas (1-2) and about Jesus' first female followers (8:2-3; 23:49-24:12). One thing is for certain. This discovery will be shocking and challenging the world for years to come.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Let's face it: a lot of Luke's concepts are going to land us with a pretty healthy dose of *skepticism*. After all,

what can revived corpses, miraculous healings, demons, exorcisms, supernatural impregnations, and fulfilled prophecies mean to us after Darwin and Einstein?

Sure, it makes for great TV (can someone get on that?), but can we really relate?

The good news is that Luke's gospel is the gospel for those of us who are the biggest skeptics of all. It's the gospel that open-minded atheists, agnostics, humanists, and non-believers of all stripes should read first, and we're here to tell you why.

Oh, The Humanity!

Our buddy [Dante](#) dubbed Luke "the scribe of the gentleness of Christ" (*De monarchia*, 1.16). After all, this gospel breathes great humanity.

Luke's demand that people love their neighbors—even the ones they don't like—doesn't just mean dropping a few nickels in the Salvation Army's buckets during the holidays.

He's talking about the good Samaritan, for example, who dares to cross and challenge hostile ethnic and religious boundaries for the sole purpose of *helping someone who's suffering*(10:30-36).

Or he's talking about the father who forgives his "prodigal" son, who returns home in poverty after squandering his entire inheritance on some R-rated activities (15:11-32).

Think about enjoying next year's Thanksgiving dinner with a bunch of "sinners" instead of friends and family. The cast of *The Usual Suspects*? Yeah, that's what your party will look like if you take Jesus's instructions for issuing party-invitations seriously (14:12-24).

So even if you're feeling a little cynical, we're guessing the Gospel of Luke will challenge you to be a more compassionate human being.

[Challenge accepted?](#) Or rejected? You choose! But I highly suggest that you give Luke a try...

These Passages are Unique to Luke

Parables:

The Good Samaritan (10: 29-37)

The Importunate Friend (11:5-8)

The Rich Man who built bigger barns (12:16-21)

The Fig Tree (13:6-9) -- transformation of fig tree episode in Mark and Matthew.

The Prodigal Son (15:11-32)

The Crafty Steward (16:1-9)

The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

The Unscrupulous Judge (18:1-8)

The Publican and the Sinner (18:9-14)

Teachings:

Warning about greed (12: 13-15)

Suffering not linked to guilt (13:1-5)

Places of honor at table (14:7-14)

Costs of discipleship (14: 25-35)

Necessity of a purse and a sword (22:35-38)

Narrative episodes:

Entire infancy narrative: birth of John the Baptist, birth of Jesus, presentation in temple, his encounter in temple with teachers of the Law (Chapters 1 and 2)

Miraculous draft of fish (5:1-11)

Widow's son at Nain (7:11-17)

Woman who bathes Jesus' feet with tears (7:36-50)

The women who accompany Jesus (8:2-3)

Sending of the seventy-two (10:1-2)

Martha and Mary (10:38-42)

Healing of a crippled woman on the sabbath (13:10-13)

Healing of a dropsical man on the sabbath (14:;1-6)

The Samaritan leper (17:11-19)

Repentance of Zachaeus (19:1-10)

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (19:41-44)

Jesus before Herod (23:6-16)

Meeting with "daughters of Jerusalem" (23:26-32)

The good and bad thieves (23:39-43)

Appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35)

Summary and Analysis the Gospel of Luke

Summary

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are closely related. Written by the same author and for the same purpose, both were addressed to a Christian named Theophilus and were designed for the purpose of presenting to him a complete and well authenticated narrative of the early history of the Christian movement.

In the introductory paragraph of the gospel, Luke tells us that many lives of Jesus were written on the basis of eyewitness reports. He does not find these narratives satisfactory in all respects and so has set himself the task of examining the records and writing a new account that will establish for all interested parties the certainty of the things about which Christians were instructed.

The first paragraph in Luke's gospel is especially informative to readers of the New Testament, for it describes the way in which the two narratives attributed to Luke came to be written.

Luke evaluated the materials he wanted to use and then supplemented them in whatever manner seemed to him to be the most appropriate.

In writing his gospel, he did not simply piece together bits of information that he gathered from different sources; rather, his own contributions include selecting and organizing these materials, along with whatever interpretation was necessary to make a complete and unified narrative.

We can be quite certain that Luke made use of at least three different sources: the Gospel of Mark, the Q source, or "The Sayings of Jesus," and a third source that is usually designated as L to distinguish it from other biographies.

The Gospel of Matthew may have existed by the time Luke wrote his account (or so some people think or at very least it was not in wide circulation) only because nothing indicates that Luke knew anything about Matthew or made any use of it.

Luke was a companion of Paul and he was quite familiar with the different interpretations of the life of Jesus held by different groups within the Christian community. His purpose was to minimize the differences between the various groups and thus promote harmony within the church. He was the original Rodney King! He was trying to make "nice."

He was aware, too, of the criticisms concerning Christianity that were being made by people who were outside the church, and he especially wanted to make an effective reply to those who claimed that Jesus

was a revolutionist and hence an enemy of the Roman government.

By giving to his readers an authentic account of the life and teachings of Jesus, Luke could show that the charges made against Jesus were false. He was quite sure that if people knew of the kind and sympathetic way in which Jesus met individuals, they would be won by the attractive power of Jesus' wonderful personality.

Luke possessed rare ability as a writer, and it has often been said that his gospel is the most appealing of all those in the New Testament.

In the opening chapters of the gospel, Luke relates a number of stories having to do with the birth and childhood of Jesus, including the announcements made to Zechariah and to Mary concerning the births of John and of Jesus, and the story of the shepherds watching their flocks at night who came to worship the newborn child. We also have accounts of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and of the child being wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn." After eight days, the child was circumcised, and later he was blessed by Simeon and by Anna. These stories are not reported in the other Gospels, and we cannot be sure whether Luke learned about them from an older source or from oral traditions. Luke also recorded the only story we have in the New Testament about Jesus' boyhood.

When Jesus was twelve years old, he went to Jerusalem with his parents to attend the Feast of Passover. On the way home, when his parents discovered that he was not with them, they returned to the Temple and found him involved in a profound discussion with prominent Jewish rabbis.

After the introductory chapters, Luke follows the outline of events as they are recorded in the Gospel of Mark. However, he does not follow Mark's narrative as closely as Matthew does.

Occasionally, he leaves out some material and substitutes an item of his own. For example, he substitutes an illustration of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth in place of Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of his Galilean ministry.

Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus' teachings that are not recorded in the other Gospels.

If he and Matthew both used the same source Q, evidently Luke used more material from it than did Matthew.

In Luke alone we find the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray, the rich man and Lazarus, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich fool who would tear down his barns and build greater barns in order that he might store his goods, and the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree in order that

he might see Jesus. Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work.

Jesus was not trying to raise opposition to the Roman government, nor was he lacking in sympathy or understanding of those whom the Jews regarded as foreigners. He places the highest value on good character regardless of a person's race or nationality.

For example, although many Jews looked with disfavor on the Samaritans, Luke emphasizes that of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, only the one who was a Samaritan expressed his gratitude for what Jesus had done. And again in the parable of the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho, a Samaritan befriended the man and saw to it that he was given proper care.

Throughout his gospel, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a friend not only to Jews but to Samaritans and to so-called outcasts from different races and nationalities.

Chapters 9–18 are often referred to as Luke's "long insertion," for in them he departs from the sequence of events in Mark and introduces a section that includes much of the most valued portions of Jesus' teachings.

Here, we have a report of Jesus sending out the "seventy" to carry the message of the kingdom to

different places. The number "seventy" is especially significant: In the Jewish Torah, the number refers to all the nations of the earth. Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus' mission is for all humankind and not just for the Jews.

In the story that describes the conversation between Jesus and Zacchaeus, we have the statement "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

And in the introductory chapters of the gospel where Luke, like Matthew, traces the genealogy of Jesus, we find the same emphasis on the universality of Jesus' mission. Matthew traces the ancestry back to Abraham, who is regarded as the father of the Hebrew people; Luke traces it back to Adam, the father of all humanity.

In reporting Jesus' discourses with his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Luke does not emphasize the nearness of the event as the other evangelists do.

Toward the end of the gospel, he describes the events leading up to the crucifixion, stressing the point of Jesus' innocence of any wrongdoing toward either Jews or the Roman government.

Pilate, the Roman governor, declares Jesus innocent of any crime, and a Roman centurion protests Jesus' execution with the words, "Surely this was a righteous man."

The gospel closes with an account of the resurrection and the subsequent meetings of Jesus with the disciples and others.

As two men are walking to the village of Emmaus, Jesus joins them, but the men do not recognize Jesus until he sits at a table with them and blesses the food that they are about to eat.

Later, Jesus meets with the eleven disciples in Jerusalem and overcomes their suspicions by showing his hands and feet to them. They cook some fish, and Jesus partakes of the food with them. Then follows a farewell discourse to the disciples, during which Jesus gives them instruction concerning what they should do.

Afterward, they go together as far as Bethany, and after blessing the disciples, Jesus departs from them.

Analysis

If the Gospel of Matthew could be called the Jewish gospel because of its leanings toward ideas that were typically Jewish, there is an equal amount of evidence for calling the Gospel of Luke the Gentile gospel.

Actually, neither gospel is purely Jewish or purely Gentile in its account of the life and teachings of Jesus, but it is fairly obvious in the case of each of them that the authors were influenced by the point of view with which they were associated.

Luke was a companion of Paul, who came to be known in Christian circles as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul's interpretation of Christianity as a universal religion did much to eliminate the barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

He emphasized the idea that all humans are sinners and in need of salvation. Jesus was, for him, the supreme example of what the power of God can do in a human life.

This point of view evidently made a deep impression on Luke and is reflected throughout the various parts of his gospel. One sees it first of all in Luke's account of the genealogy of Jesus, which is traced to Adam rather than to Abraham, thus indicating that Jesus was representative of the entire human race rather than simply a member of the Hebrew race, and it is seen in the attitude taken by Jesus toward the Samaritans, the Romans, and others outside the Jewish fold.

When Jews and Gentiles are contrasted in Luke, often the Gentiles are presented in the more favorable light.

For example, in the story of the Publican and the Pharisee, both of whom go to the Temple to pray, only the Publican is commended for the attitude that he expresses.

Following his journey into the northwest country, Jesus pronounces woes on Capernaum and other Jewish communities and states, "But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." This saying does not mean that Luke rejects the Jewish people but that membership in the kingdom of God is dependent on the quality of a person's life rather than on racial or religious backgrounds.

Paul has often been referred to as a "Christian mystic" because of his conviction that salvation comes only by a union of an individual and God.

When the Spirit of God dwells in the human heart and mind, as it did in the person of Jesus, then a person belongs to God's kingdom.

But Jewish "Apocalypticism" regarded the coming of the kingdom as a future event, when the Son of Man would descend from heaven.

In the Gospel of Luke, we find a blending of these two ideas. Luke, like Matthew, makes use of the apocalyptic section in Mark's gospel but with certain modifications.

The nearness of the event is not stressed as much, and Luke recognizes that there is a sense in which the kingdom is already present. When Jesus was accused of casting out demons because he was exercising the power of a greater demon, he replied, "But if I drive

out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

In the story concerning Jesus and Zacchaeus, the coming of the kingdom is portrayed in a similar manner. When Zacchaeus stands up and says, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay it back four times the amount," Jesus replies, "Today salvation has come to this house." These passages, as well as many others that might be mentioned, indicate that Luke was sympathetic to Paul's mystical conception of the Christ who lives and abides in human hearts.

Luke does not abandon the "apocalyptic conception" of the coming of the age's end, but he emphasizes the quality of living that alone can prepare one for the coming of the future event.

As nearly as we can determine, the Gospel of Luke was written toward the end of the first century, probably between the years 85–90 A.D. By this time, Christianity was fast becoming seriously a "worldwide movement." A lot of people do not get that – and yes, it happened just that fast!

Starting in Jerusalem, it spread to the surrounding territory and reached as far west as the city of Rome.

With the increasing numbers of Christians, the movement not only attracted attention but

encountered opposition from several different quarters.

Rumors circulated to the effect that the founder of the movement was a dangerous character who was trying to overthrow the Roman government.

Luke was a peacemaker, and he was anxious to show that Jesus was not the type of person that these critics supposed Jesus to be. Therefore, Luke takes particular pains to point out that Jesus had no quarrel at all with the Roman government. Pilate finds no fault in Jesus and a Roman centurion declares Jesus innocent. Although Pilate finally consents to Jesus' crucifixion, it is not until he is pressured by Jews that he does so.

Jesus' whole ministry was conducted in a quiet and peaceful manner. He was the friend of the poor and the outcast and had "no political ambitions" of his own and no intention of trying to interfere with the orderly processes of government. I would like to see the debate between Jesus and Donald Trump on the issue of "Immigration." "The Donald" would have his work cut out for himself...and yet, I can see him arguing even with Jesus.

Writing from the point of view of the Christian church toward the end of the first century, Luke is convinced that the characteristics of the movement that were then being emphasized had been present from the movement's very beginning.

He shows, for example, that the opposition to Jesus and his work was present during Jesus' early ministry in Galilee and was demonstrated in people's reactions to the sermon Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Those who opposed Jesus continued their harassment throughout Jesus' entire public career, and the cause of this harassment was their resentment of the criticisms that Jesus made of their formalism and hypocrisy. Determined to silence Jesus' criticisms, they invented false charges concerning his disloyalty to the government.

Luke shows the broad humanitarian character of Jesus' work that was manifested from the first in Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans and others whom the Jews regarded as their enemies.

Jesus never failed to commend those who had a humble and contrite heart and it made no difference whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

At the time of Luke's writing, the Spirit of Christ was regarded as the guiding factor in the life of the Christian church. That this guiding factor was only a continuation of what had been present all along is shown by Jesus' repeated references to the Spirit of God throughout the period of his public ministry.

What Jesus taught was now accepted to be in harmony with what the church believed. Many of the

statements attributed to Jesus were now interpreted in light of what had happened already, implying that at least some of his statements were intended as definite predictions of what was going to occur.

And I bet you are still thinking about the debate between Jesus and Donald Trump, aren't you?

