

“The Beautiful Book”

Luke 1:1-4

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I. Introduction

- A. The gospel according to Luke has been called “the loveliest book in the world.”
 - 1. Many view Luke as the best life of Christ ever written.
 - a) It certainly has won my affection!
- B. Why four gospels?
 - 1. Matthew- “Behold the King” (Jews)
 - 2. Mark- “Behold the Servant” (Romans)
 - 3. John- “Behold Your God” (Universal)
 - 4. Luke- “Behold the Man” (Greeks)
- C. The Gospel of Luke is the gospel of the man who was perfection incarnate. The only truly perfect man, the only sinless man; the “Son of Man” and “Son of God.” The God Man, Jesus Christ.
 - 1. The author of this third gospel is Luke, called by Paul in Colossians 4:14 “the beloved physician.”
 - 2. He has the unique distinction of being the only New Testament writer who was a Gentile.
 - 3. He was a traveling companion of Paul.
 - 4. He also wrote the book of Acts.
 - 5. Both Luke’s gospel and Acts were addressed to Theophilus, called here in verse 3 “most excellent Theophilus.”
- D. When did Luke write his gospel?
 - 1. It’s possible and highly probable that Luke wrote his gospel during Paul’s two-year imprisonment at Caesarea (AD 56-58).
 - 2. Luke was with Paul until the time of Paul’s martyrdom.
 - a) “Only Luke is with me” (2 Timothy 4:11).
- E. Luke is the longest of the gospels, and 50% of its content is found in no other gospel.
 - 1. In this gospel, Luke has given us an invaluable gift.
 - 2. It’s the most artistically constructed and most beautifully written gospel.
 - 3. It is truly “The Beautiful Book.”
- F. Four reasons Luke’s gospel is “The Beautiful Book.”

II. It was written with “the skill of a historian”

- A. Luke opens his gospel with a preface (Luke 1:1-4).
 - 1. It is considered to be the best-styled Greek in the New Testament. It’s one long sentence in the Greek.
 - 2. Charles Erdman called it “a perfect gem of Greek art.”
- B. It is written in the polished style of a Greek literary classic.
 - 1. Luke was saying that what he was writing was historically true and must not be ignored.
- C. Note four things the historian tells us in his preface:
 - 1. He gives us the source of his information (Luke 1:1-4)

- a) “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” (Luke 1:1-2 NIV).
- 2. He names his subject
 - a) “Ministers of the word” (Luke 1:2)
 - b) The “ministers” or “servants”
 - c) The Greek word “logos” is the message of the gospel embodied in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- 3. He reveals his method (Luke 1:3)
 - a) The nature of “divine inspiration of Scripture”
 - b) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - c) “knowing this first, that...” (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- 4. He reveals his purpose (Luke 1:4)
 - a) Luke wanted Theophilus (and us) to have certainty that the story of Jesus is true and trustworthy.
 - b) Do you have certainty?
 - 1) That the Bible is true? Trustworthy?
 - 2) That Jesus really is the Savior from Heaven?
 - 3) That Jesus died and rose for you?
 - 4) That you are His child and forgiven?

III. The Gospel of Luke was written with “the care of a physician”

- A. Luke was a medical doctor and showed his love and care for people.
- B. He delighted in mentioning individuals the other gospels left out.
 - 1. Illustration- Zechariah and Elizabeth (parents of John the Baptist); Simeon, Anna, Zacchaeus, the repentant thief
- C. He elevated the role of women.
 - 1. He mentions women in his gospel 43 times! Women are only mentioned in Matthew and Mark 49 times combined.
 - 2. Illustration- The birth of Jesus is told from Mary’s perspective.
 - a) Christ’s genealogy through Mary
 - b) Elizabeth- the mother of John the Baptist
 - c) Anna
 - d) The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law
 - e) The raising of the widow’s son at Nain
 - f) The forgiveness of the sinful woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears
 - g) Mary and Martha
 - h) The widow with two mites
 - i) The woman at the cross
 - j) The post-resurrection reports from women
- D. He cares for the poor
 - 1. Illustration- Jesus born in a stable (Luke 2)
 - 2. Jesus preached to the poor
 - 3. Jesus’ warnings about riches
 - 4. Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus
 - 5. Jesus’ compassion for the poor and needy is a pattern for us

6. He is the great, compassionate Physician

IV. It's a beautiful book because it was written with "the songs of a musician"

- A. Luke's gospel is a "singing gospel."
 1. Illustration- The Song of Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)
 - a) Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)
 - b) The Benedictus (the song of Zacharias at the birth of John (Luke 1:67-79)
 - c) The angels sang at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13-14)
 - d) Simeon's song of praise when he saw the Messiah (Luke 2:28-32)
 - e) The gospel ends, "And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen" (Luke 24:52-53).
- B. The word "rejoice" is found in Luke more than in any other book in the New Testament.
 1. Jesus sets your heart to sing!
 2. Luke wrote with:
 3. The skill of a historian
 4. The care of a physician
 5. The songs of a musician
 6. He also wrote with the "insight of a theologian"

V. It's a beautiful book because it was written with "the insight of a theologian"

- A. Luke is the gospel of prayer
 1. Luke emphasizes the prayer life of Jesus as a mark of His humanity.
 2. Illustration- At his baptism (Luke 3:21)
 3. After He preached and healed the sick (Luke 5:16)
 4. Before He selected the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12,13)
 5. At His transfiguration (Luke 9:29)
 6. Three times in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46)
 7. On the cross to the Father (Luke 23:34,46)
 8. He taught His disciples a model prayer (Luke 11:1-4)
 9. He taught them in parables about prayer (Luke 18)
- B. The gospel of the parables (Luke 9:51, Luke 18:14)
 1. Of the twenty-two parables in Luke, seventeen are found nowhere else.
 - a) The two debtors (Luke 7:41-43), the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), the friend asking for bread at midnight (Luke 11:5-8), the rich fool and his barns (Luke 12:16-21), the watchful servants (Luke 12:35-48), the barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9), the chief seats at the wedding feast (Luke 14:7-11), the great supper and the excuses for not attending (Luke 14:15-24), the builder who did not finish (Luke 14:28-30), the king who sought counsel (Luke 14:31-32), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the clever steward (Luke 16:1-13), the unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10), the widow and the judge (Luke 18:1-8), the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14), and the servants and the pounds (Luke 19:11-27).

C. The gospel of the Holy Spirit

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

D. The gospel of a universal salvation

1. The offer of salvation for all is more prominent in Luke than in any other gospel.
2. Illustration- The angels' message at the birth of Christ
3. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings and great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

E. Only in Luke:

1. The story of Zacchaeus
2. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican
 - a) "He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18:9).
3. The story of the penitent thief on the cross (Luke 23:43)
4. The story of the prodigal son and the loving father (Luke 15)
5. The key verse of Luke's gospel- "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10).

VI. Conclusion

A. 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 and rejoicing in Jesus.
4. Luke the theologian will point you to salvation found in Jesus alone.

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