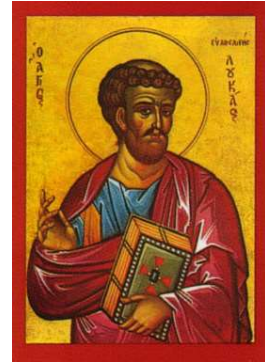


St Luke

Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done among us. They wrote what we had been told the ones who were there in the beginning and saw what happened. So I made a careful study of everything and then decided to write and tell you exactly what took place. Honorable Theophilus, I have done this to let you know the truth about what you have heard. Luke 1: 1-4



by

Background

Luke may have written only two of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament but the scope of his work covers more than twenty-seven percent of it's words (in Greek). His two-volume collection includes the longest Gospel and the most comprehensive history of the early Christian church. "Luke" and "Acts" are both addressed to "Theophilus" (which means 'God-lover') who may have been a Roman nobleman. One early tradition maintains Theophilus was Caesar's cousin.

There is a certain irony that the book of Acts contains great historical information but we are uncertain about many of the details about Luke the person:

- Early church writings state that Luke was born a slave in Antioch, Syria. Wealthy families (Theophilus?) commonly sent favored slaves to medical school for training. Occasionally these slaves would be rewarded freedom for outstanding service. There is little doubt that Luke was an extremely gifted person. Paul refers to Luke as "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14).
- We're not certain how Luke and Paul met and later became great partners in ministry. One interesting possibility is that there was a large university with a medical school in Tarsus. It was considered one of the best in the world. Luke could have met Paul in his hometown of Tarsus. Paul may have sought out his old classmate and later shared the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Luke is mentioned by name in just three other books (Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 1:24). Most scholars include him in the famous "we" sections (Acts 16:10-17; Acts 20:5-15; Acts 27:1-37; Acts 28:1-14),

which describe his adventures with Paul on the second and third missionary journeys. These passages may have been from his very own spiritual journal.

- An early church leader, Irenaeus, maintained that Luke wrote Paul's gospel. This means that Luke performed the same literary partnership that Mark did for Peter. If true, Peter and Paul, the two giants of the Christian faith, needed help from others to tell their Gospel stories.

The Gospel of Luke and book of Acts provide us with several clues about their author:

1. **Multicultural**. Church tradition indicates Luke was a Gentile. Paul supports this by grouping Luke's name with other known Gentiles (Colossians 4). As a Gentile, Luke had a special openness to accepting people from different cultures. The early church was predominantly led by Jews. Luke was an outsider who became a significant leader in the church. Luke saw the message of Christ was meant for all people of all races of all nationalities. He saw a savior who crosses all boundaries to bring salvation to the whole world.
2. **Sensitive**. Luke emphasized how Jesus cared for the overlooked and oppressed:
 - Jesus showed concern for children who were rejected or neglected.
 - Women were treated with tenderness, compassion, and great respect. The women are presented as key supporters of the disciples.
 - Luke's Gospel proclaims "Blessed are the poor" and "blessed are you that hunger now." Poverty was a virtue.
3. **Talented writer**. The Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts are considered amongst the best-written books of the Bible. The use of language is outstanding, the historical references invaluable. Luke was a master storyteller and historian. His parables and stories are filled with vivid and meaningful details. He demonstrates remarkable knowledge of the Old Testament.
4. **Spiritual**. Certain parables and details are unique to Luke's gospel. The Prodigal son, the Good Samaritan, Jesus' conversation with the penitent thief on the cross, Dives and Lazarus, Zacchaeus, and others provide

meaningful examples of God's amazing grace. Luke also places a special emphasis on prayer. Jesus prayed at his baptism, at the transfiguration, and when he called the disciples. Jesus taught us how to pray with the Lord's Prayer used by Christians the world over.

5. **Artist.** There is a divine poetry at work in the recorded hymns of Zechariah: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel", Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord", and Simeon: "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen the glory of your salvation."

Reflections

Six hundred years ago the concept of a "Renaissance man" developed. Over time this phrase has lost its original meaning. It was meant to be someone who was good at everything: physical, spiritual, intellectual, and artistic. Luke was the original "Renaissance man."