The Lone Gentile

(The Scientific Community Response)

Luke—the author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts—is of special interest for several reasons. He was the only Gentile who wrote any of the books of the Bible. Furthermore, he was the only “scientist” or “man of science” among the writers.

He is also recognized as a great historian, with his excellent accounts of the key events of the most important era in the history of the world. He also was undoubtedly a devoted Christian, a truth especially demonstrated by his unselfish service and companionship to the apostle Paul. Finally, he was probably the first Christian apologist, zealously concerned to defend and establish the absolute truth of the gospel of Christ.

Luke As Scientist and Medical Doctor

We know nothing for certain about Luke's background or his medical training. He was called "*the beloved physician*" by Paul ([Colossians 4:14](#)), and undoubtedly one reason for his ongoing association with Paul was the latter's need for frequent medical care.

Paul spoke of his "*thorn in the flesh*," ([II Corinthians 12:7](#)), for example, and his "*infirmities*" ([II Corinthians 12:9](#)). We don't know what these were, although they affected him "*in the flesh*," and thus presumably needed a doctor's care from time to time. Paul had also suffered much actual physical persecution during his ministry (see [II Corinthians 11:23-27](#)), and undoubtedly needed Luke's medical help on many occasions.

We can assume that Dr. Luke could have built up a comfortable practice in such a city as Antioch (where he probably met Paul), but he chose instead to serve the Lord in this sacrificial and much-needed capacity of helping Paul. As a scientist, it is interesting to the scientific community that the only one of Paul's followers who stayed with him to the end was also a man of science ([II Timothy 4:11](#)).

As far as Luke's two Bible books are concerned, there is little in either book that utilizes scientific or medical facts or principles. He does refer to the infant Jesus "being circumcised" on the eighth day ([Luke 2:21](#)), and he is **the only one** of the four Gospel writers who does.

Luke alone of the Gospel writers noted the reliability of the created kinds ("*every tree is known by his own fruit*" Luke 6:44). Some commentators have noted the ironical relation between Mark 5:26 and [Luke 8:43](#). Mark had said that a certain woman needing healing "*had suffered many things of many*

physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Luke, perhaps trying to defend his professional colleagues, merely said that this same woman ***"had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any."*** That is, they had done their best, but it was an incurable disease. Hmmm....

As an historian Luke was highly scientific in the way he compiled the data for his Gospel and his book of Acts for many sections of Acts, of course, he was simply recording carefully what he saw and heard, as a scientist should. He had not been present at the events described in his Gospel, so had not acquired the data directly as had Matthew and John (Mark also, partly through Peter). But as he said in his opening passage, he somehow ***"had perfect understanding of all things from the very first"*** ([Luke 1:3](#)).

This understanding was acquired in various ways. He evidently had devoted much time to interviewing those who ***"from the beginning were eyewitnesses"*** ([Luke 1:2](#)).

Thus, for example, he was able to give the most thorough account of the events surrounding the human birth of the Lord Jesus, as well as the preceding birth of John the Baptist.

He alone reported the beautiful account of the two disciples who met Jesus after His resurrection as they traveled home to Emmaus ([Luke 24:13-35](#)), as well as a number of other events recorded nowhere else.

At least twenty of Christ's parables are recorded in Luke—a number of which (e.g., the Good Samaritan, the prodigal son) are found only in Luke's gospel.

As far as his own eyewitness accounts in the book of Acts are concerned, he has achieved the reputation of utmost accuracy.

One of the most distinguished of all New Testament archaeologists, Sir William Ramsay, is said to have been converted partially through his surprised realization of the precise accuracy of Luke's depiction of conditions in the first century.

In his epochal work, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (1915), Ramsay said: "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness" (p. 81). He added later: ". . . this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians" (p. 222).

In addition to Luke's "scientific devotion to accuracy in reporting," not only of the events of which he was an eyewitness, but also of what he learned from others about the life of Christ, there is one other vital factor.

When he claimed to have "*had perfect understanding of all things from the very first*" ([Luke 1:3](#)), he may well have been thinking of God's inspiration of his writings. The phrase "*from the very first*" could also be translated "*from above.*" It is so translated in John 3:31, for example: "*He that cometh from above is above all.*"

If this phrase is so rendered, it would explain where Luke got his information regarding some events. Of course, all Scripture is divinely inspired ([II Timothy 3:16](#)), even when the basic information was acquired by research.

Luke and Apologetics

Luke's writings are of special interest for the scientific community, not only because of his scientific accuracy in reporting but also because of his desire to defend the gospel and give evidence for its truth.

In fact, most commentators on Luke's Gospel and especially his book of Acts agree that one important purpose was, indeed, that of apologetics. However, their main reason for understanding Acts this way is usually because of Luke's repeated emphasis on the legitimacy of Christianity as far as Rome was concerned, noting that practically all the initial opposition and persecution had been fomented by the Jewish leaders.

The attempted defenses of Christ by Pilate and of Paul by Felix, Festus, Agrippa, etc., are recounted.

However, Luke's interest in apologetics is broader than that. For example, he begins his two-book narrative with the most in-depth account of Christ's incarnation and birth to be found anywhere.

Then he begins his book of Acts by noting that there had been "*many infallible proofs*" ([Acts 1:3](#)) of Christ's resurrection.

This is followed by the supernatural events on the day of Pentecost, and then many miracles performed by the apostles as they began preaching the gospel, continually stressing the great truth of His resurrection.

There was also much rehearsing of the evidence of fulfilled Messianic prophecy. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit is also evident through much of Luke's record in Acts.

Although the book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome, he is still free to preach the gospel to anyone who will listen, especially to the Gentiles.

Finally, the book of Acts closes with the testimony that, despite his nominal status as a Roman prisoner, Paul spent *"two whole years"* free to preach to all who came to hear, *"teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him"* ([Acts 28:30-31](#)).

Luke and Creation

In concluding this very brief survey of the writings of Dr. Luke, it is good to remember that he was a creationist and delighted in reporting Paul's references to God as Creator. When the chief priests and elders first commanded the apostles *"not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus"* ([Acts 4:18](#)) they simply prayed, beginning their prayers by saying: *"Lord,*

thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" ([Acts 4:24](#)). Then they prayed to God "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" ([Acts 4:29](#)), and great numbers were won to Christ.

Soon came the conversion of Paul and the beginning of his missionary journeys. As he went to different cities, he normally preached first to the Jews there, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was their Messiah, that He had died for their sins and been raised from the dead.

When he preached to pagan Gentiles, however, they knew nothing of the Scriptures or the promised Messiah, so Luke tells how Paul began with the creation, then proceeded to the resurrection, then to the gospel.

At Lystra, for example, he urged the pagans there to turn from their idols "*unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein*" ([Acts 14:15](#)).

Eventually Paul came to Athens, the very center of pagan culture, particularly encountering Epicurean and Stoic philosophers there, both systems espousing a form of evolution.

Here is the gist of what he preached to them, according to Luke: "*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to*

dwell on all the face of the earth. . . . He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" ([Acts 17:24-26,31](#)).

Doctor Luke was surely a great man specially called of God—a man of science, physician, historian, brilliant writer, inspired writer, Christian apologist, and Biblical creationist! Thank God for his unique ministry.

Who Is Theophilus?

Theophilus is the name or honorary title of the person to whom the [Gospel of Luke](#) and the [Acts of the Apostles](#) are addressed (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1).

It is thought that both Luke and Acts were written by the same author, and sometimes argued that the two books were originally [a single unified work](#).¹ Both Luke and Acts were written in a refined [Koine Greek](#), and the name "θεόφιλος" ("Theophilos"), as it appears therein, means *friend of God* or *(be)loved by God* or *loving God* in the Greek language. No one knows the true identity of Theophilus and there are several conjectures and traditions around an identity.

In [English](#) Theophilus is also written "Theophilos", both a common name and an honorary title among the learned (academic) [Romans](#) and [Jews](#) of the era. Their life would coincide with the writing of [Luke](#) and the author of Acts.

Theories about who Theophilus was

Coptic view

Coptic tradition asserts that Theophilus was a person and not an honorary title. The Coptic Church claims

that the person was a Jew of Alexandria. Similarly, John Wesley in his Notes on the New Testament recorded that Theophilus was "a person of eminent quality at Alexandria", which he understood to be the tradition 'of the ancients'.

Roman Official

Others say that Theophilus was probably a Roman official of some sort, because Luke referred to him as "κρατιστε", *optime* in the Latin Vulgate translation, meaning "most excellent" (Luke 1:3), although in the parallel introduction to Acts he is simply referred to as 'O Theophilus'.

The word "excellent" is used in other New Testament passages when referring to a Roman official. Such passages include Acts 26:25, "But Paul said, 'I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus'" and Acts 24:2, "Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: 'Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, [...]"

Honorary title

Honorary title (academia) tradition maintains that Theophilus was not a person. The word in Greek means "Friend of God" and thus both Luke and Acts were addressed to anyone who fits that description. In this tradition the author's targeted audience, as with all other canonical Gospels, were the learned (academic) but unnamed males and females of the

era. Likewise the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, and Gospel of James are not addressed to any particular gender, or any specific person.

A Lawyer

Some believe that Theophilus could have been Paul's lawyer during his trial period in Rome. To support this claim people appeal to the formal legalese present in the prologue to the Gospel such as "eye witnesses", "account", "carefully investigated", "know the certainty of things which you have been instructed". The conclusion of The Book of Acts ends with Paul still alive and under arrest awaiting trial, suggesting it was the intention of the author to update Theophilus on Paul's history to provide for an explanation of his travels and preaching and serve as evidence in support of his innocence under Roman law. Some also point to the parallel between the account of Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate narrated in Luke's Gospel with the account of Paul's trials before Roman judges in the Book of Acts. In total, Jesus was declared innocent 3 times by Pontius Pilate as was Paul before various judges.

Jewish Priest

A growing belief points to Theophilus ben Ananus, High Priest of the Temple in Jerusalem from 37-41 In this tradition Theophilus would have been both a kohen and a Sadducee. That would make him the son of Annas and brother-in-law of Caiaphas,

raised in the Jewish Temple. Adherents claim that Luke's Gospel was targeted at Sadducee readers. This might explain a few features of Luke. He begins the story with an account of Zacharias the righteous priest who had a Temple vision of an angel (1:5-25). Luke quickly moves to account Mary's purification (niddah), Jesus' Temple redemption (pidyon ha-ben) rituals (2:21-39), and then to Jesus' pilgrimage to the Temple when he was twelve (2:46), possibly implying his bar mitzvah. He makes no mention of Caiaphas' role in Jesus' crucifixion and emphasizes Jesus' literal resurrection (24:39), including an ascension into heaven as a realm of spiritual existence (24:52; Acts 1:1). Luke also seems to stress Jesus' arguments with the Sadducees on points like legal grounds for divorce, the existence of angels, spirits, and an afterlife (Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead). If this was the case then Luke is trying to use Jesus' rebuttals and teachings to break down Theophilus' Sadducean philosophy, maybe with the hope that Theophilus would use his influence to get the Sadducees to cease their persecution of the Christians. One could also look at Luke's Gospel as an allegorical (remez) reference to Jesus as "the man called the Branch" prophesied in Zechariah 3:8; 6:12-13, who is the ultimate high priest foreshadowed by the Levitical priesthood.

Most, if not all, of the commentaries on the Gospel of Luke say the "Question about the Resurrection" pericope presented in Lk. 20:27-40 is the only account in Luke of Jesus confronting the

Sadducees. It is true that Luke only mentions the Sadducees by name once but it is not true that this pericope is the only one concerning the Sadducees. The Parables about the Good Samaritan, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Wicked Tenants are directed to the Sadducees who controlled the temple establishment. These parables are about unfaithful priests. They are the wicked sons of Eli.

All of the New Testament passages concerning alms and almsgiving, except one in Matthew, are in Luke-Acts. Therefore, these parables may be about alms, almsgiving and the proper use of the wealth controlled by the temple authorities.

Luke's criticism focuses on the use of these temple resources by the religious aristocracy for their own selfish purposes. This means that the religious authorities controlled tremendous wealth that had been in times past properly distributed to the people as part of the institutional form of almsgiving.

The priests in these parables are unfaithful, dishonest and disobedient because, inter alia, they have not invited the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind to the banquet table.

Once the office of the High Priest became non-hereditary, and available to the highest bidder, the institutional role of almsgiving was abandoned or reduced as the purchaser had to recoup his purchase price.

A minority view identifies Theophilus as a later high priest: Mattathias ben Theophilus who served from 65-66. Note that Luke refers to high priest Joseph ben Caiaphas simply as "Caiaphas". Thus, the reasoning goes, Luke used this pattern when addressing Theophilus.

Titus Flavius Sabinus

Another tradition claims the person was a converted Roman official, possibly Titus Flavius Sabinus II, a former Prefect of Rome and older brother of future Roman Emperor Vespasian, owing to the honorific, "most excellent" (Luke 1:3).

As Titus Flavius Sabinus, Theophilus is given a crucial role in the historical novel *The Flames of Rome* by Paul Maier, where he is given the dedication of the "Gospel of Luke" and "Acts of the Apostles" by Luke the Evangelist. Maier's extensive research into biblical and archaeological intertextuality lend credence to this theory, as evidenced in the footnotes of the book. He also ties Titus Flavius Sabinus to Aulus Plautius and his wife Pomponia Graecina by marriage, the latter of whom is by scholars presumed to have converted to Christianity, and who possibly used her son-in-law's status as Lord Mayor of Rome to try to protect Paul while he was under house arrest during his first stay in Rome.

As Luke was believed to be with the Apostle Paul at this time, it is indeed plausible that in gratitude to Sabinus for the kindnesses shown to Paul during his

**imprisonment, Luke considered Sabinus to be a friend of God, based on Christ's words that "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
(Matthew 25:40)**

To honor Sabinus while protecting him from the persecution of Christians and those who sympathized with them under the tyrannical rule of the Emperor Nero, it is postulated that Luke encoded the dedication of Acts.

Another theory is that Luke was Sabinus' slave and Luke cured him of an illness. In return Sabinus set Luke free and he travels with Paul to Antioch dedicating the book of Acts to Sabinus.

Peter and Paul Almond Joy! Not!

Mark was a companion and disciple of the Apostle Peter but was not himself an Apostle of Christ, meaning he was not one of the twelve (or 13, if you count both Judas' replacement and Paul).

Luke was likewise not an Apostle.

