

# Luke

## Dear Theophilus.....

Luke 1:1-4

April 25, 2020

### Today

**Author:** Not named, but evidence points to a Gentile believer - Luke the Physician {see Acts 1:1 and Colossians 4:14}

**Audience:** Theophilus *"Beloved of God"* --- likely a wealthy Greek convert.

**Date:** 60-ish AD

Luke is the longest of the 4 Gospels {by words} and 60% of the book is unique:

- Events leading up to the births of both John the Baptist and Jesus {1-2}
- Jesus childhood {2:40-52}
- Luke's Genealogy is different from Matthews:
  - Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus {Matthew 1:2-16}.
  - Luke begins with Jesus and ends with Adam – son of God {Luke 3:23-38}.
- Jesus Journey to Jerusalem {9:51-19:44}
- Different slant on the destruction of the Temple {21:5-38}
- Jesus' post-resurrection activities {24:13-53}

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Dear Theophilus....

I have been doing a lot of research into the life of Jesus, including getting eyewitness accounts. I am writing it out for you so that your faith will be strengthened and you will see the Truth in the things you have been taught. Here are the highlights....

It was during the time of Herod the Great.... Zacharias was a priest. He and his wife, Elizabeth were righteous and followed all the commands of God. They were old and had no children. While Zacharias was performing his duties in the Temple, an angel of the Lord stood before him at the altar of incense. As you can imagine, Zacharias was afraid. The angel told him that Elizabeth would have a son and that his name would be John {see Luke 1:13-17}. Zacharias didn't believe him, which is understandable considering their ages, but Gabriel said the news was true and that because of unbelief, Zacharias would be unable to speak until the baby was born.... When Elizabeth was 6 months along, another special event happened in the town of Nazareth....

Mary was a young woman engaged to Joseph, the local carpenter. Gabriel appeared to her: *"Hail favored one. The Lord is with you."* Mary was terrified and wondered why in the world an angel would be talking to her.

- *The angel said, "Do not be afraid. You have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." {Luke 1:30-33}*

Mary wondered how this could be true since she was still a virgin, but Gabriel assured her it was true because she would become pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Then he shared the news that Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, was also pregnant – even though she was old – **"For nothing is impossible with God."** Mary accepted the news and Gabriel left.

Mary went to visit Elizabeth and when she walked into the room the baby leapt for joy {even though he wasn't born yet}. Elizabeth blessed Mary and she responded with a beautiful song {see Luke 1:46-55}.

3 months later Elizabeth gave birth to a son. True to Gabriel's word, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, Zacharias was able to talk and confirmed that the baby would be named John. {see Luke 1:68-79}

A few months later, Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken **{This census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.}** All citizens were ordered to register in the city of their ancestors - Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem. While there, Mary gave birth to her first child. She wrapped him in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.

There were some shepherds in the hills watching over their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared before them **{they were terrified}**. *“Don’t be afraid”* the angel said. *“I bring you fantastic news that will benefit all people. Today, in the city of David a Savior has been born, Christ the Lord. You will find him wrapped in cloth lying in a manger.”*

Suddenly a whole host of angels filled the sky --- *“Glory to God in the Highest and on earth, peace to men”*

The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Jesus, Mary and Joseph, just as the angel said they would.

After the purification period was over Mary and Joseph took the baby to the Temple to be dedicated. While there, Simeon and Anna blessed Jesus.

- Simeon was righteous and devout. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw Christ.
- Anna was a prophetess. She was 84 years old.

Jesus grew and became strong. His wisdom increased and the grace of God was on him.

When Jesus was 12, he went with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. When the celebrations were over, his parents headed home unaware that he had remained in Jerusalem. 3 days later they finally found him in the Temple talking to the teachers of the law, who were amazed by what they heard.

Mary asked Jesus why he had treated his parents with such disregard. *“Why were you looking for me”,* Jesus asked. *“Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s House?”* But they didn’t understand.

Many years later **{Tiberius was Caesar and Pilate was governor of Judea}**, the word of God came to John and he began to preach the forgiveness of sins and baptize people. **{this fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah – Is. 40:3-5}** All the people who heard him speak began to wonder if he could be the Christ. *“No,”* he responded *“I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”* **{Luke 3:16}**

John was a popular teacher, but he got crossways with Herodias, Herod Antipas’ wife, and she had him thrown into prison.

Before that happened, Jesus was baptized by John. When he came out of the water the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove and a Voice came from heaven, *“You are My Beloved Son and I am very pleased with you”* --- Jesus was about 30 years old. He was the son of Joseph..... The son of Adam, the son of God. **{Genealogy - Luke 3:23-38}** After his baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness **{The order of temptations is different in Matthew 4:1-11}**:

- He was there for 40 days and didn’t eat the entire time. By the end of the 40 days, he was very hungry. It was then that Satan came to him.... *“If you’re the Son of God, turn this stone into bread.”* Jesus responded: *“It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God”* **{Deut. 8:2-3}**
- Next, Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth. He said he would give Jesus everything he saw, if he would just bow down and worship Satan. Jesus responded: *“Get behind me, Satan!! It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and worship Him only.”* **{Deut. 6:13}**
- Finally, Satan took Jesus to the very top of the Temple and challenged him to throw himself off, *“For it is written, He will give His angels charge over you. They will hold you up and not even let your foot hit the ground.”* **{Ps. 91:11-12}** Jesus responded: *“It is written, you should not test the Lord your God.”* **{Deut. 6:16}** Satan left Jesus to plan for the next battle.

