

“The Beautiful Book” Luke 1:1-4

Introduction- The gospel according to Luke has been called *the loveliest book in the world*. Many view Luke as *the best life of Christ of written*. It certainly has won my affection.

The author of this third gospel is Luke, called by Paul in Colossians 4:14, “the beloved physician.” He had the unique distinction of being the only New Testament writer who was a Gentile. He was a traveling companion of Paul. He also wrote the book of Acts. Both his gospel and Acts were addressed to Theophilus, called here in Luke 1:3, “most excellent Theophilus.”

Luke stayed with Paul during his second imprisonment; and was with the apostle till the time of his martyrdom. Paul wrote to Timothy, II Tim. 4:11, “only Luke is with me.” It’s possible that Luke wrote his gospel during Paul’s two year imprisonment at Caesarea, A.D. 56-58. It’s the longest of the gospels, 50% of its content is found in no other gospel.

Luke has given us an invaluable gift, it’s the most extensive and varied of the gospels, as well as the most artistically constructed, and most beautifully written.

Why is Luke the beautiful book?

1. The Skill of a Historian (vv. 1-4)

Luke opens his gospel with a preface that is one single sentence and is considered to be the best styled Greek in the New Testament. Charles Erdman called it “a perfect gem of Greek art.” It is written in the polished style of a Greek literary classic.

Luke was saying that what he was writing is historically true and must not be ignored.

Four things Paul tells us in his preface:

1. He names the subject (vs. 2). The “word,” it’s Jesus (John 1:1); it’s “logos.” It’s the message of the gospel embodied in the words, deeds, and person of Jesus Christ.

2. He gives us the sources of his information (vv. 1-2). Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

3. He reveals his method (vs. 3). From the very first, literally “from above”.

4. He reveal his purpose (vs. 4). So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Luke wanted Theophilus to have a certainty. That’s the story about Jesus is true and trustworthy. So to us, the story of Jesus in the gospels is true. It’s based on history. So “good news,” not “good views!” What a motivation to study the gospel of Luke.

2. The Care of a Physician.

Luke was a medical doctor; but he not only cared for the body, he also cared for the soul! He was a lover of people.

A. He delighted in mentioning individuals. *e.g.* Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Zacchaeus and Cleopas.

B. He elevates the role of women. He referred to women 43 times; in Matt. & Mark together, 49 times. Just to name a few:

- The birth of Jesus from Mary’s perspective.
- The genealogy through Mary.
- Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.
- Anna
- The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law.
- The raising of the widow’s son at Nain.
- The forgiveness of the sinful woman who washed Jesus’ feet with tears.
- Mary and Martha
- The widow’s two mites.
- The woman at the cross.
- The post resurrection reports to woman.

C. We see Luke’s heart for babies and children.

D. Luke’s care for the poor.

- Jesus was born in a stable. He portrays Jesus as coming to preach the gospel to the poor and blessing the poor. The shepherds were poor. Joseph and Mary made an offering of the poor at Jesus’ birth. He also repeatedly warned about the dangers of riches. The parables he recorded repeatedly

return to these themes: the rich fool, the unjust steward, the rich man who ignored the beggar Lazarus, the rich young ruler, the widow's mite.

It's the gospel of compassion.

3. The Songs of a Musician

Luke's gospel is a singing gospel.

- 1. The song of Elizabeth when her infant jumped within her womb at the coming of Mary (1:39-45).**
- 2. Mary's "magnificent" in response to the song of Elizabeth (1:45-55).**
- 3. "The Benedictus," the song of Zacharias at the birth of John (1:67-79).**
- 4. The song of the angels rejoicing over the birth of Jesus (2:13-14).**
- 5. The song of praise from Simeon upon seeing the Messiah (2:28-32).**

Also, the joy of Zacchaeus, salvation. The joy at finding the lost sheep coin, son. The joy in heaven over one lost sinner is found. The gospel ends 24:52-53, "*And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And were praising and blessing God.*"

Rejoice is found in Luke more than any other book in the New Testament. Christ brings joy and a new song into your heart.

Col. 3:16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" Do you have a song of joy?

4. The Insight of a Theologian.

1. The gospel of prayer.

- Luke emphasizes the prayer life of Jesus as a mark of His humanity.
- At His Baptism.
- After he preached and healed the sick.
- Before he selected the twelve apostles.
- At his transfiguration.

- Three times in Gethsemane.
- On the cross to the Father.
- He taught the disciples a model of prayer.
- He taught them in parables about prayer.

2. The gospel of parables (chp. 9:51-18:14).

Of the 22 parables in Luke, 17 are found no were else!

- Two debtors.
- The good Samaritan.
- The friend asking for bread at midnight.
- The rich fool and his barns.
- The watchful servants.
- The barren fig tree.
- The chief seats at the wedding feast.
- The great supper and the excuses for not attending.
- The builder who did not finish.
- The king who sought counsel.
- The lost coin.
- The prodigal son.
- The clever steward.
- The unprofitable servants.
- The widow and the judge.
- The Pharisee and the publican.
- The servants and the pounds.

3. The gospel of the Holy Spirit.

Mary was overshadowed by the Spirit to conceive (1:35). Elizabeth (1:41), Zacharias (1:67), and Simeon (2:25) were filled with the Spirit in order to prophesy. John the Baptist was providentially prepared for his task as the messianic forerunner by the Spirit (1:15). The Spirit came upon Jesus at the baptism (3:22), led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (4:1), and empowered Jesus for His preaching and healing ministries (4:18-19). After His resurrection, Jesus predicted that the apostles would carry out the Great Commission in the power of the Spirit (24:49). Luke's second book, The Acts, is a vivid chronicle of this accomplishment.

4. The gospel of a universal salvation.

The offer of salvation for all is more prominent in Luke than in any other gospel.

Illus.: The angels message at the birth of Christ. Luke 2:10-11.

Only in Luke 7, the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, the story of Zacchaeus, the sinful tax collector. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The story of the penitent thief on the cross. The story of the Prodigal Son and the loving father.

The key verse of Luke's gospel:

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost," 19:10.

Luke is a beautiful book!

- 1. Luke the historian will make us certain about the truth of Jesus.**
- 2. Luke the physician will help us understand the love and compassion of Jesus.**
- 3. Luke the musician will set your heart to singing, rejoicing in Jesus.**
- 4. Luke the theologian will point you to salvation found alone in Jesus.**

May we come to love more deeply our beautiful Savior as we see Him together on the pages of this beautiful book.