It is also possible that the writer of Hebrews might not have been an Apostle, though we don't know that for sure.

Of the 27 books of the New Testament, at least 24 seem to have been written by those who were both Apostles and eyewitnesses of Jesus.

Try reading Luke chapter 1 right after reading Mark chapter 1. The differences are as striking as the differences between Peter and Paul, and for good reason.

Mark wrote his gospel account according to Peter's testimony, while Luke wrote according to Paul's testimony.

This arises from the facts that Mark was a companion and disciple of Peter, and Luke was Paul's friend, associate in ministry, and personal physician.

Many scholars have noted that because of these influences, the gospel accounts of Mark and Luke can be thought of more or less as the Gospels of Peter and Paul, respectively.

Peter was by nature a rather brash, impetuous man, not usually given to long thought processes, elaborate speech, or hesitation... He tended to rush in where others took their time. A case in point is Peter's rushing into the empty tomb. Another is his initial refusal to have his feet washed by Jesus, and still another is his initial refusal to accept Jesus' statement that He would suffer and be killed at the hands of religious leaders (Matthew 16:21-23); this reaction by Peter would later illicit the command from Jesus, "Get behind me Satan!"

By contrast, Paul was a scholar - thoughtful, educated, careful, theological, and deliberate. Since

Mark was heavily influenced in his writing by Peter, Mark portrays Jesus and His ministry more by actions than by words, at least compared to other gospel writers. Mark sought to emphasize Jesus' power, authority and miracles, encouraging Roman/Gentile believers to persevere and keep the faith under persecution by the Roman Empire and by the Greco-Roman culture.

Dr. Luke, on the other hand, set out to write an “orderly account” of the life and ministry of Christ.

I guess he is saying that Mark’s account is not orderly enough for him. Hmmmmmmm....

Mark’s gospel - like Peter’s personality - is concise, compact, almost staccato in form, while Luke’s account is far longer, more detailed, and more elaborate. Given these influences and differences, it is fitting that Mark’s gospel account is believed by most to be the first of the four gospels to have been written.

When we are about to read Mark’s gospel, it’s time to strap on our seatbelts, take a few deep breaths, and prepare for speed, movement and intensity. We are going to get action more than long discourses. We will find more of an emphasis on “doing” than “being,” and more on application than theology. Mark’s gospel contains less than one-third of the number of parables of Luke’s gospel and less than half the parables of Matthew’s gospel.

In Mark’s account, scenery changes quickly, and stories often begin and end abruptly.

Mark’s account was written in such a style as to appeal to his intended Roman/Gentile readers, not known for their intellectualism or their interest in theology, philosophical thought, syllogisms, or drawn out arguments.

Romans were known for action and for power. They respected authority more than flowery thought or elaborate speeches. They were committed to a

worldview which we might characterize by the phrase, *“ready, fire, aim!”*

Luke’s gospel, by contrast, was styled for “Greek” readers, and for Hellenized (culturally Greek) Jews. The first century Greek mindset, compared to that of the Romans, tended to be more philosophical, thoughtful and reflective – *“ready, ready, ready some more, aim, discuss, aim some more, fire, as long as you are good and ready!”*

If you are more “Roman” than “Greek” by nature, then you will very likely enjoy reading Mark’s gospel.

If you are more “Greek” by nature and mindset (like I am), you may not prefer Mark’s gospel to the others, but that only means a chance to embrace and experience something you might not ordinarily prefer - in other words, a good chance to learn from what may be, for you, a slightly contrarian source.

In any case, the Gospel of Mark is the most densely action packed of the four gospels, and in Mark there is never a dull moment.

For the record, there is never a dull moment with Luke either, although the pace is much slower....more methodical and more scholarly....

The Gospel of the Marginalized!

The Gospel of Luke is unique or different from other two synoptic gospels. He is the only non-Jewish writer in the Early Christian Writings. He was probably a Greek. Only this gospel has a sequel – the Acts – in the New Testament. Luke is the longest gospel that covers twenty-five percent of the entire New Testament. Yep, 25%, a quarter of the entire book of writings...

One of the big and controversial differences it has is the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Luke seems to have followed the lineage of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as he writes that Heli is the father of Joseph which contradicts with the account of Matthew who has Jacob as the father of Joseph (Luke 3:23).

If we look into these genealogies side by side, we find only two names in common in the genealogy are Shealtiel and Zerubbabel (Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27).

The disparity between Matthew and Luke quite suggests that Luke might have interviewed Mary to write down about the supernatural virgin birth and

inserted her lineage into the genealogy which is quite unusual in the Jewish culture in Jesus' time.

“Worship” is the central point in the hymns Luke records in the Gospel. Mary’s song of praise is one of them (1:46-55). Luke also sheds some light on Jesus’ private prayer life. So, it is more like a gospel of prayer.

Luke’s presentation of Jesus is largely focused on the humanity and compassion for the outcasts of society.

His gospel, in this sense, is the gospel of the poor and of social justice.

Jesus in the Gospel of Luke is the one who has entered into the world as the Savior of all mankind. Luke, the author is as identified as a doctor and historian, also puts physiological (5:12, 6:6, 9:39-42) and geographical details of Samaria (9:52; 17:11) and Judea, en route to Jerusalem (18:35; 19:1, 11, 18) in plain words.

Luke features marginalized people over and over in the story.

Only Luke has the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37) and the story of ten lepers being cured and cleansed, but only the Samaritan leper returning to Jesus to thank him (17:11-19).

Luke also consists of 18 unique parables that are only found in the Luke: the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, and the Prodigal Son are only found in the book of Luke (Luke 10:25-37, 15:4-7, 15:11-32).

He also makes references about women and their stories forty-five times in his Gospel.

The birth narratives of Jesus and John the Baptizer are told from the women's perspective – Mary and Elizabeth respectively (chapters 1-2).

Women received special attention in Luke's Gospel.

He records about "women disciples" in different occasions. The texts in Luke 8:1-3 also indicates that women were monetarily supporting Christ's ministry. Luke does not forget to mention those women who followed Jesus from the court to the Cross (23:49).

The most spectacular remarking about women in the Gospel is Jesus' first appearance to women (24:1-10).

Luke also takes some time to give special interest in poor, crippled, and shepherds. He heals them, and some of his teachings have strongly emphasized to love and care the poor, weak, and crippled who are overlooked by their families, friends, and society. He himself healed them and loved them (14:21). Mary, a humble is exalted; shepherds who are lowly and insignificant people are exalted and they are the one

to see the glory of God when the Word became flesh (Luke 1:30; 2:14-20).

The outcasts – the Samaritans, tax-collectors, and women – are seated into the place of honor.

The abundance of food is also portrayed in the Luke.

Some of Jesus' parables have setting of banquet and feasts. He makes altogether nineteen references to food or meal and thirteen of them are very exclusively only into his gospel. The number of references also shows the significance of gathering together and having meal together.

Jesus took opportunity of every feast or meal time that is mentioned in the gospel to reveal who he is and what is his teaching all about. He uses these times to communicate really something very important. The punch line is, he is disclosing his divine identity that he is the only source of both spiritual and physical life. In addition, Luke also emphasizes how Jesus communicates about his kingdom with his people. The kingdom is a full of forgiven sinners – outcasts, unclean, and poor.

And also “portrayal of his community” can be found in this gospel. In other words, community is the key aspect of the Kingdom of God – church. He has a very serious ecclesiological (church-y) concern.

Luke has presented Jesus in a very distinctive way that we find him as a verifiable historic person too. The historical figures Luke recorded and the events can be corroborated even today, as he makes datable references to events and characters (Luke 1:5, 2:1-2, 3:1-2). For this reason, the gospel of Luke is not utterly atypical; yet it stands as a different gospel than other two synoptic gospels.

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are closely related.

Written by the same author and for the same purpose, both were addressed to a Christian named Theophilus and were designed for the purpose of presenting to him a complete and well authenticated narrative of the early history of the Christian movement.

In the introductory paragraph of the gospel, Luke tells us that many lives of Jesus were written on the basis of eyewitness reports. He does not find these narratives satisfactory in all respects and so has set himself the task of examining the records and writing a new account that will establish for all interested parties the certainty of the things about which Christians were instructed.

The first paragraph in Luke's gospel is especially informative to readers of the Early Christian Writings, for it describes the way in which the two narratives attributed to Luke came to be written. Luke evaluated the materials he wanted to use and then

supplemented them in whatever manner seemed to him to be the most appropriate. In writing his gospel, he did not simply piece together bits of information that he gathered from different sources; rather, his own contributions include selecting and organizing these materials, along with whatever interpretation was necessary to make a complete and unified narrative.

We can be quite certain that Luke made use of at least three different sources: the Gospel of Mark, the Q source, or "The Sayings of Jesus," and a third source that is usually designated as *L* to distinguish it from other biographies.

The Gospel of Matthew may have existed by the time Luke wrote his account, but nothing indicates that Luke knew anything about Matthew or made any use of it.

Luke was a companion of Paul, and he was quite familiar with the different interpretations of the life of Jesus held by different groups within the Christian community. His purpose was to minimize the differences between the various groups and thus promote harmony within the church. He was aware, too, of the criticisms concerning Christianity that were being made by people who were outside the church, and he especially wanted to make an effective reply to those who claimed that Jesus was a revolutionist and hence an enemy of the Roman government.

By giving to his readers an authentic account of the life and teachings of Jesus, Luke could show that the charges made against Jesus were false. He was quite sure that if people knew of the kind and sympathetic way in which Jesus met individuals, they would be won by the attractive power of Jesus' wonderful personality.

Luke possessed rare ability as a writer, and it has often been said that his gospel is the most appealing of all those in the New Testament.

In the opening chapters of the gospel, Luke relates a number of stories having to do with the birth and childhood of Jesus, including the announcements made to Zechariah and to Mary concerning the births of John and of Jesus, and the story of the shepherds watching their flocks at night who came to worship the newborn child. We also have accounts of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and of the child being wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn."

After eight days, the child was circumcised, and later he was blessed by Simeon and by Anna.

These stories are not reported in the other Gospels, and we cannot be sure whether Luke learned about them from an older source or from oral traditions.

Luke also recorded the only story we have in the Early Christian Writings about Jesus' boyhood.

When Jesus was twelve years old, he went to Jerusalem with his parents to attend the Feast of Passover. On the way home, when his parents discovered that he was not with them, they returned to the Temple and found him involved in a profound discussion with prominent Jewish rabbis.

After the introductory chapters, Luke follows the outline of events as they are recorded in the Gospel of Mark.

However, he does not follow Mark's narrative as closely as Matthew does.

Occasionally, he leaves out some material and substitutes an item of his own. For example, he substitutes an illustration of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth in place of Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of his Galilean ministry.

Luke includes a considerable number of Jesus' teachings that are not recorded in the other Gospels.

If he and Matthew both used the same source Q, evidently Luke used more material from it than did Matthew.

In Luke alone we find the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee who went to the Temple to pray, the rich man and Lazarus, the lost

coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich fool who would tear down his barns and build greater barns in order that he might store his goods, and the story of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree in order that he might see Jesus.

Each of these parables and stories illustrates what Luke regards as an essential characteristic of Jesus' work. Jesus was not trying to raise opposition to the Roman government, nor was he lacking in sympathy or understanding of those whom the Jews regarded as foreigners.

He places the highest value on good character regardless of a person's race or nationality. For example, although many Jews looked with disfavor on the Samaritans, Luke emphasizes that of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, only the one who was a Samaritan expressed his gratitude for what Jesus had done.

And again in the parable of the man who fell among thieves on the road to Jericho, a Samaritan befriended the man and saw to it that he was given proper care.

Throughout his gospel, Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus was a friend not only to Jews but to Samaritans and to so-called outcasts from different races and nationalities.

Chapters 9–18 are often referred to as Luke's "long insertion," for in them he departs from the sequence

of events in Mark and introduces a section that includes much of the most valued portions of Jesus' teachings.

Here, we have a report of Jesus sending out the "seventy" to carry the message of the kingdom to different places. The number "seventy" is especially significant: In the Jewish Torah, the number refers to all the nations of the earth. Luke wants to make it clear that Jesus' mission is for all humankind and not just for the Jews.

In the story that describes the conversation between Jesus and Zacchaeus, we have the statement "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." And in the introductory chapters of the gospel where Luke, like Matthew, traces the genealogy of Jesus, we find the same emphasis on the universality of Jesus' mission. Matthew traces the ancestry back to Abraham, who is regarded as the father of the Hebrew people; Luke traces it back to Adam, the father of all humanity.

In reporting Jesus' discourses with his disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Luke does not emphasize the nearness of the event as the other evangelists do.

Toward the end of the gospel, he describes the events leading up to the crucifixion, stressing the point of Jesus' innocence of any wrongdoing toward either Jews or the Roman government.

Pilate, the Roman governor, declares Jesus innocent of any crime, and a Roman centurion protests Jesus' execution with the words, "Surely this was a righteous man."

The gospel closes with an account of the resurrection and the subsequent meetings of Jesus with the disciples and others. As two men are walking to the village of Emmaus, Jesus joins them, but the men do not recognize Jesus until he sits at a table with them and blesses the food that they are about to eat. Later, Jesus meets with the eleven disciples in Jerusalem and overcomes their suspicions by showing his hands and feet to them. They cook some fish, and Jesus partakes of the food with them. Then follows a farewell discourse to the disciples, during which Jesus gives them instruction concerning what they should do. Afterward, they go together as far as Bethany, and after blessing the disciples, Jesus departs from them.

Analysis

If the Gospel of Matthew could be called the Jewish gospel because of its leanings toward ideas that were typically Jewish, there is an equal amount of evidence for calling the Gospel of Luke the Gentile gospel.

Actually, neither gospel is purely Jewish or purely Gentile in its account of the life and teachings of Jesus, but it is fairly obvious in the case of each of

them that the authors were influenced by the point of view with which they were associated.

Luke was a companion of Paul, who came to be known in Christian circles as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul's interpretation of Christianity as a universal religion did much to eliminate the barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

He emphasized the idea that all humans are sinners and in need of salvation. Jesus was, for him, the supreme example of what the power of God can do in a human life. This point of view evidently made a deep impression on Luke and is reflected throughout the various parts of his gospel. One sees it first of all in Luke's account of the genealogy of Jesus, which is traced to Adam rather than to Abraham, thus indicating that Jesus was representative of the entire human race rather than simply a member of the Hebrew race, and it is seen in the attitude taken by Jesus toward the Samaritans, the Romans, and others outside the Jewish fold.