Jesus returned to Galilee and began his ministry. He came to his home town **{Nazareth}** and since it was Sabbath, he went to the Synagogue and stood up to read. He turned to the book of Isaiah - *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* **{Luke 4:18-19 --- see Is. 61:1-2}** Then he sat down. Every eye was on him. He looked at them and said, *“Today this scripture has been fulfilled.”*

The men were furious! They hauled Jesus out of the city intent on throwing him down a cliff, but he walked right through the crowd and left town.

Healing on the Sabbath

- Jesus went to the Synagogue in Capernaum where he encountered a man possessed by a demon. The demon recognized Jesus!! Jesus rebuked the demon and told him to come out of the man.... The demon obeyed!!
- After church, Jesus went to Peter’s house. Peter’s mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. Jesus rebuked the fever and it left her.

As you can imagine, Jesus was becoming very popular:

- Crowds of people came to him with various diseases and he healed them all. Demons were being cast out, but Jesus would not allow them to speak because they recognized him as the Son of God.
- At the lake of Gennesaret the crowd was so big that he had to stand in a boat off shore. That's the same day Jesus told Peter he would fish for men. Peter, James and John left their fishing boats and began to follow Jesus.
- He healed a man with leprosy and then a paralyzed man who had been let down to Jesus through a hole in the roof. {Luke 5:20-26}

Jesus called Levi, the Tax Collector, to follow him and Levi invited Jesus home for a dinner party --- Jesus accepted. The religious leaders began to complain that Jesus was socializing with tax collectors and other sinners. Jesus response?? *"Well people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. Righteous people don't need to repent, but sinners do and those are the people I've come to call."*

In my research I discovered that Jesus often got in the most trouble on Sabbath:

- Jesus and his disciples were passing through a grain field. The disciples began to pick the grain rubbing the heads with their hands and then eating {in other words they were **"working" on Sabbath**} Gotcha!! The Pharisees asked Jesus why the disciples were breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus reminded them of a little story... *"Remember when your hero, David, and his companions went into the Tabernacle and ate some of the consecrated bread because they were hungry. If you'll also recall, that bread, by law, was only for the priests to eat... By the way, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."*
- Jesus went into the Synagogue to teach. There was a man with a withered hand {the Pharisees were watching Jesus very closely to see what he would do so that they could make an accusation against him – but he knew what they were thinking}. Jesus told the man to come to the front and then asked, *"Is it lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbath?"* Since no one responded, Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand – he did and his hand was healed. The church leaders were very angry and began to discuss among themselves ways to destroy Jesus. He excused himself and went into the mountains to pray.

The next day Jesus chose the 12: **Peter**, his brother **Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James** son of Alphaeus, **Simon** the Zealot, **Judas** son of James, and **Judas** Iscariot, the traitor.

Per usual, a crowd surrounded Jesus so, he began to teach them. He concluded the sermon with these words:

- *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? <sup>47</sup> I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. <sup>48</sup> He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. <sup>49</sup> But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."* {Luke 6:20-49 --- see also James 1:21-25}

On his way to Capernaum, Jesus was stopped by some men sent by the local Roman Centurion. One of the Centurion's slaves was near death {he was highly valued}. Jesus decided to go to the Centurion's home {this was unusual} - *"He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: 'Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup> That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." <sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."* {Luke 7:6-9} When the men returned to the house, they were told the servant had been healed!

Jesus was on his way to Nain when he met a funeral procession coming out of the gate. The dead man was the only son of a town widow. Jesus was touched with compassion, so he walked over and laid his hands on the coffin, *"Get up!"* he said and the young man immediately sat up and began to talk. Fear gripped the crowd and they began to praise God.

John was still in prison, so his disciples went to him and reported all they had seen. He sent them to ask Jesus a question, *"Are You the Expected One or should we look for someone else?"* Jesus answered them, *"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. <sup>23</sup> Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."* {Luke 7:22-23}

Simon, the Pharisee, asked Jesus to dinner and he accepted. While reclining at the table a woman, who was a known sinner, quietly came into the house. She had brought with her a jar of expensive perfume, which she began to pour on Jesus' feet – mixed with her tears. She wiped his feet with her hair. Simon noticed and thought to himself: *"If Jesus is really a prophet, he would know that the woman touching him is a sinner."* Jesus said out loud: *"Simon, who is more grateful when the bank forgives a loan – the man who owes \$10 or the man who owes a million \$?"*

*"The man who owes a million \$" ----- "Correct",* Jesus said. *"When I entered your house, you didn't wash my feet, nor did you welcome me with a kiss or anoint my head with oil, but this woman has done all 3... Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven-- for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."* {Luke 7:47-50}

Soon after this event Jesus began to go from one city and village to another preaching – through parables – about the Kingdom of God.

