

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

Luke

Luke, the third Gospel, reports the news of Jesus Christ more like Matthew and Mark, less like John. Its writer was Paul's missionary companion and a beloved physician, Luke — not among the twelve apostles. After careful research, he wrote this Gospel and Acts primarily to one person, Theophilus (1:1-4; Acts 1:1; Col. 4:14).

Luke's 24 chapters make the New Testament's longest book, though both Matthew and Acts have more chapters (28).

Comparing the Gospels, Matthew reveals the Hebrew Messiah and appeals to Jewish readers; Mark tells of a kingly Christ and appeals to Romans; Luke, of an ideal human Jesus, appealing to Greeks; and John, of the divine Son of God, appealing to Christians.

Characteristics of the third Gospel

- It reveals the vocabulary (266 words are not found elsewhere in the New Testament) and the concerns (physical and medical terms) of a trained author.
- It shows the universal and human Jesus, whose salvation message is not for Jews alone but for Samaritans and other Gentiles — all the sons (and daughters!) of Adam.
- Despite its broad appeal, there is a Jewish-ness about Luke. It begins and ends in the temple (1:8, 9; 24:52, 53), and 31 references are made to Jerusalem — nearly as many as the other Gospels combined (9:51, 53; 13:22, 33, 34; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28, etc.).
- It scatters major sayings of Christ through the text. Luke 6:20-49, for example, continues in chapters 11, 12 to approximate Matthew's fuller Sermon on the Mount.
- It records more parables than any other Gospel.
- It focuses on women: John's mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus' mother, Mary (chs.

- 1, 2); aged Anna in the temple (2:36-38); widow of Nain (7:11-17); sinful woman in Simon's house (7:37-50); Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, etc. (8:2, 3); Mary and Martha (10:38-42); 18-year bowed lady (13:11-17); women in parables (15:8-10; 18:1-8); poor, generous widow (21:1-4); weeping women (23:27ff); and women at the tomb (23:55-24:10, 22).
- It offers help for the poor, warnings for the rich (1:53; 4:18; 6:20, 24, 30; 7:22; 12:13-21; 14:11-13, 21; 16:19ff).
- It declares hope for the outcast and sinner (5:30; 7:37-50; 12:13-21; 15:1; 16:1-12; 18:1-14).
- It emphasizes the Holy Spirit right from the start (1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12; 24:49).
- It gives prominence to praise and prayer (1:46-55, 67-79; 2:13, 14, 29-32; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 13; 9:18; 11:1-13).
- It underscores the suffering and death of Christ (9:31, 51; 12:50; 13:32; 17:25; 18:31-33; chs. 22, 23; 24:7, 26, 46).

Gospel facts recorded only in Luke

- announcement, conception, and birth of John the Baptist to the priest Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth; the hill country visit of the two expectant women, Mary and Elizabeth (1:5-80)
- Christ's birth in the manger, His visit by the shepherds and temple presentation; at age 12, the boy Jesus choosing His Father's business (2:1-52)
- a lineage of Jesus (3:23-38) that varies from Matthew's account
- Jesus' inaugural sermon and near-death in Nazareth (4:16-30)
- Jesus' last journey toward Jerusalem and the fate that awaited Him there, more prominent (starting with 9:51); Jesus wept over Jerusalem (19:41-44).
- several of Jesus' parables, including two of the Bible's best-known: the good Samaritan (10:25-37) and the prodigal son (15:11-32). Also, the rich fool (12:16-21); invitations and excuses (14:7-24); unjust steward (16:1-13); rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31); unjust judge (18:1-8); Pharisee and publican (18:9-14)
- healing of ten lepers (17:11-19)
- an Olivet discourse in which Jesus' prophetic words about the abomination of desolation clearly anticipate the Roman conquest (A.D. 70) and the scattering of the Jewish people (21:5-36)
- Jesus' trial appearance before King Herod (23:6-11)
- Jesus' resurrection appearance on the Emmaus road (24:13-33)
- the ascension of Christ (24:50, 51), also found in Acts 1

Luke in a sentence: Jesus the Christ was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, baptized by John in the Jordan, and tempted in the desert; began His ministry with opposition in Nazareth, ministered to multitudes across Galilee, then set His face toward Jerusalem where He suffered, died, rose again, and ascended back to heaven.