When Jews and Gentiles are contrasted in Luke, often the Gentiles are presented in the more favorable light.

For example, in the story of the Publican and the Pharisee, both of whom go to the Temple to pray, only the Publican is commended for the attitude that he expresses.

Following his journey into the northwest country, Jesus pronounces woes on Capernaum and other Jewish communities and states, "But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." This saying does not mean that Luke rejects the Jewish people but that membership in the kingdom of God is dependent on the quality of a person's life rather than on racial or religious backgrounds.

Paul has often been referred to as a Christian mystic because of his conviction that salvation comes only by a union of an individual and God.

When the Spirit of God dwells in the human heart and mind, as it did in the person of Jesus, then a person belongs to God's kingdom.

But Jewish apocalypticism regarded the coming of the kingdom as a future event, when the Son of Man would descend from heaven.

In the Gospel of Luke, we find a blending of these two ideas. Luke, like Matthew, makes use of the apocalyptic section in Mark's gospel but with certain modifications.

The nearness of the event is not stressed as much, and Luke recognizes that there is a sense in which the kingdom is already present. When Jesus was accused of casting out demons because he was exercising the power of a greater demon, he replied, "But if I drive

out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

In the story concerning Jesus and Zacchaeus, the coming of the kingdom is portrayed in a similar manner. When Zacchaeus stands up and says, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay it back four times the amount," Jesus replies, "Today salvation has come to this house."

These passages, as well as many others that might be mentioned, indicate that Luke was sympathetic to Paul's mystical conception of the Christ who lives and abides in human hearts.

Luke does not abandon the apocalyptic conception of the coming of the age's end, but he emphasizes the quality of living that alone can prepare one for the coming of the future event.

As nearly as we can determine, the Gospel of Luke was written toward the end of the first century, probably between the years 85–90 A.D. By this time, Christianity was fast becoming "a worldwide movement." Starting in Jerusalem, it spread to the surrounding territory and reached as far west as the city of Rome.

With the increasing numbers of Christians, the movement not only attracted attention but

encountered opposition from several different quarters.

Rumors circulated to the effect that the founder of the movement was a dangerous character who was trying to overthrow the Roman government.

Luke was a peacemaker, and he was anxious to show that Jesus was not the type of person that these critics supposed Jesus to be. Therefore, Luke takes particular pains to point out that Jesus had no quarrel at all with the Roman government.

Pilate finds no fault in Jesus, and a Roman centurion declares Jesus innocent. Although Pilate finally consents to Jesus' crucifixion, it is not until he is pressured by Jews that he does so.

Jesus' whole ministry was conducted in a quiet and peaceful manner. He was the friend of the poor and the outcast and had no political ambitions of his own and no intention of trying to interfere with the orderly processes of government.

Writing from the point of view of the Christian church toward the end of the first century, Luke is convinced that the characteristics of the movement that were then being emphasized had been present from the movement's very beginning. He shows, for example, that the opposition to Jesus and his work was present during Jesus' early ministry in Galilee and was demonstrated in people's reactions to the sermon

Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth. Those who opposed Jesus continued their harassment throughout Jesus' entire public career, and the cause of this harassment was their resentment of the criticisms that Jesus made of their formalism and hypocrisy. Determined to silence Jesus' criticisms, they invented false charges concerning his disloyalty to the government.

Luke shows the broad humanitarian character of Jesus' work that was manifested from the first in Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans and others whom the Jews regarded as their enemies.

Jesus never failed to commend those who had a humble and contrite heart, and it made no difference whether they were Jews or Gentiles. At the time of Luke's writing, the Spirit of Christ was regarded as the guiding factor in the life of the Christian church. That this guiding factor was only a continuation of what had been present all along is shown by Jesus' repeated references to the Spirit of God throughout the period of his public ministry.

What Jesus taught was now accepted to be in harmony with what the church believed. Many of the statements attributed to Jesus were now interpreted in light of what had happened already, implying that at least some of his statements were intended as definite predictions of what was going to occur.

“Luke and Prayer”

Prayer always has been, and always will be, a staple of Christian practice. Jesus devotes much time both in prayer and teaching his disciples to pray. All four of the gospels devote time and space to the subject of prayer.

According to Lindell Harris, though, the gospel of Luke has more to say about prayer than any of the other gospels. Therefore, it is easy for one to gather that Luke held a high regard for the institution of prayer. In fact, P. T. O’Brien has stated that “prayer is a significant motif in the Lukan writings as both the terminology and the contexts make plain.”

INSTANCES OF PRAYER IN LUKE

According to K. S. Han, Luke uses two Greek words translated for prayer a total of forty-one times in his gospel. The verb “proseukomai,” and its noun form “proseuke,” are used twenty-two times while the verb “deesis” is used nineteen times.³ When the use of “proseukomai” in Luke is combined with that in Acts, it totals thirty-five times (out of a total eighty-six uses in the Early Christian Writings).

This fact reiterates how important prayer is to the author.

Harris explains the difference in the two words that Luke uses to describe prayer: “deesis” gives prominence to the expression of personal need while “proseuke” pertains to the element of devotion.

Harris goes on to explain that the use of “deesis” is not limited to God, but can also be used of a request addressed to a man. “Proseuke,” however, is limited to God.

Given the understanding of the importance of prayer to Luke, it is interesting to note that Luke both opens and closes his gospel with instances of prayer. This is huge and something we should pay attention to...

In Luke 1:10, God’s people are praying outside of the temple prior to the angelic announcement of the birth of John to Zechariah.

The last verse of the gospel (24:53) shows a scene of Jesus’ followers at the temple continually offering blessing to God.

Of the prayer instances recorded in Luke’s gospel, there are eight texts that relate to prayer in the life of Jesus.

The majority of the other prayer texts deal with the instruction of prayer for the disciples. Only a handful of references fall outside these two distinctions: the prayers of Zechariah and Elizabeth for a son (1:13), the prayers of Anna (2:36-38), and Simeon's prayer of thanksgiving (2:26-32).

PRAYERS OF JESUS

By reading any of the gospels, especially Luke, one will easily understand that Jesus was not only a man that taught about prayer, but he was one that also practiced it.

R. Beiler states it this way: More compelling than anything Jesus taught about prayer by precept was what he taught by his prayer practice... he depended upon it in the great soul-moving experiences of his life . . . Whether he needed courage, strength, or fellowship with the Father, prayer was his reliance, his very mood.

In many of the important ministry points of Jesus' life, Luke makes sure to record the fact that Jesus prayed. In no way was prayer an action that Jesus failed to practice. He not only taught his disciples how to pray, he demonstrated to them how to pray.

Prayer at The Baptism of Jesus

(Luke 3:21)

In this scene, after Jesus was baptized, he was praying as the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended.

J. M. Creed notices Luke's correlation between the prayer of Jesus and the descending of the Spirit in the baptismal account. He points out that Luke uses the present participle "proseukomenou" ("praying") in contrast to the aorist "baptisthentos" ("baptized").

This indicates that Luke understands the descent of the Spirit to be coincident with the prayer of Jesus, not the baptism which had already been completed. So what? You may be thinking...but remember this is what scholars do – this is their bread and butter...

Oscar Cullmann also sees a correlation with Jesus' prayer at his baptism and his prayer at the crucifixion. Oscar Cullmann was at one time considered to be "THE authority" on the Gospel of Luke!

He argues that the true meaning of the baptism was not fully established until his death and resurrection.

Because Jesus prays at his crucifixion as well, the baptism not only inaugurates his public mission, it

also “proleptically” (this just means anticipation) indicates his death and resurrection. I know, I know, so why doesn’t Oscar Cullmann just say “anticipates” instead of “proleptically” ...it is because...that’s what scholar’s say...it is how they talk, trust me they are not much fun at cocktail parties...

Routine Prayer

(Luke 5:16)

Luke is the only author to record Jesus retreating to pray subsequent to the healing of the leper and just prior to his first major encounter with the scribes and Pharisees. It may have been an oversight of the other authors, because of no direct correlation between this prayer and the events that preceded or succeeded.

It seems, though, that Luke is offering an insight into the routine of Jesus.

As Han states, (Han is the newest big Lucan scholar to come along, just so you know!) Luke is noting the regularity of Jesus’ prayer life.

Danker (another scholar) does notice a correlation between Luke’s explanation of Jesus’ routine prayer time with the events that will follow regarding the

scribes and Pharisees. He believes that Luke is using this instance to indicate Jesus' desire to spend time with God before he was to face any sort of opposition.

Harris (still another scholar) understands this verse to explain Jesus' need to "recharge" himself occasionally. That's what I have always thought and that is – actually what I was taught. He notes the constant drain of his human energy due to constant demands for his sympathy and compassion. In order for him to respond to the needs of those who flocked to him, Jesus occasionally needed to separate himself for communion with God.

The Choosing of the Twelve

(Luke 6:12)

Prior to calling his twelve disciples, Luke states that Jesus prayed all night.

O'Brien suggests that Luke was illustrating Jesus' prayer over the momentous issues of the choice which Jesus was about to make.

Han (not the Dry-Cleaner hehehe) adds to this theory by stating: The calling of disciples stresses the continuation of Jesus' work after his death. Since the

entire context of Luke-Acts develops how the disciples follow Jesus' way, Jesus' prayer has to do with the life of the disciples.

Harris goes on to state that in this instance prayer became not only Jesus submitting his petitions, but also a time for him to listen to God in an undistracted manner.

In other words, Jesus made himself available in the times when others were sleeping so that there were no distractions in his hearing the voice of the Father.

Peter's Confession

(Luke 9:18)

Jesus prays before he questions the disciples of his true identity.

Luke is the only author to introduce this story with Jesus praying.

Unlike Mark, Luke omits Peter's erroneous protest and Jesus' subsequent rebuke. It would seem that Luke is directing the reader away from the negative aspect of Peter's objection, and, instead, pointing the reader towards the positive fact that Jesus' preceding prayer had been answered.

Han states that Jesus' prayer had been effective because "the Father had revealed to Peter the secret of [Jesus'] messianic person and dignity."

The Transfiguration

(Luke 9:28-29)

Jesus takes his inner circle of three disciples to the mountain to pray.

As he is praying, Luke records that his appearance was changed and he was joined by Moses and Elijah.

Han references Jesus' routine prayer in 6:12 with this passage to indicate that this prayer time was also a part of Jesus' common routine.

It is noted that this is the only time that others were present when Jesus prayed.

MacLaren (still another scholar chimes in) and offers an interesting theory about the transfiguration. He suggests that it could have been a common occurrence when Jesus entered into prayer only that no one was present to witness it, save this one time.Hmmm.

Was it possible that, at some point, as Jesus entered into closer communion with his Father that glory

shone from his face, though no one was there to record it?

Intercession for Peter

(Luke 22:32)

In this text, Luke states that Jesus has specifically prayed for Peter to maintain his faith. Although it has been assumed in the previous passages that Jesus has offered prayers for others, here Luke points out that Jesus definitively has offered a priestly prayer for Peter.

O'Brien indicates that the plural use of "you" in this passage makes Peter a representative of the twelve, and by extension, all believers.

All believers have benefited from Jesus' intercessory prayer for Peter.

Prayer at Gethsemane

(Luke 22:39-46)

This text shows Jesus offering prayer for himself regarding the event that will soon follow. This is the first time that Jesus has prayed a prayer of supplication for himself.

It is interesting, also, to note that Luke begins and ends this passage with Jesus urging the disciples to “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”

Han sees a specific purpose for Luke mentioning both the prayer of Jesus and his exhortation to the disciples.

In verse 39, he notes that the term Luke uses for discipleship, “akolouthein,” is a technical term which implies participation in the fate of Jesus.

Although the disciples would not share Jesus’ fate immediately, Jesus’ exhortation for them to pray was to prepare them for things to come while his prayer for himself was to prepare him for things to come.

Prayer on the Cross

(Luke 23:34,46)

Luke is the only author to record the prayers of Jesus on the cross.

The first is a prayer of forgiveness for those executing him.

Harris states that Jesus “phrased in prayer the forgiveness which his death was destined to achieve for sinful men.”

Even while on the cross, Jesus' thoughts and prayers were focused on those whom he came to save.

The second prayer is described as a prayer of trust: "Father into your hands I commit my spirit."

It is not a prayer out of doubt or agony, rather, it is a declaration that the kingdom of God has been established by the completion of Jesus' ministry.

DIDACTIC PRAYER

Apart from practicing prayer in his own life, Jesus taught others both about prayer and how to pray. Luke takes notice of this and devotes much of his work to Jesus' prayer teachings. There are five main passages in which Luke discusses the teaching of prayer.

Han suggests that these five passages taken together offer a paradigm for prayer. The two parables teach one how to pray, the Lord's prayer teaches one what to pray, and in the final passage, Jesus teaches why one should pray persistently.

Prayer after the Mission of the Seventy

(Luke 10:21-24)

This is one of the few instances in Luke in which he gives the reader an example of Jesus' prayer.

Even though the passage is not explicitly labeled a prayer, scholars agree that it represents Jesus praying.

According to Han, this section is didactic (teaching) because it instructs the disciples who will engage in the harvest (referred to in 10:2) based upon the present kingdom, and it demonstrates that their prayers will bring God's harvest to completion.

In this text Luke shows that prayer is the lifestyle of those who will enter the kingdom.

The Lord's Prayer

(Luke 11:2-4)

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he responded with what is now labeled, The Lord's Prayer.

Luke's account of the prayer differs slightly from the Matthean account (Matthew 6:9-13).

This prayer was given to serve as an outline for the disciples to follow.

Harris notes that Jesus instructs that prayer is directed toward God and representative of his holiness (“Father, hallowed be your name.”).

“Your kingdom come,” was an instruction to pray that the kingdom which had already come in Jesus would be brought to fruition.

“Give us each day our daily bread,” is a prayer of provision and constant reminding of our dependance on God.

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us,” is somewhat self-explanatory-- “forgive us as we forgive others.” Although, Luke uses the term “sin” when Matthew uses the term “debts.”

Harris suggests that this is because of the difference in audiences (Matthew wrote with Jews in mind while Luke wrote with Gentiles in mind.)