Michelangelo is acknowledged as history's greatest artist. He painted both Major and Minor Prophets in his Sistine Chapel masterpiece. Angels are speaking to both but only the Major Prophets are listening. Prophets who do not listen are forever destined for the Minor League. Luke was someone who listened and then magnificently shared God's message.

Luke traveled thousands of miles to share the good news of Jesus Christ. The grace-filled gospel of Luke has been called the most beautiful book of the Bible. Luke as physician would have been one of the most learned persons of his time. The details and comprehensive scope of Luke and Acts are invaluable literary treasures.

Early church tradition maintains that Luke was also a remarkable painter whose works survived hundreds of years. He was credited with a beautiful painting of Mary, the mother of Jesus. This multifaceted man could paint beautiful pictures on canvas as well as in his writings.

Luke is known as the Patron Saint of artists, bachelors, bookbinders, brewers, butchers, doctors, glassmakers, glass workers, lace makers, notaries, painters, sculptors, stained glass workers and surgeons.

The name Luke means "bringer of light." His ministry and writings continue to bring light to our world. "To whom much is given, of him much is expected" (Luke 12: 48). Luke was a talented servant of God whose work continues to transform people's lives today.

St. Luke The Painter

*Give honour unto Luke Evangelist;
For he it was (the aged legends say)
Who first taught Art to fold her hands and pray.
Scarcely at once she dared to rend the mist
Of devious symbols: but soon having wist
How sky-breadth and field-silence and this day
Are symbols also in some deeper way,
She looked through these to God and was God's priest.*

*And if, past noon, her toil began to irk,
And she sought talismans, and turned in vain
To soulless self-reflections of man's skill,
Yet now, in this the twilight, she might still
Kneel in the latter grass to pray again,
Ere the night cometh and she may not work.
Dante Gabriel Rossetti 1881*

Strength Finders talent: Connectedness

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252197/connectedness-theme.aspx>

Luke had the special spiritual gift of "connectedness" which is demonstrated in his writings, life, and mannerisms. He helped influenced many with a spiritual Gospel. Luke cared about all God's children. He celebrated a unity amongst all God's children. The story of "The Prodigal" contains a message of forgiveness, love, and understanding. This talent is also known as "spirituality".

Luke is also part of the "relationship" domain. These are folks who have the gift of building lasting connections with others. I suspect they may experience overload sometimes with social media.

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252083/relationship-building-domain.aspx>

Enneagram connections: Four

Luke comes across as a Four. He is a gifted artist that comes across in his inclusion of songs and hymns. He also paints powerful verbal portraits of many key people in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. There is also a part of Luke that is sensitive enough to care for those who were often rejected in Jesus' time (Women, children, Gentiles, Samaritans, tax-collectors, sinners, you and I).

<https://cpenneagram.com/enneagram-type-four>

Enneagram is an ancient tool used to help us better understand each other. Don't know your Enneagram type? Check out <https://www.wepss.com/> (an assessment tool approved by American Psychological Association).

Questions

1. Presbyterian pastor George Duffield courageously dedicated himself to serving struggling congregations. What kind of strength does this hymn convey? What is the source of that power?

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day.
Ye that are brave now serve Him against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there. (1858)

2. If God only used perfect people then nothing would ever get done. Have you ever made a mistake in the faith? Did some help you? Can you help others?

3. Paul ultimately boasted about his weaknesses. How can our shortcomings strengthen our service in the kingdom?

All these materials are pre-publication portions of new book by Dr Wonhee Kang and Rev Dr Robert Driver-Bishop. We welcome your insights and suggestions to improve. These are not intended yet for publication or

distribution without prior permission. We are willing to share but ask you to respect this process encouraged by our publisher. Thank you!

Questions

1. Adelaide Pollard wanted to be a missionary but could not raise the funds on her own. She wrote this hymn as a fervent prayer. God's will was done. She raised the funds needed. What is God's way? How does God touch us? Heal us? Mold us?

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter,
I am the clay.

Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!

Power, all power, surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Savior divine. (1907)

2. It is important to keep a journal of your faith journey. How have Luke's writings benefited us? How can we benefit others? Write on!

3. PBPGINFWMY stands for "Please Be Patient God is Not Finished With Me Yet." Consider the highs and lows of your spiritual journey. Share them with others. Why is patience so important?

