

**Bible Synthesis IV**  
(Bible Survey)

**INTRODUCTION TO**  
**LUKE**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- Peter’s ministry was to the Jews, as Paul’s was to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7–10). Luke was brought under the influence of Paul, and many think that Mark was influenced by Peter. As Matthew wrote for the Jews, and Mark for the Romans, so Luke wrote for the Greeks, as we shall see.

(1) Luke is the most literary and beautiful of all the Gospels. Artists revel in this book. More pictures have been painted from Luke’s Gospel than from any of the others. Renan the skeptic (1823–1892) declared Luke to be “the most beautiful book in the world.” Though this man distorted the historical facts of the Gospels, he could not escape the beauty of the picture of Christ which Luke painted in this book.

(2) Distinctive Characteristics of Luke’s Gospel:

- 1. It makes much of praise and thanksgiving. It opens with Mary’s hymn of rejoicing (1:46–55), followed by the prophetic praise of Zacharias (1:67–80), and then the praise (not song) of the angels at His birth (2:8–14). Luke closes with the words, “praising and blessing God. Amen” (24:53).
- 2. It gives us the fullest account of the birth of Christ (the Christmas story, as many call it). How many have rejoiced as they read Luke’s account with its great delicacy, feeling, and human interest. People never tire of hearing or reading this wonderful story as Luke has presented it.
- 3. It makes frequent mention of the Holy Spirit — mentioned on 9 occasions in this Gospel.
- 4. Luke gives prominence to angels.
- 5. Women and children are also prominent in Luke.
  - 1. He tells us more than the other Gospels about Mary, mother of Jesus, and about Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist.
  - 2. He records much of the ministry of Jesus to women and of women to Jesus (See 7:46; 8:3, 42; 9:38; 10:38–42; 11:27; 23:27).
  - 3. Children are referred to more affectionately in Luke than in the other Gospels.
- 6. He uses medical terms and takes special interest in the sick.

## 2. AUTHOR

Luke is the author.

- (1) This is shown by a comparison of Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–3, which indicates the same author for the two books. That it was Luke is then indicated by the “we” sections of Acts (16:9–12; 20:5–21; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16) where he is a companion of Paul.
- (2) Tradition also accepts Luke as the writer. There has been no question as to Luke’s authorship and authority until recent times. According to Eusebius, Luke, the writer of this Gospel, was a native of Antioch in Syria.

## (3) The man Luke:

- 1. He was not one of the Twelve Apostles.
- 2. Luke was a Greek (or Hellenistic Jew). If this was so, he is the only Gentile writer of the New Testament books. However, contrast Romans 3:2, where we learn that “the oracles of God” were “committed” to the Jews. By “oracles” is meant “the words and utterances.”
- 3. He was a close associate of Paul (see Acts passages given above). He is also mentioned in Phile. 24 and II Tim. 4:11.
- 4. He was an educated man and a keen observer. He was called “the beloved physician” — Col. 4:14.
- 5. Both books which he authored (Luke and Acts) begin with a formal dedication in Graeco-Roman literary style.

**3. RECIPIENTS**

## (1) Addressed to Theophilus (“lover of God,” or “friend of God”) — Luke 1:3.

- 1. Theophilus was evidently a high official, because of the title, “most excellent” (Cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). [The name “Theophilus” possesses a meaning which can be applied to every believer. Thus, any “lover of God” can be assured that this most wonderful Gospel was also written to them.]
- 2. He was probably a Gentile because of the Greek name.
- 3. Nothing further is known about this man.

## (2) Luke wrote to the Greeks who were a cultured people who loved beauty. The Greeks possessed a wider culture than either the Jew or the Roman. They loved beauty, rhetoric, and philosophy.

## (3) Luke is the Gospel for the sinner. It brings out Christ’s compassionate love for man, in that He became a man in order to save man.

**4. DATE**

- (1) Date of writing — about 58 to 60 A.D. It was written before Acts, which was completed before Paul’s death. [Paul’s death has generally been set between A.D. 65 and 68.] It is believed that Luke wrote this book during the time Paul was in prison in Caesarea (See Acts 27:1 for the beginning of their trip to Rome).
- (2) Time covered — about 35 years — From the annunciation to Zacharias of John’s birth, to the ascension of Christ.

**5. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK**

- (1) To present an accurate account of the facts about the life of Christ (1:1–4).
- (2) To present Christ uniquely to the Greeks. In Luke we see God manifest in the flesh. He deals with the humanity of the Christ.
  - 1. In the moral perfection of His humanity — Notice Luke 1:35, “That holy thing which shall be born of thee” — Revealing his holy human nature. [Contrast our human nature — Isa. 64:6.]
    - As a boy, Jesus developed naturally — 2:40, 52
    - As a child, He was subject to Joseph and Mary — 2:51
    - Only Luke tells of His visit to the Temple when He was 12 years old — 2:41–50.