“Lead us not into temptation,” is a prayer for God’s providence.

Parable of the Midnight Friend

(Luke 11:5-13)

Jesus uses this parable to teach on the persistence of prayer. The request of the friend is outrageous, since

his midnight venture would surely wake the entire household, however, persistence is rewarded.

Just as the persistent friend would eventually receive that which he asked for, so too, will the persistent pray-er when he asks, seeks, and knocks.

Parable of the Unjust Judge

(Luke 18:1-8)

This parable is another tool that Jesus uses to teach on the persistence of prayer. A widow who seeks justice against her adversary is persistent in pleading with a judge that has no concern for her. Eventually, the judge gives in to her in order for her nagging to cease.

This parable is preceded by Jesus' exhortation to always pray and never give up.

Luke opens the story with this exhortation to give focus to the point of the parable: "God will hear and speedily answer the cries of his people who are persistent and faithful in prayer."

O'Brien goes on further to suggest that Luke is addressing a situation in which Christians, under severe persecution, are denying their faith. Their

persistence in prayer will insure that God acts speedily on their behalf.

Regardless of whether this is the case or not, the point is clear: God answers those who pray persistently.

The Watchful Prayer

(Luke 21:36)

This verse is an exhortation from Jesus to always be on the watch.

Again, this verse points to the idea of persistent prayer with the use of the word “always.”

Morris suggests that this verse also has an eschatological perspective. “The prayer he urges involves an attitude of life, an attitude that seeks to flee worldly sins as the believer concentrates on the service of God. To stand before the son of man is to possess the ultimate salvation.”

The believer is to be on the watch and persistent in doing so, but this type of prayer lends itself to a lifestyle that seeks to avoid the coming age.

CONCLUSION AND MINISTRY APPLICATION

There has been much debate on which aspect of prayer in Luke is more important, the prayer life of Jesus or his teachings on prayer. It would seem, in reality, both are equally important.

Jesus himself displays how important prayer is by offering his own prayer life as a model. With Jesus as the ultimate example for righteous living, how much more should believers strive to emulate him.

Jesus takes it a step farther, though. Not only does he live the example of prayer, he teaches his followers both how to pray (the Lord's prayer) and in what manner to pray (persistently).

Turner sums it up when he states that "The texture of Luke's portrait of prayer is too exotic to sum up in any epigram; for him prayer is not a technique for achieving some object or goal, it is man relating every aspect of his life . . . to God."

Luke has more than shown the importance of prayer in the life of the believer.

As seen in the Lord's prayer (Luke 11:2-4), prayer is the believer's connection to the Father. It is the means by which the believer not only asks for provision and protection ("Give us each day our daily bread . . . and lead us not into temptation."), but also a means of

offering praise to the Father (“Hallowed be Your name.”).

In other words, prayer is direct connection with God. Prayer is direct communication with God. Prayer should be a daily conversation, waiting to happen.

Jesus himself displayed the importance of prayer by practicing it himself.

It is interesting to note that before many of the major events in the life of Jesus (calling of the twelve, the transfiguration, his arrest and trial, the crucifixion, etc.) he preceded those times with prayer. There is a vital application for the believer to be drawn from this example.

Significant events in the believer’s life should not be experienced without prayer in the equation.

Luke has made clear that prayer is a vital aspect of the life of the believer.

Jesus not only taught about prayer, he also provided the example and set the standard. The believer should emulate Jesus in any way possible.

Fast Facts!

Despite being grouped with Matthew and Mark, Luke's gospel has a number of parallels with the [Gospel of John](#).

For example, Luke uses the terms "Jews" and "Israelites" in a way unlike Mark, but like John; the figures of [Mary of Bethany](#) and [Martha](#) as well as a person named Lazarus (although [Lazarus of Bethany](#) and the Lazarus of [the parable](#) are generally not considered the same person) are found only in Luke and John;

and at Jesus' arrest, only Luke and John state that the servant's *right* ear was cut off (there are several such small details found only in Luke and John).

Interesting huh?

When the Packers' Stink... It's time to work on Luke!

(Just sayin')

I will try to be uplifting...and educational here, but if you just watched some of the plays I watched...it might be a little bit difficult...and sad to say, but I turned it off before the end of the first quarter. A Book is better. Even Luke, the third gospel to be written is preferable.

I will not admit which game this week this is or how many weeks in a row, I have turned off the game.

If I had one of those brick sponges, I might have thrown it at the TV, but fortunately, I do not own one! So I am breathing deeply into a brown paper bag and grabbing the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Luke is my only consolation...

The TV is on and the dryer is humming in the background...

Who knows? This might be one of the best Bible Studies ever...on Luke's gospel....hehehe ;-)

So here I go, the last word is: According to Luke!

The third gospel is “the first volume” of a two- part work, Luke/Acts, which many people claim was written by the same author. However, just so you know, there are those that disagree with that, but they are obviously in the minority today!

We know that both works are dedicated to Theophilus, which roughly translated means “friend of God.”

Now, Theophilus could have been an individual...or it could just be an address to a non-descript group of faithful people who happened to be Gentile. No one knows the answer to that question. Theophilus is well, Theophilus. Friends of God are good. Friends of God are important. Friends of God – may live in Philadelphia...

Sorry that was funny only in my head. Philia means love, delphia means “city of.” I think you had to be in my head, post-Packer game to catch the gaiety of it all. Friends of God may just live in the city of Brotherly love...

I digress.

I am burying my sorrows in a diet Pepsi...nothing stronger.

In content, this gospel is related to the Marcan and Matthean gospels, collectively, these three Gospels

form the group usually called “synoptic” or “similar” – because they are of the tradition that developed independently of the gospel according to John. Three are similar – one is not. Three are alike, one is very different.

Dependent upon who you read and whom you study with – the Lucan gospel may be summarized under eight headings... (Obviously, each scholar is different) – This would be my take:

- (1) A brief Prologue (1.1-4)
- (2) Infancy Narratives (1.5-2.52)
- (3) 3.1-4.13 – John as a Prelude...a forerunner...
- (4) 4. 14-9.50 – Jesus’ Galilean Ministry
- (5) 9.51-19.27 – Travel Account of Jesus (he still owes \$1.95 at an oasis!)
This is good; it is taking my mind of the game, kind of....
Next, I would say, we should start with....
- (6) The Triumphant Entrance and beyond...19.28-21.38
- (7) 22.1- 23.56a – This is pure Passion Narrative.
- (8) The Lucan Resurrection Narrative 23.56b-24.53.

That’s it. Pretty simple. The gospel in a nutshell.

It is always interesting to note: that Luke brings this particular gospel to an end – with Jesus giving a final commission to his 11 disciples (and to “others”) and

with his Ascension (apparently on the night of the day of the discovery of the empty tomb).

This is huge.

Jesus Resurrects.

Jesus Ascends.

Luke.

I cannot believe I have typed all this, with those!@@\$% silly Packers still on my mind. Are they winning now? Is it close? I cannot turn it on...Luke is preventing me...

I just realized if they keep losing, this might really turn into something!!!! Some kind of a study anyways....and it could be ready sooner rather than later...

Unlike the Pauline letters (read Epistles), which bear the apostle's (?) name; the third gospel was written anonymously.

Ancient church tradition attributed the third gospel to the Luke who appears in Philemon 24 as being Paul's "fellow worker" and is called "the beloved practitioner of all things medical." He experimented a lot with his patients-why do you think they call it a practice? He would ask. Practice makes perfect, some times.

Sometimes you get it right, and sometimes you do not!

What I want you to know is that most modern commentators on the Lucan gospel are skeptical about the validity of this traditional attribution. Generally, they regard the tradition as based largely on inferences from the text of the Early Christian Writings made when people were first beginning to wonder who had written the gospels.

They further call into question the early church father – Irenaeus and question at the same time his description of Luke as being Paul’s “inseparable collaborator” – which he inferred from those famous “we sections” to be found in the Book of Acts.

Present thinking is that these “we sections” are a part of a diary or some kind of literary journal kept as the author of Acts journeyed with Paul. This makes sense and extremely plausible when remembers that the book of Acts also contains a “Ship’s Log.”

Alternatively, another possibility is that they are a literary form used by the author to enhance his narrative of sea journeys.

A still larger part of the problem is the relationship of the author of Acts to Paul.

In recent decades, it has become evident that only with considerable difficulty can one reconcile much of the depiction of Paul in Acts with that of what emerges from Paul's own letters or epistles...

So therefore, was the author really the "inseparable collaborator" of Paul?

The differences between the "Lucan Paul" and the "Pauline Paul" is not minor...even though it is only a matter of Acts and the Pauling epistles.

So at the end of the day (or at the end of the Green Bay Packer game) many modern commentators and scholars are uncertain about the authorship of Luke/Acts. However, what is "new" there...? I mean seriously, we already knew that!!!

There are a minority of commentators who retain the traditional attribution as being substantially correct...they tend to be the most conservative...and those unwilling to use modern critical methods...of study. So you can tell a great deal at the onset of the study of Luke...if an author says, one Luke wrote it...and his name is not Skywalker!

Enough for tonight,...they lost, I checked!

Therefore, when it comes to the church fathers, you have to read them critically and cannot accept their

word at face value. This was not always done! Some people want to place the church fathers in the same basket that holds tradition. You have to decide that question for yourself!

Another game...another 45 minutes into and I already turned off the television and went searching for Luke.

One of the things that are somewhat interesting is – scholars do not believe that the author of Acts ever read any of the letters or epistles of Paul.

Yet it would seem if the author (whoever it is-was a traveling companion of Paul) – even this brief association with Paul led the author to idealize Paul and make him the hero of the second part of Acts.

He has painted his own picture of Paul, which may not agree in all details with the Paul of the uncontested Pauline letters. Yet since Luke is not prominent in the apostolic age, if the gospel and Acts were not originally written by him, there is no obvious reason why they should have been associated with him. In other words, the ancient tradition which holds that Luke is the author of the third gospel and Acts may in the long run prove to be substantially valid. “May.”

Again, you decide.

Let's talk about the Lucan picture of Jesus. I believe this is important to talk about as we approach the year of Luke. Just how does he depict Jesus?

Luke clearly depicts Jesus as a preacher, as one who proclaims a message. According to the author, Jesus is God's agent of promised salvation. At the very same time, he is the preacher par excellence of God's Kingdom.

There are those that always say that you cannot dismiss the Jesus of Acts and separate that from the Jesus in Luke. The two writings go together. The depiction of Jesus must also go hand-in-hand.

One more time, you decide!

Jesus, as depicted by Luke, also shows Jesus' disciples-apostles as being sent out to announce the kingdom and to heal.

Later in Acts, Peter will proclaim Jesus Christ not only as crucified and risen but also as Lord and Messiah. Indeed, Peter announces further, "salvation is found in no one else...for there is no other name under heaven given to human beings by which we are to be saved."

Although Luke's gospel has become more of a "life of Christ" than either Mark's or Matthew's, it has not lost its proclamation character.

The Lucan picture of Jesus is also drawn in a distinctive historical perspective. (Of course, this would be my major interest and focal point.) Luke's concern is evident from the remark that he has Paul utter before King Agrippa, "None of these things has escaped his (the King's) notice, for this was not done in a corner." (Acts 26.26)

Jesus' story and its sequel, intended by God's providence to challenge human beings to Christian faith, has been rooted in human history.

This is simply to say, that it takes place in real time, in the real world, as we know it to exist. It does not happen in a vacuum somewhere. This is why that Luke has not written a gospel as does Mark – a term he never uses in the first part of his work...preferring instead to designate his two-volume work as a "narrative account."

How many times can Green Bay lose this year...and what was all that hype and talk about another SuperBowl run????

I discovered tonight that I cannot even watch it online with the sound turned off....

In addition, I am not a fair-weather fan!

In this account, it is important to Luke that his account be grounded in three ways: first, it needs to be connected to Roman history, secondly to Palestinian history and then, finally to church history...because already there is a church.

His relation to Roman History is shown by the connection of Jesus' birth with a decree of Caesar Augustus ordering the registration of the whole world during the governorship of Quirinius.

He does not stop there. The ministry of John the Baptizer (and of Jesus, by implication) is connected with the fifteenth year of the reign of the emperor Tiberius and with the prefecture of Pontius Pilate to Judea.

Luke further connects events in the early Christian community with the famine in the days of Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome and with the proconsulship of Gallio in Achaia.

Again he connects the birth of Jesus with Palestinian history by linking it with the days of King Herod the Great, and John's and Jesus' ministry to the time of the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, to the

reign of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, of Philipp, Tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and of Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene even though only Galilee further figures in Jesus' story.

Spell check is giving me a headache, just saying!)

Finally, he connects the Jesus story with the Christian history in a way that no other evangelist does or could...because more time has passed.

Years are turning into decades...and there is a developing history...of the church. He also does this by recounting his sequel in the Book of Acts.

All of this historical perspective, which is exclusively Lucan, is in the long run related to his view of salvation history.

Luke sees all of human history divided into three phases: the period of Israel, the period of Jesus, and the period of the church under great stress.

As a side note, the Lucan picture of Jesus is also drawn in a geographical perspective. Luke is preoccupied in his gospel to depict Jesus as moving from his Galilean ministry, once the travel account begins toward Jerusalem, the city of his destiny – where his “exodus” is to be achieved.

Such a perspective gives Jerusalem a distinctive centrality, towards it; all in the gospel is aimed. Then in Acts, it becomes the focal point from which “the Word of the Lord” goes forth as Jesus’ disciples are commissioned as “witnesses” to carry it from Jerusalem to “all of Judea and Samaria” and to the very ends of the earth!

And then, there is the growing primacy of Rome...since the last expression can mean “Rome” and since Rome is where the story of Acts will end....Paul will be the one who in effect carries the word “about the Lord Jesus Christ openly and unhindered from Jerusalem to that “end.”

Both the historical and the geographical perspectives enhance the status of the church as the sequel to Jesus’ ministry in the Roman world of its time.

The losses in Tinsel-town are starting to add up...sorry Miss Helen, I know it is home-away-from-home! I guess there is always next week...or perhaps the week after that...

At least we are not the Cleveland Browns, the San Diego Chargers, or the Tennessee Titans, just saying...

