

LUKE

I have been writing these articles

- To encourage you to pick up the Bible and read,
- To help the first-time reader understand as much as possible, and
- To give the experienced reader more insight.

The writer of Luke has a goal also:

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Luke 1:1-4

Luke is easy to read because the writer intended it to be clear and informative for a reader without much knowledge of Judaism or the Old Testament. It is full of familiar and beloved stories such as the birth of Jesus and the Good Samaritan. Luke has more stories about Jesus' infancy and childhood than any other gospel.

Here are some important features in Luke:

1. The birth of John the Baptist.
2. Two songs which have been used in Christian worship from the first century: The *Magnificat*, Mary's song (1:46-55) and the *Benedictus*, the song of John the Baptist's father (1:67-79).
3. Jesus as the Savior of all people; for example, Jesus' genealogy is traced back to Adam.
4. Jesus must suffer, die and rise again.
5. Journey to Jerusalem in Luke 9:51 – 19:27, most of which is teaching unique to Luke.
6. Compassion for the sick, outcasts, the poor.
7. Teaching about prayer – includes material in other Gospels and much additional.

Luke, named by tradition as the writer of this Gospel, does not identify himself. The opening verses of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles state that they have the same unnamed writer and the same intended recipient, Theophilus. (This name means "beloved friend of God." "Theophilus" was either a man of high rank or a code name for believers.) The author traveled with Paul. In Acts 16, 20 and other places, the pronouns change from "he" and "they" to "we." Luke was a Gentile convert, a physician, whom Paul identifies as a companion on some of his journeys (Colossians 4:14, II Timothy 4:11), so he gets the credit. This gospel is dated 75-95 A.D.

The structure of Luke is similar to Matthew and Mark. In addition, many sections of these Gospels use the same or very similar wording. Jesus' transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36, Matthew 17:1-8, and Mark 9:2-8) is a good example of this. It seems that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were familiar with a basic collection of materials about Jesus. Scholars call this common source "Q." (The German word for source is *Quelle*.) Each Gospel writer developed "Q" further with additional materials and their own emphasis. The Gospel of John does not use "Q." It parallels the other Gospels at crucial points, but includes many different stories such as the woman at the well (4:1-42) or foot washing at the Last Supper (13:1-11).

The reader ready to dig deeper will find it very rewarding to read Luke in [Gospel Parallels](#). This book lays out the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in side-by-side columns so that the reader can easily compare each Gospel writer's account of one event. It is a quick way to see what is shared, what is found in only one gospel, and what each writer emphasizes. Two copies of [Gospel Parallels](#) are available at Emmanuel.