- As a Man, Christ toiled, wept, prayed, suffered —all this is strikingly human.
- 2. Luke’s genealogy of Christ goes back to Adam, the father of all mankind, while Matthew’s goes back to Abraham. Luke follows the line of David through Nathan to Mary (Luke 3:23–38), while Matthew traces from David through Solomon and the rejected Jeconiah (Matt. 1:11) to Joseph (Matt. 1:16).
- 3. As interested in men of all classes —As the One who came to seek and to save all, regardless of race or nationality — As compassionate toward the weak, the suffering, and the outcast — Only Luke tells of the Good Samaritan, the Publican, the prodigal, of Zacchaeus, of the thief on the cross.
- 4. Luke stresses Christ’s dependency — He is shown in prayer (3:12; 5:16; 6:12–13; 9:18, 28–29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39–46: 23:34, 46). Only Luke records two parables about prayer. He tells that Jesus had prayed especially for Peter (22:31–32). He is presented in the Gospels as praying 15 times — 11 of these are in Luke’s Gospel.
- 5. Luke alone shows Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem, or speaks of the bloody sweat in Gethsemane, or tells of Jesus’ mercy on the dying thief on the cross. He alone mentions the walk to Emmaus. He alone tells how Christ led His disciples out as far as Bethany and that as He lifted up His hands and blessed them, He was parted from them into heaven.

## **6. THEME**

The perfect Manhood of Christ [The perfect Humanity of Christ]

## **7. KEY PASSAGES**

Luke 19:10

## **8. KEY TERMS**

“Son of Man — 26 times

[This speaks of more than just His Humanity in contrast to His Deity (“Son of God”). It means that He is the perfect, ideal Man, the true representative of the whole human race.]

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**OUTLINE OF**  
**LUKE**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>— 1:1–4</b>
<b>1. Immediate Preparation for the Appearance Of Christ</b>	<b>— 1:5 – 2:52</b>
(1) Annunciation	— 1:5–56
(2) Birth of John the Baptist	— 1:57–80
(3) Birth, Infancy and Youth of Jesus	— 2:1–52
<b>2. Inauguration of Jesus’ Ministry</b>	<b>— 3:1 – 4:13</b>
(1) Ministry of John and Baptism of Jesus	— 3:1–22
(2) Genealogy of Christ	— 3:23–38
(3) Temptation of Jesus	— 4:1–13
<b>3. Christ’s Ministry in Galilee</b>	<b>— 4:14 – 9:50</b>
(1) Rejection at Nazareth	— 4:14–30
(2) Ministry in the City of Capernaum and Vicinity	— 4:31 – 6:11
(3) Appointment of Apostles and Sermon on the Mount	— 6:12–49
(4) Christ’s Ministry — One of Grace and Mercy	— 7:1 – 8:3
(5) Kingdom Parables	— 8:4–21
(6) Four Great Miracles	— 8:22–56
(7) Preaching Ministry of the Twelve	— 9:1–9
(8) The Feeding of 5,000	— 9:10–17
(9) Great Confession	— 9:18–22
(10) A Call for Sacrifice	— 9:21–27
(11) The Transfiguration	— 9:28–36
(12) The Healing of the Boy Possessed with a Demon	— 9:37–42
(13) Renewed Prediction of His Death	— 9:43–50
<b>4. Christ’s Ministry in Judea</b>	<b>— 9:51 – 19:27</b>
(1) Journey Toward Jerusalem	— 9:51–62
(2) Commission of the 70	— 10:1–24
(3) Discourses on Various Themes	— 10:25 – 15:32

- (4) Instruction on Various Subjects — 16:1 – 18:34
- (5) Visit at Jericho — 18:35 – 19:27

**5. Christ's Ministry in Jerusalem****— 19:28 – 24:53**

- (1) Triumphal Entry — 19:28–48
- (2) A day of Controversy — 20:1 – 21:4
- (3) The Olivet Discourse — 21:5–38
- (4) The Last Supper — 22:1–38
- (5) The Agony in Gethsemane — 22:39–46
- (6) The Betrayal and Arrest — 22:47–53
- (7) Christ on Trial — 22:54 – 23:25
  - 1. Before the High Priest — 22:54–71
  - 2. Before Pilate — 23:1–26
- (8) Crucifixion and Burial — 23:26–56
- (9) Open Tomb — 24:1–12
- (10) The Walk to Emmaus — 24:13–35
- (11) The appearance to Disciples in Jerusalem — 24:36–49
- (12) The Ascension — 24:50–53