The Lucan picture of Jesus’ ministry and its sequel also has an argumentative side to it...it is an

apologetic of sorts. This would be one of those secondary concerns that authors have...in writing their narrative accounts.

At some point, they come out of their corner fighting and have a mission to fulfill....albeit a kind of hidden agenda. In this case besides setting the record straight – the author also has a legitimate concern – that Christianity has the right to exist in the Roman Empire, as does any other religion. It has the right to exist side by side with Judaism. It has the same rights and privileges.

Hence, the author is concerned from the outset of the gospel to depict Jesus as the founder of Christianity, as one born into a pious Jewish family, circumcised and faithfully observant of all Jewish customs. It is a legitimate religion. Later on, it is going to emerge in Luke's account that it started as a "sect" first – within Judaism. It needs recognition. It needs to be respected and honored, as such. One might even go so far as to say that it is the logical outgrowth of Pharisaic Judaism.

In the book of Acts, he will depict Paul as stoutly maintaining his Pharisaic connection, by siding with the Pharisees against the Sadducees with respect to the "resurrection of the dead." He further portrays Paul, once he has been taken captive at the end of

Acts, as being declared innocent on several occasions. These declarations of innocence imply indirectly that Christianity likewise stands in the same relation to the Roman government.

The key-figure in Lucan salvation history is Jesus himself, about whom the evangelist makes not only Christological (Christ-declarations) but also soteriological (saving-salvation declarations) affirming about who Jesus is and what he has done for humanity.

Certain aspects of Jesus, who is otherwise portrayed as a human being, hint at this transcendent condition: his virginal conception through the power of the Holy Spirit; his ministry under the auspices of the Holy Spirit, his special relationship to his heavenly father, his resurrection and exaltation to glory.

Luke applies many traditional “Christological titles” to Jesus...like...Messiah or Christ...Lord Savior...Son of God...Son of Man...Servant...Prophet...King...Son of David...Leader...Holy One...Righteous One...Teacher.

Particularly noteworthy are the distinctive Lucan use of Savior and suffering Messiah and the retrojection of the title, “the Lord.” (Originally used for the resurrected Christ) which he uses even in the infancy

narratives...and the ministry account when the evangelist himself is speaking.

When Luke speaks of the soteriological function of Jesus Christ (saving action) and the effects of what he has done for humanity, he depicts them as salvation, or as the forgiveness of sins, of peace, and of life, and once even as justification....so he does carried away a little with the fifty-cent theological terms...

That would be Luke! He surpasses the other evangelists in this...Luke portrays not only the ministry of Jesus himself but also even the movement begun by him as especially being spirit guided...In at least seventeen instances in the gospel and fifty-seven in Acts – the influence of the Spirit is seen both on the activity of Jesus himself and on that of his followers.

...Though Luke may have introduced a historical perspective in his gospel tradition, he did not simply imitate Flavius Josephus, who composed the Jewish Antiquities, by writing merely annalistic Christian Antiquities. He has preserved the proclamatory aim of the gospel tradition and that is why we refer to it as the gospel according to Luke.

For the record, the Packers just beat the Vikings...OMG...three times for emphasis...I am done!

The Stink continues...

Ok, everyone was all about the half time show with Brent Farve. Bart Starr was the real show stealer...good old number 15...getting a free ride in his golf cart. Their hug spoke volumes, the fact that Bart was even able to be present was nothing short of miraculous. And, it was very much like a scene out of a movie. Well orchestrated, guys...now if only the game between the Bears and the Packers were as well orchestrated. I typed on Facebook – “it’s not my fault” – that’s all I typed...people that were in church on Thanksgiving Eve will get it. The rest will be left in the dark.

Thanksgiving, sitting in the church office at 9:25 P.M. and still typing Bible study for this coming Tuesday at noon...the team (the Packers) still are not playing to their potential. The game was slow. By half time the mojo – juju – and momentum seems to be with the Bears and Chicago.

Hopefully this will be a necessary shot in the arm...

But before I leave this study, I still wanted to add something on the Temple and the importance of the Temple in Luke.

Jay Cutler was terrific, Rodgers was so-so, Lacey on the other hand, needs superglue on his gloves.

Oh yeah, I was talking about the Temple wasn’t I – or at least I was supposed to be. Don’t watch the packers and attempt to do Bible study at the same time. (Note to self)

Luke's interest in the Temple is sufficiently and widely acknowledged as to need no more than a few additional comments.

The Gospel opens in the Temple with Gabriel's dramatic appearance to Zechariah during his priestly service. (We are actually admitted into the Temple.)

If there is a tone that the Gospel takes on, it takes its lead from old Simeon (also in the Temple) with his outbursts of praise and thanksgiving...at the sight of the infant Jesus in the Temple proper.

The Gospel closes after Jesus' resurrection with the joyful disciples praising God in the Temple. It has been stated many, many times that the Temple thus provides an important narrative focus for the whole Gospel, a focus that is maintained at the outset of the second volume...

Luke's apparent interest in the Temple is matched by a corresponding interest in the city of Jerusalem in which the Temple resides.

Remember Jesus sets his face like flint toward Jerusalem. And later will lament or cry over the entire city.

Later the interest in Jerusalem will continue in the writing the Acts Of The Apostle's because the young fledgling church will trace its beginnings from Jerusalem and going out from there to the very ends of the earth.

Interest in the Temple...of course, is also characteristic of all Judaism.

We have to remember that the Solomonic Temple served as the cultic center of Israel's faith and life, as the place of sacrifice, atonement and pilgrimage, where the covenant obligations of Israel might be rendered unto the Lord.

Not the wrist, Not the wrist...It is not my fault! I tell you-they are playing mediocre at best this year! I love it when people blame the game on the refs and bad calls...obviously we are not watching the same game. No offense, dropped balls all over the field...missed opportunities...overthrows...bad plays...injured players...the list goes on and on, mediocre I say...but I digress...

The Temple also served as the place for the administration of law and justice and even more as an archive and as a Treasury.

The Temple was the only focal point of God's presence within Israel...this was the place where God chose for his name to dwell.

We cannot forget that the Temple also served as a house of prayer and a place of divine revelation.

Herod's rebuilding of the Second Temple, reconstructed a vast expense over many, many years, aimed to recapture the glory of the original Solomonic Temple.

The stones were imposing, the decorations beautiful, the gold work-magnificent enough to justify oaths, and the magnificence of the edifice of polished white marble was widely acknowledged by visitors and pilgrims alike.

Josephus remarked, “the edifice or the exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye.” The rabbi’s said, “he who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never in his life seen a beautiful building.”

Most Jews (but not all) accepted the legitimacy of the Second Temple and continued to order their faith and life around its cultic activity. The Temple came to be regarded as the symbolic centre of the entire cosmos.

Later on, when people saw all the impurity surrounding the Temple and the cult, people hoped for a new or restored Temple. There was even some thought that the community itself could be likened to a new Temple.

It is obvious that Luke did not hold a negative view of the Temple...but regarded it as an appropriate place for Israel to pray, it also held a key-role and sacred place for Jewish Christians...central for prayer, Torah observance, teaching and pilgrimage...but not for the Gentile Christians...

Both Luke and Acts has materials very much favorable of the Temple. Luke actually uses a couple of different terms when he is talking about the Temple.

By Luke introducing the Temple early on in his gospel he also introduces us to expectant Jews in and around the Temple...like Anna and Simeon.

For Luke it is about Torah observance, trusting and being faithful to one’s beliefs. Luke gives us a portrait of “practicing Jews” and only of “practicing Jews.”

The account of Jesus in the Temple at age twelve begins with an account of regular, normal pilgrimage observance of the boy's parents. Here they come to Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. It is normal. It is natural. It is to be expected! Jesus is actually found in the Temple amazing the teachers with his understanding. This is a part of Luke's positive view of the Temple as a place of learning, higher education, of teaching and of pilgrimage.

Luke's version of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness has a notable order for the three temptations which places the temptation at the Temple at the climactic final point: "then the devil took him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the Temple...doubtless this anticipates the way in which Jerusalem is the climactic destination of Jesus' travel narrative, where Jesus' final temptation will take place.

Remember when Jesus tells the cleansed Leper to go and show himself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded to make an offering for his cleansing?

Normal. Natural.

Remember Jerusalem is also the city that kills the prophets and those sent to it – it will be the place of Jesus' final rejection.

A particular crucial text occurs in Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. After affirming that his ministry will reach its climax and its end in Jerusalem, Jesus says:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to

gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing. See your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

Jesus’ entry into the temple answers to Malachi 3.1, “the Lord who you seek will suddenly come to his Temple.”

The so called “Cleansing of the Temple” is given a very abbreviated treatment by Luke, which minimizes the elements of hostility and rejection that is present in Mark’s account.

Luke has Jesus teaching in the Temple, every day! Again, normal, natural.

The crucifixion narrative and its reference to the Temple has to do with the tearing of the Temple veil from top to bottom.

Jesus is the innocent one!

A lot of people do not know this, but now you do – the Temple actually had two curtains, but it seems obvious that Luke means the veil which stood before the “Holy of Holies.” What significance should be attached to the tearing of the Temple curtain, remains disputed, however three main lines of interpretation have emerged:

- 1) That it was a portent of the destruction of the Temple.**
- 2) That it was a sign of the end of the Temple cultus as a sacred symbol of socio-religious power.**
- 3) That it was a sign of open access to God through Jesus Christ.**

At the end...and in his transition into Acts of the Apostles....Luke has the disciples worshiping Jesus-before they return to Jerusalem with great joy and the gospel closes with the disciples in the Temple. They were there constantly, because it is normal and natural to do so, within the Temple precincts they could be found – daily praising God. And at the very same time, the Temple, like the city, in which it resides stands under the threat of judgment inasmuch as it partakes in the rejection of God’s beloved Son.

So what do you think about Luke and the Temple?

Women and Equality in the Gospel of Luke

By: Argrow “Kit” Evans

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The gospel of Luke portrays, through examples, women in the early church. Although the culture of the first century Greco-Roman world often minimized the role of women, Luke makes sure to give voice to their role in the early church. In this paper I will argue that the gospel of Luke supports woman as praiser of God (Luke 1: 46-55), woman as prophet (Luke 2: 36-38), and woman as minister (Luke 8: 1-3). Mary as praiser of God, Anna as prophet, and the ministering Galilean women (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna) will be discussed. These biblical stories are paralleled with the stories of men within the biblical text. This parallelism supports the popular notion that Luke regarded women and men as equals.

This paper will further note how Luke's readings also limit women. Mary is not given the Holy Spirit as is Zechariah during their time of praise; Anna is not able to prophesy speaking publicly to others as does Simeon; and the ministering Galilean women are not commissioned by God and do not engage in public ministry of the word as the twelve disciples do. This contrasting perspective will be discussed, offering further

insight into the role of women in the Luke text.

The gospel of Luke has a distinct identification with people who are poor and marginalized. Within the context from which Luke was written, during the first century Greco-Roman period, women were considered part of the marginalized. Dowling has noted that the Greco Roman philosopher Aristotle described women as an inferior class: “The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject.”¹ Dowling also presents a contrasting idea regarding the status of women, noting

1 Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in*

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that women's experiences and treatment were based on their social location. In the ancient Greco-Roman world the status and power of women varied considerably, being influenced by such factors as class and location.² Nevertheless, treating women as inferior was an ethical issue during this period as well as an issue within the Christian community.

The gospel of Luke was written to account for the ethical integrity of the

Christian community and to account for the relative paucity of treatment of the development of the early church, of its problems, and of the lives of the apostles.³

It was written to give the early church direction. The status and role of women in the Church, the issue of women's rights, was a highly charged one.⁴ Why was this a highly

charged issue? There may have been a number of women within the Christian community who were schooled in scripture. Gospel listeners of scripture in the church

may have been both men and women.⁵ It would have been imperative to have women

within the gospel who modeled the role of Christian women, setting an example for

women in the first century Christian church.

The gospel of Luke emphasizes the role of women. Luke contains more stories

about women than any other gospel.⁶ A range of theologians has spoken about varying

perspectives in regards to the role of women in the Luke scriptures. Though some argue

the Gospel of Luke (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 12-13.

² Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in*

the Gospel of Luke (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 11-12.

³ Frederick W. Danker, *Luke (Proclamation Commentaries)*, 2 Rev Sub ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1987), 7.

⁴ Philip Van Linden, *Gospel of Luke and Acts* (Wilmington: Health Policy Advisory Center, 1998), 104.

⁵ Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in*

the Gospel of Luke (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 62.

6 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 2.

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that Luke's gospel shares a free liberated stance towards women, others note that there is still a patriarchal framework that does not equally include women.⁷ This paper seeks to explore both perspectives.

Throughout the gospel of Luke a rhetorical-structural device is used, paralleling the role of men and women in the text. Luke's rhetorical-structural device is the use of thematically related or contrasting recitals and sayings, either juxtaposed or distributed in his narrative. Doublets or triads are most frequent.⁸ The pairing suggests a measure of equality between men and women that was unique during the time of Jesus. This gender pairing could model women and men standing together side by side as equals before God; equal in honor and grace, blessed with the same gifts and with the same responsibilities as Christian persons.⁹ The parallel could also be used to clearly state the distinction between the two genders as it related to roles within the Christian church.

Parallel accounts in Luke are shown with Mary and Zechariah, Anna and Simeon, the Galilean women, and the 12 disciples. Though the Lukan author does not totally reject the patriarchal framework of his or her culture, Luke does present a transformed vision which incorporates women in various ministerial roles.¹⁰ Mary, Anna, and the Galilean women serve as examples.

7 Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in the Gospel of Luke* (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 61.

8 Frederick W. Danker, *Luke* (Proclamation Commentaries), 2 Rev Sub ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1987), 15.

9 Philip Van Linden, *Gospel of Luke and Acts* (Wilmington: Health Policy Advisory Center, 1998), 104.

10 Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in the Gospel of Luke* (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 63.

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Luke 1: 46-55

Mary’s Song of Praise

And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely,

from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done

great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the

powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with

good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in

remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever (NRSV).’