- *The Sower and the Seed* – {8:5-15}
- *Revealed Light* – {8:16-18}

Let me continue....

- *The wind and waves obey him* – {8:22-25}
- *Restoration of Demoniac* – {8:26-37}
- *Woman touches the hem of Jesus' garment and is healed* – {8:41-47}
- *Resurrection of Jairus' daughter* – {8:48-56}

Jesus called the 12 together and gave them power and authority over all demons and diseases then he sent them out. When the Apostles returned, they gave an account of all they had done – then they all went to Bethsaida. A large crowd followed. On that day Jesus fed the entire crowd {about 5000 men} with only 5 loaves and 2 small fish.

Now Jesus began to tell his disciples that he would soon suffer and be killed at the hands of the church leaders, but that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day he would rise again.

Jesus gathered the disciples and the crowd together and spoke to them about counting the cost of following Him: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup> What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? <sup>26</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."* {Luke 9:23-26} Jesus then told them that some standing in the crowd would not die before they saw the kingdom of God come in power:

- **Mount of Transfiguration:** Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him to a high mountain and before their eyes He was transformed into a Glorious Being wearing clothes of brilliant white. Beside Him stood Elijah and Moses and they were in conversation together. A cloud encircled them and the disciples heard a voice: *"This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!"*

Coming down off the mountain, Jesus walked into a situation --- a father had brought his only son to the disciples in order that the child might be freed from the demon who was throwing him into convulsions, but the disciples could not heal the child. Seeing Jesus, the father asked him to heal the boy. Immediately, the demon threw the boy into a convulsion – he fell on the ground and foamed at the mouth. Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

As the crowd marveled at what Jesus had done, he began to talk to his disciples again about his suffering and death, but they didn't understand and were afraid to ask questions. They had been talking among themselves about who would be greatest in Jesus' kingdom, so they kept quiet. *Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and said to them, "Whoever welcomes this child welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all-- he is the greatest... and with that, Jesus deliberately turned toward Jerusalem.* {Luke 9:47-51}

That's all for now, Theophilus. More next week.....

## Take Aways

The purpose of Luke's letter is spelled out in the first few verses: *"So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."*

Luke gives a reliable and precise historical record of the life of Jesus. He was detailed and included dates and events that the other Gospels do not include. He paid special attention to the parables and miracles of Jesus, listing more than the other Gospels.

It is also interesting to note that women are given a prominent place in his writings – specifically naming 8 {Elizabeth, Mary mother of Jesus, Anna, Martha and her sister Mary, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary mother of James} + at least 14 other references to women throughout the book.

Luke portrays Jesus' profound interest in people and relationships --- revealing that Christ is for everyone and not just the Jews. Jesus is seen as a friend of sinners and a savior to anyone who will believe in Him.

# THE PROMINENCE OF WOMEN IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

## **Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist:**

- Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist, whose work paved the way for Jesus ([Luke 1:5-7](#)).
- After Elizabeth conceived (verse 25), her unborn baby jumped when Mary visited (verses 41-44).
- Elizabeth said that her son's name was John (verses 57-60).

## **Mary, mother of Jesus:**

- An angel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus Christ (verses 26-38).
- Mary offered a poem of praise, the Magnificat (verses 46-55).
- Mary gave birth (2:5-7) and thought about the wonderful things said about Jesus (verse 19).
- Mary was blessed by Elizabeth and Simeon (1:42; 2:34-35).
- Mary did not understand, but treasured Jesus' sayings (2:50-51).
- Mary kept in contact with Jesus during his ministry (8:19).

## **Women healed by Jesus:**

- Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law (4:38-39).
- He raised a 12-year-old girl (8:41-42, 49-56).
- He healed a woman with a 12-year infirmity (verses 43-48).
- He healed a woman who had been crippled 18 years (13:10-17).

## **Women as good examples:**

- A sinful woman anointed Jesus and was forgiven (7:37-50).
- Mary listened while Martha worked (10:38-42).
- A woman in a parable found a lost coin (15:8-10).
- In another parable, a widow kept going to a judge to obtain justice (18:1-5).
- A poor widow gave two small coins to the temple (21:1-4).

## **Other roles of women:**

- Anna, a prophetess, blessed the child Jesus (2:36-38).
- Women, part of Jesus' traveling party, helped pay his way (8:1-3).
- An anonymous woman blessed Mary (11:27-28).

## **Witnesses to the resurrection:**

- Women were among those who observed the crucifixion (23:27, 49).
- Women prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body (verses 55-56).
- Women were the first to find Jesus' tomb empty (24:1-3).
- Angels told the women that Jesus had risen (verses 4-8).
- Women were the first to tell the other disciples (verses 9-11).
- Although first-century culture usually minimized the importance of women, Luke portrayed women as good examples in the early church.

*Author: Michael Morrison*