In Luke 1: 46-55 Mary sets an example, especially for women, for believers to

praise God. These verses are connected to a parallel account within the text. In the first chapter of this gospel, Luke pairs off and contrasts the elderly Zechariah, father to be of John the Baptist, with the young maiden Mary, mother to be of Jesus. While Zechariah hesitated to doubt at hearing the angel's good news, Mary permits the creative message of God to take life within her. Both the man and the woman were afraid upon receiving the angel's message. The woman, however, said yes and gave life.¹¹ Mary works through her fear, and her strong faith in God allows her to overcome this fear. She sings a song of praise, celebrating what God has done. Mary's song is a celebration. She focuses on the effect of God's actions on her personal life. Her focus then broadens to God's actions for all those who fear God. As such, God's action in the life of Mary reflects God's action in the life of God's people. Her individual song of praise becomes a communal theme that celebrates reversals in society. She praises the God who brings

11 Philip Van Linden, *Gospel of Luke and Acts* (Wilmington: Health Policy Advisory Center, 1998), 107.

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down the powerful and raises the lowly, who fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty.¹²

The Magnificat also has Old Testament connections. It is compared to the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15: 20-21, where Moses's sister sings and leads the song of praise after the escape from the Egyptians. Both women speak prophetically, celebrating what

God has done for them personally, and bearing witness.¹³ Mary's song may also be aligned with the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2: 1-10.¹⁴ Mary is aligned with memorable women in the Old Testament biblical tradition. This connection to women in the Old Testament could be very significant for the early Christian church in understanding the importance of Mary as well as that of other women within the early Christian church. Within the Magnificat, Mary acts as praiser, while also modeling an example of faith in God for women and men in the church.

Luke 2: 36-38

Jesus is Presented in the Temple: Anna as Prophet

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her

marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple

but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she

came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were

looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (NRSV).

In Luke 2: 36-38 Anna, as prophet, is presented as a major participant in the

presentation of the baby Jesus at the temple. Anna and Simeon (Luke 2: 25-35) are

one of the gender pair parallels within the Lukan narrative. Both are portrayed as faithful

¹² Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in*

the Gospel of Luke (Library Of New Testament Studies) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2007), 129.

¹³ Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of*

the Church) (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 76.

14

Loretta C. Dornisch, *A Woman Reads the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 23.

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and inspired.¹⁵ Simeon is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and Anna, as prophet, is inspired by God. After Circumcision and Naming, Mary and Joseph took Christ up to Jerusalem to be offered to God. Simeon and the Holy Spirit blessed God and the Christ Child. Anna, the Prophetess, sees the Messiah and confirms him. She is presented as an outstanding model of what it means to be an Israelite who is faithful. Anna is singled out as a proclaimer of salvation, giving thanks to God speaking about the redemption of Jerusalem.¹⁶ Anna's credentials are not to be overlooked. She also sets a powerful example for women within the early Christian church. Her advanced years make her a reliable figure of wisdom and maturity. Living with her husband seven years makes her an ideal wife.¹⁷ Worshipping at the temple night and day with fasting and prayer makes her a model Christian who actually practices spiritual disciplines that could be connected to discipleship. She is the ideal believer who can be linked to a set of women, including Mary, who are liberative and lifegiving.¹⁸ Anna was not identified only as the poor and oppressed widow, one of what may have been a prevalent marginalized group during the time Luke was written. Rather, she is seen as Anna the widow who ministers to them. Within the gospel of Luke there

are numerous mentions of widows. The Lukan incidents of widows may reflect the growing numbers and importance of widows in the ministry of the church during the first

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Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 93.

16 Philip Van Linden, *Gospel of Luke and Acts* (Wilmington: Health Policy Advisory Center, 1998), 107.

17 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 91.

18 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 94.

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century. Consecrated widows whose roles included fasting, prayer, making clothes, and doing good works, were important.¹⁹ Anna was the prototype for such women.

Luke 8: 1-3

The Ministering Galilean Women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna

Accompany Jesus

Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing

the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, 2as well as some

women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3and Joanna, the wife of

*Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them**

out of their resources (NRSV).

In Luke 8: 1-3 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna are mentioned.

Jesus had

cured some of the women of their evil spirits and infirmities, which lead them to support

the mission. These women and others were recipients of Jesus' mercy who put their faith

in action by supporting Jesus' ministry with their resources. Though there is not one

direct parallel with this text, the Galilean women could be paralleled with the three male

disciples in the inner circle of men closest to Jesus. This inner circle included: Peter,

James, and John.²⁰

During the time of Jesus' ministry there was a need for resources. The women shared their time and, talent through providing meals and clothes and other

needed domestic services. The traditional roles they played were seen as a form of

ministry being performed for Jesus and for the Christian mission.²¹ These women might

have also shared their financial resources to support Jesus and ministry.

Some scholars do

¹⁹ Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 93.

²⁰ Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 132.

²¹ Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 127.

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indeed note that the women's support was financial. Within the biblical text the word

hyparchontonqis used. This word, in Luke and Acts, is affiliated with resources, possessions, property, money, or goods. 22 However, there is the question of women's ability to have their own money and property independent from a man during the first century, when patriarchy was dominant. In using their financial resources they would have stepped from the traditional role of women. 23 Some women did inherit money, worked a job, and or had their own business and money. 23 These women may have also been single or widowed. 24 Nevertheless, they still donated their resources to the ministry. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna are bearers of a distinctive message regarding women in the first century Christian church. The Galilean women used their resources to support the ministry of Jesus Christ. In doing this they also acted as ministers serving Jesus and attending to the needs of others within the Christian community.

Limitations of Women in Luke

The gospel of Luke uses women as examples of Christians within the early Church. Mary as praiser, Anna as prophet, and the Galilean women as ministers all reflect the Lukan writer's desire to emphasize the role of women within the early Christian church. There are several parallels between the accounts of women and men in the Lukan text. The stories of Mary and Zechariah, Anna and Simeon, and the Galilean women and the disciples model this. However, there are also some distinctions

22 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 127.

23 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of*

the Church) (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 128.
 24 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 131.

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By: Argrow “Kit” Evans

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made within these same texts that actually separate men and women. This is explicit when comparing Mary’s Song of Praise (Luke 1: 46-55) to Zechariah’s Praise and Prophecy (Luke 1: 67-80). There is no mention of Mary as prophet or the presence of the Holy Spirit. However, the text notes in Luke 1: 67, that Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy. The stories parallel each other, but there is a clear distinction recognizing Mary as praiser magnifying God and Zechariah as prophet filled with the Holy Spirit. The parallel accounts of Anna the prophet (Luke 2: 36-38) and Simeon the righteous and devout also model an unequal distinction between men and women within the text. Again the text does not speak of Anna being filled with the Holy Spirit as is the male prophet Simeon. Within the text Simeon speaks for himself, stating in Luke 2: 30-32, “For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” However, Anna does not speak for herself. There is the voice of the Lukan narrator. Her words are not recorded and consequently her action has not made sufficient impact to be recognized. Luke 2: 38 notes, “At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” There is also no reaction to her prophecy, but there is a reaction by Joseph and Mary to

Simeon's prophecy. Anna has no audience other than the reader. This interpretation of

this Lukan text could assume, a private, quiet stance for women in the Greco Roman

world; public prophetic stances belong to men.²⁶

25 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 137-138.

26 Barbara E. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part?: Women in the Gospel of Luke (Message of the fathers of the Church)* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier Books, 1996), 95.

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Though there is not an explicit parallel account with the three ministering Galilean women in Luke 8: 1-3, they are sometimes compared to the male disciples of

Jesus: Peter, James, and John. Comparison is made, however, there are some distinctions

that does not focus on equality of the two genders. In Luke 9: 1-2 Jesus called the twelve

disciples together and gave them power over all demons. The male disciples were sent to

mission and to preach the word. Women and male disciples had differing roles in the

mission of Jesus. Unlike the twelve there was no call for the ministering Galilean

women to become disciples or of them being sent on mission.²⁷ Neither did they have

access to the public ministry preaching the word. The women gave monetary support out

of thanks and also gave other personal gifts to the ministry of Jesus Christ. The women

may have also been cooking, cleaning, and sharing other labors behind the scenes to

support Jesus and the disciples.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Luke does give voice to women in the gospel. The gospel of Luke portrays women as examples in the early church. Mary as praiser of God, Anna as prophet, and the ministering Galilean women all set an example of the ministerial

leadership qualities that women have within this gospel and the church. Through parallel accounts with males Luke also makes it clear that men and women have distinct roles and are given different gifts concerning ministry within the first century church. These distinctions can be limiting for women seeking to engage in public ministries. This gospel was written for the first century church. However, Luke may very well be speaking to the Christian church today through the scriptures. It is imperative to acknowledge that both men and women have ministerial abilities. The challenge comes in faith communities understanding of whether men and women are to engage in ministerial leadership equally. This was a struggle for the Christian church in the first century to understand. Over 2000 years later this is still an issue area that churches seek to understand.

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Women in Luke's Gospel

Women? In the gospels?! Yep, that's right.

Luke gives women a pretty prominent role in his story.

Luke names several female followers of Jesus (8:1-3), makes them the first witnesses of the empty tomb (24:1-8), and affirms that they, too, should attend to the teachings of Jesus (10:38-42).

Luke is living in a Greco-Roman cultural world, where there are plenty of debates about whether women even have the capacity to learn at all and whether they can properly hold a job like, say, philosopher.

It's pretty easy to see which side Luke seems to have come down on.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves; this isn't the stuff of Women's Lib...at least, not yet...

Luke is not re-writing the cultural expectations men hold about women or the cultural roles men assign to women.

The trick is to tease out just how far Luke goes without losing sight of the fact that he's still working within the confines of a very male-centered world.

Questions About Women and Femininity

1. Does Luke give women the same treatment he gives other social outcasts?

2. What does Luke see as women's proper work and role?

3. Imagine a scale with Women's Lib on one side and patriarchy on the other. Where would you place Luke on this scale? Is he always consistent?

4. Does Luke take up any of the stereotypical female roles found throughout world literature, like the *femme fatale*, the chaste maiden, the lovesick woman, or the bad girl?

And of course, the problem is that we are so used to hearing the gospel narratives...that we do not pause and place the various stories in their historical/cultural context.

Remember this is a man's world. This is a patriarchal society. Luke may be enlightened and some of his readers may be enlightened...but what about the rest of them.

The norm is, “IF” women are mentioned “they” are not named. Women are property. Women are of less value than the family cow. Women are easily replaced. Easily divorced. Easily displaced. Easily placed on the back-burner so to speak.

Here’s just a quick overview:

Women were prominent in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' life.

Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptizer:

- Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptizer, whose work paved the way for Jesus (Luke 1:5-7).
- After Elizabeth conceived (verse 25), her unborn baby jumped when Mary visited (verses 41-44).
- Elizabeth said that her son's name was John (verses 57-60). Women had no say in such matters.

Mary, mother of Jesus:

- An angelic visitor told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus Christ (verses 26-38).
- Mary offered a poem of praise, the Magnificat (verses 46-55).
- Mary gave birth (2:5-7) and thought about the wonderful things said about Jesus (verse 19).

- **Mary was blessed by Anna and Simeon (1:42; 2:34-35).**
- **Anna was a prophetess!**
- **Mary did not understand, but treasured Jesus' sayings (2:50-51).**
- **Mary kept in contact with Jesus during his ministry (8:19).**

Women healed by Jesus:

- **Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law (4:38-39).**
- **He healed a 12-year-old girl (8:41-42, 49-56).**
- **He healed a woman with a 12-year infirmity (verses 43-48).**
- **He healed a woman who had been crippled 18 years (13:10-17).**

Women as good examples:

- **A sinful woman anointed Jesus and was forgiven (7:37-50).**
- **Mary listened while Martha worked (10:38-42).**
- **A woman in a parable found a lost coin (15:8-10).**

- **In another parable, a widow kept going to a judge to obtain justice (18:1-5).**
- **A poor widow gave two small coins to the temple (21:1-4).**

Other roles of women:

- Anna, a prophetess, blessed the child Jesus (2:36-38).
- Women, part of Jesus' traveling party, helped pay his way (8:1-3).
- An anonymous woman blessed Mary (11:27-28).

Witnesses to the resurrection:

- Women were among those who observed the crucifixion (23:27, 49).
- Women prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body (verses 55-56).
- Women were the first to find Jesus' tomb empty (24:1-3).
- Angels told the women that Jesus had risen (verses 4-8).
- Women were the first to tell the other disciples (verses 9-11).

- Although first-century culture usually minimized the importance of women, Luke portrayed women as good examples in the early church.

No matter how you look at it, whether named or not, women do seem to play an important role in this gospel. Let's explore it further....

The gospel of Luke has a distinct identification with people who are poor and marginalized.

Within the context from which Luke was written, during the first century Greco-Roman period, women were considered part of the marginalized.

Dowling has noted that the Greco Roman philosopher Aristotle described women as an inferior class: "The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject."

Dowling also presents a contrasting idea regarding the status of women, noting that women's experiences and treatment were based on their social location. Location...location...location.

In the ancient Greco-Roman world the status and power of women varied considerably, being influenced by such factors as class and location.

Nevertheless, treating women as inferior was an “ethical issue” during this period as well as an issue within the Christian community.

The gospel of Luke was written to account for the “ethical integrity of the Christian community and to account for the relative paucity of treatment of the development of the early church, of its problems, and of the lives of the apostles.” It was written to give the early church direction.

The status and role of women in the Church, the issue of women’s rights, was a highly charged one. Why was this a highly charged issue? There may have been a number of women within the Christian community who were schooled in scripture. Gospel listeners of scripture in the church may have been both men and women.

It would have been imperative to have women within the gospel who modeled the role of Christian women, setting an example for women in the first century Christian church. The gospel of Luke emphasizes the role of women. “Luke contains more stories about women than any other gospel.”

A range of theologians has spoken about varying perspectives in regards to the role of women in the Luke scriptures.

Though some argue that Luke's gospel shares a free liberated stance towards women, others note that there is still a patriarchal framework that does not equally include women.

Throughout the gospel of Luke a rhetorical-structural device is used, paralleling the role of men and women in the text. "Luke's rhetorical-structural device is the use of thematically related or contrasting recitals and sayings, either juxtaposed or distributed in his narrative. Doublets or triads are most frequent." If there is a story about a man, expect a story about a woman to follow...

The pairing suggests a measure of equality between men and women that was unique during the time of Jesus.

This gender pairing could model "women and men standing together side by side as equals before God; equal in honor and grace, blessed with the same gifts and with the same responsibilities as Christian persons."

The parallel could also be used to clearly state the distinction between the two genders as it related to roles within the Christian church.

Parallel accounts in Luke are shown with Mary and Zechariah, Anna and Simeon, the Galilean women, and the 12 disciples. Though the "Lukan author

does not totally reject the patriarchal framework of his or her culture, Luke does present a transformed vision which incorporates women in various ministerial roles.”

Mary, Anna, and the Galilean women serve as examples.

Luke 1: 46-55 Mary’s Song of Praise And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever (NRSV).’ Can you hear Kathy Mack singing it? I can!

In Luke 1: 46-55 Mary sets an example, especially for women, for believers to praise God.

These verses are connected to a parallel account within the text. “In the first chapter of this gospel,

Luke pairs off and contrasts the elderly Zechariah, father to be of John the Baptist, with the young maiden Mary, mother to be of Jesus.

While Zechariah hesitated to doubt at hearing the angel's good news, Mary permits the creative message of God to take life within her. Both the man and the woman were afraid upon receiving the angel's message. The woman, however, said 'yes' and gave life."

Mary works through her fear, and her strong faith in God allows her to overcome this fear. She sings a song of praise, celebrating what God has done.

"Mary's song is a celebration. She focuses on the effect of God's actions on her personal life. Her focus then broadens to God's actions for all those who fear God. As such, God's action in the life of Mary reflects God's action in the life of God's people. Her individual song of praise becomes a communal theme that celebrates reversals in society.

She praises the God who brings down the powerful and raises the lowly, who fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty."

The Magnificat also has Old Testament connections. It is compared to the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15: 20-21, where Moses' sister sings and

leads the song of praise after the escape from the Egyptians. “Both women speak prophetically, celebrating what God has done for them personally, and bearing witness.”

Mary’s song may also be aligned with the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2: 1-10.14 Mary is aligned with memorable women in the Old Testament biblical tradition. This connection to women in the Old Testament could be very significant for the early Christian church in understanding the importance of Mary as well as that of other women within the early Christian church.

Within the Magnificat, Mary acts as “praise-r,” while also modeling an example of faith in God for women and men in the church.

Luke 2: 36-38 Jesus is Presented in the Temple:

“Anna, A Prophet-ess”

There was also a “prophetess,” Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (NRSV). In

Luke 2: 36-38 Anna, as prophet, is presented as a major participant in the presentation of the baby Jesus at the temple.

Anna and Simeon (Luke 2: 25-35) are one of the gender pair parallels within the Lukan narrative.

Both are portrayed as faithful and inspired.

Simeon is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and Anna, as prophet, is inspired by God.

After Circumcision and Naming, Mary and Joseph took Christ up to Jerusalem to be offered to God.

Simeon and the Holy Spirit blessed God and the Christ Child. Anna, the Prophetess, sees the Messiah and confirms him. She is presented as an outstanding model of what it means to be an Israelite who is faithful.

Anna is singled out as a proclaim-er of salvation, giving thanks to God speaking about the redemption of Jerusalem. Anna's credentials are not to be overlooked.

She also sets a powerful example for women within the early Christian church. "Her advanced years make her a reliable figure of wisdom and maturity. Living with her husband seven years makes her an ideal wife."

Worshipping at the temple night and day with fasting and prayer makes her a model Christian whom actually practices spiritual disciplines that could be connected to discipleship. She is the ideal believer who can be linked to a set of women, including Mary, who are “liberative and lifegiving.”

No bra burning, yet!

Anna was not identified only as the poor and oppressed widow, one of what may have been a prevalent marginalized group during the time Luke was written.

Rather, she is seen as Anna the widow who ministers to them. Within the gospel of Luke there are numerous mentions of widows. The “Lukan incidents of widows may reflect the growing numbers and importance of widows in the ministry of the church during the first century.

“Consecrated widows” whose roles included fasting, prayer, making clothes, and doing good works, were important.

Anna was the prototype for such women. Luke 8: 1-3 The Ministering Galilean Women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna accompany Jesus soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with

him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them* out of their resources (NRSV).

In Luke 8: 1-3 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna are mentioned.

Jesus had cured some of the women of their evil spirits and infirmities, which lead them to support the mission. These women and others were recipients of Jesus' mercy who put their faith in action by supporting Jesus' ministry with their resources. Though there is not one direct parallel with this text, the Galilean women could be paralleled with the three male disciples in the inner circle of men closest to Jesus. This inner circle included: Peter, James, and John.

During the time of Jesus' ministry there was a need for resources. The women shared their time and talent through providing meals and clothes and other needed domestic services. The traditional roles they played were seen as a form of ministry being performed for Jesus and for the Christian mission.

These women might have also shared their financial resources to support Jesus and ministry. Many

scholars today do indeed note that the women's support was financial. Within the biblical text the word 'hyparchonton' is used. This word, in Luke and Acts, is affiliated with resources, possessions, property, money, or goods.

However, there is the question of women's ability to have their own money and property independent from a man during the first century, when patriarchy was dominant.

In using their financial resources they would have stepped from the traditional role of women. "Some women did inherit money, worked a job, and or had their own business and money."

These women may have also been single or widowed.

Nevertheless, they still donated their resources to the ministry. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna are bearers of a distinctive message regarding women in the first century Christian church.

The Galilean women used their resources to support the ministry of Jesus Christ. In doing this they also acted as ministers serving Jesus and attending to the needs of others within the Christian community.

Limitations of Women in Luke

The gospel of Luke uses women as examples of Christians within the early Church.

Mary as praise-r, Anna as prophet-ess, and the Galilean women as ministers all reflect the Lukan writers' desire to emphasize the role of women within the early Christian church.

There are several parallels between the accounts of women and men in the Lukan text.

The stories of Mary and Zechariah, Anna and Simeon, and the Galilean women and the disciples model this. However, there are also some distinctions made within these same texts that actually separate men and women.

This is explicit when comparing Mary's Song of Praise (Luke 1: 46-55) to Zechariah's Praise and Prophecy (Luke 1: 67-80). There is no mention of Mary as prophet or the presence of the Holy Spirit. However, the text notes in Luke 1: 67, that "Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy." The stories parallel each other, but there is a clear distinction recognizing Mary as praise-r magnifying God and Zechariah as prophet filled with the Holy Spirit.

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“There is the voice of the Lukan narrator.

Her words are not recorded and consequently her action has not made sufficient impact to be recognized.” Luke 2: 38 notes, “At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

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Anna has no audience other than the reader.

This interpretation of this Lukan text could assume, “a private, quiet stance for women in the Greco Roman world. Though there is not an explicit

parallel account with the three ministering Galilean women in Luke 8: 1-3, they are sometimes compared to the male disciples of Jesus: Peter, James, and John.

Comparison is made, however, there are some distinctions that does not focus on equality of the two genders. In Luke 9: 1-2 Jesus called the twelve disciples together and gave them power over all demons. The male disciples were sent to mission and to preach the word.

Women and male disciples had differing roles in the mission of Jesus.

“Unlike the twelve there was no call for the ministering Galilean women to become disciples or of them being sent on mission. Neither did they have access to the public ministry preaching the word. The women gave monetary support out of thanks and also gave other personal gifts to the ministry of Jesus Christ. The women may have also been cooking, cleaning, and sharing other labors behind the scenes to support Jesus and the disciples.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Luke does give voice to women in the gospel. The gospel of Luke portrays women as examples in the early church.

Mary as praise-r of God, Anna as prophet-ess, and the ministering Galilean women all set an example of the ministerial leadership qualities that women have within this gospel and the church.

Through parallel accounts with male's Luke also makes it clear that men and women have distinct roles and are given different gifts concerning ministry within the first century church. These distinctions can be limiting for women seeking to engage in public ministries. T

his gospel was written for the first century church...not the 21st century church!!! Some churches need to wake up!

However, Luke may very well be speaking to the Christian church today through the scriptures. It is imperative to acknowledge that both men and women have ministerial abilities.

The challenge comes in faith communities understanding of whether men and women are to engage in ministerial leadership equally. This was a struggle for the Christian church in the first century to understand.

Over 2000 years later this is still an issue area that churches seek to understand and to deal with.

Women Should Minister!

Concluding Remarks

I have thought long and hard – about what to say – and how best to summarize the gospel of Luke, from my humble pastoral position. Know that it is ok to disagree with me. This is just one man’s opinion.

Luke is the longest of our gospel narratives. It is also the furthest advanced theologically of the Synoptics. It is also the furthest removed from the historical events of which the author is writing. The author is not an eye witness. Nor does he seek out an eye witness that we know of... All of that matters to me. He writes obviously to a Gentile audience that much is pretty clear. He does highlight some areas of concern and of passion.

There can be no doubt that the author has care and concern for the poor and the disenfranchised. For whatever reason the author is fascinated with the Temple and all things Jerusalem... Prayer is important for him, as is the Holy Spirit. He is also the gospel writer of gender equality. The author is really a head of his time.

His writing as a whole – Luke/Acts is about “salvation history.” If one is to be saved this is the route to take. According to the author there is no other name that saves – in heaven or on earth. Jesus Christ is the Son

of God. He is the Savior of the world. He is the savior of the disenfranchised. God loves those who struggle in this life. God is the chief cheerleader of the underdog.

For those that love statistics and all things mathematical...get this...a mathematical comparison shows that 97 % of Mark's gospel is found or contained in the Gospel according to Matthew. When it comes to Luke - 88 % of Mark's gospel is found in Luke. It is an interesting statistic. And you understand, this is at the heart of the "Synoptic Problem." (Which gospel was written first?)

Just throwing another one out there- when it comes to verses and the number of words written - Mark has 661 verses and 11,025 words. Matthew has 1068 verses and 18,293 words. By the time we get to Luke's gospel, the author uses 19, 376 words and 1149 verses. Again interesting. You do the math, as to what this means to you.

Luke is verbose, Mark not so much.

We know that before the evangelists took keyboard in hand – there was a history of "oral tradition" that not only preceded the writing of the gospels, but also continued to exist simultaneously with the gospel accounts.

Oral tradition continued to live on...stories continued to exist...probably well into the fourth century and beyond.

To set himself apart, the author of the third canonical gospel says that his intention is to write “an orderly account.” I find this humorous. He really is putting down the first two gospel writers....and at the same time, attempting to place his work in a different light.

This third gospel has been called the most historical account of the three. I seriously doubt that and call that statement into question.

If it is such a historical account and so Temple based, why doesn't the author clearly state the fall of Jerusalem that happened at the hands of the Romans, as predicted by Jesus...decades earlier? Why isn't he clear on this? This event sent Jews and Christians alike scrambling and fleeing the holy city...and yet, this “historian” makes no clear mention of it.

I would also question his timeline when he compared to Mark's gospel – given the fact that he is writing decades later.

Because we know that each author writes with his own purposes in mind, writing for a specific religious community – in a specific geographical location – how does this then effect the writing as a whole?

I am thinking “yellow journalism...”

Their viewpoint, their axes to grind...

Their specific slant...

Their historical experience at the time of their writing.

Again, I want answers...I want to know how it alters or changes their text.

There is also the whole “Marian Discussion.”

I will be the first to admit, that when first written the Gospel of Mark came up wanting. Not only was he extremely harsh on the disciples, but there were gaps of time, that people wanted filled in.

Who was this Jesus? Where did he hail from? Who were his people? What did his family think of this itinerant preacher-healer-miracle worker? Mark had no answer for these and other questions.

Matthew took up the challenge. Matthew used the traditions and oral traditions that were already in existence.

But the author of the third gospel adds even more to the infancy narratives. It is from Luke that we have the stories of the John the Baptizer’s parents: Zechariah and Elizabeth. It is from this evangelist that we the announcement of the birth of Jesus, and

another genealogy offered to us, the Visitation by Mary to her cousin, Elizabeth, the Magnificat (as sung by Mary), Zechariah's prophecy, the Shepherds and the Angelophany, the Naming of Jesus, the presentation of Jesus at the Temple...his circumcision...the return to Nazareth and Jesus in the Temple at age 12 for his Bar Mitzvah.

The third gospel fills in a lot of blanks or wholes...but where does this information come from? It is different than the traditions used by Matthew. Does tradition take on a negative life all of its own? Where does these narratives come from then? Enter Mary, Mother of our Lord. Does she fill in the blanks? This too becomes a part of the ever-growing tradition. These are stories that only a mother, present could relate to the evangelist...

So, my fellow students and seekers of truth...do we attribute these stories to the Virgin Mary as some would have us to believe – or do we attribute them to some hitherto unknown tradition or perhaps to the author's own private sources...????

Again, you decide...

Let me speak about tradition...tradition played a huge role in the life of the early church. Tradition still has its role to play. And perhaps it always will.

It is said that a tradition is a [belief](#) or behavior - passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning - or - special significance with origins in the past.

Traditions can persist and evolve for thousands of years—the word "tradition" itself derives from the [Latin](#) *tradere* or *traderer* literally meaning to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping.

While it is commonly assumed that traditions have ancient history, many traditions have been invented on purpose, whether that be political or cultural, or religious over short periods of time.

The concept of tradition, as the notion of holding on to a previous time, is also found in political and philosophical discourse.

A number of factors can exacerbate the [loss of tradition](#), including industrialization, [globalization](#), and the assimilation or [marginalization](#) of specific cultural groups.

In response to this, tradition-preservation attempts have now been started in many countries around the world, focusing on aspects such as traditional languages.

Tradition is usually contrasted with the goal of [modernity](#) and should be differentiated from customs, conventions, laws, norms, routines, rules and similar concepts.

When I think of tradition, I think about one person whose death is attributed to differing countries...and

differing manners of death. Each has its own tradition and is adhered to, by someone.

The question is do we believe all traditions to be true and to be based in truth? Is there a little bit of truth in most traditions? What is the difference between legends and tradition? Do legends become traditions?

I have never believed that Mary, Mother of our Lord aided the third evangelist in filling in some of the blanks in the previously written gospels.

For me, it is too far of a stretch. Had this been the case, the Mother of our Lord would have certainly been given more acknowledgement.

The real value of the third gospel – is its value to the church...and to faith. People love Luke. People embrace this writing. It did what it was supposed to do, it filled in some of the blanks, it answered some if not, many of the questions. The church has embraced the parables of the third gospel and its reported author...almost without question...

For some people the third gospel is by far the best. It is the cream of synoptics.

One last time, what do you think?