

LUKE

1:1 – 9:56

INTRODUCTION

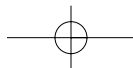
This Gospel is proved by its style and language to have been written by a Greek doctor, who was identical with the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, and, as the latter book shows, was a companion of Paul. Only Luke, 'the beloved physician', fits these conditions, and as he was not a man of note, there would have been no inducement to attribute the Gospel to him had he not actually been the author.

The most probable explanation of the abrupt ending to Acts is that Luke brought that book up to date, and that Paul was still in his first imprisonment at Rome when Acts was finished. This would give a date of about AD 62 for Acts, and a year or two earlier as the latest date for the Gospel.

This Gospel lays a special emphasis on the human nature of the Lord Jesus, though witnessing also with certain voice to his deity (see, e.g., 10:21, 22; 24:26, 49). His sympathy with the suffering and bereaved, the despised and the outcast, is brought into clear view, and the universal nature of the gospel, intended for Samaritan and heathen as well as the Jew, is strongly emphasized. The free offer of salvation and the impossibility of acquiring merit come out again and again (e.g., 15:11–32; 17:7–10; 18:9–14; 23:39–43).

ANALYSIS

1:1 – 2:52	The birth and childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist.
3:1 – 4:13	The preaching of John; the baptism and temptation of the Lord.
4:14 – 9:50	The ministry in Galilee.
9:51 – 19:28	Journeyings towards Jerusalem.
19:29 – 21:38	Last days of public teaching.
22:1 – 24:53	The last supper, the arrest, trial, death and resurrection of the Lord.



STUDY 1 LUKE 1:1–25

- 1 What was the mission assigned to John the Baptist? What was to be the nature of his greatness (verse 15)? Cf. verses 76, 77.
- 2 What was the cause of Zechariah's punishment (verse 20)? What made him hesitate to believe the angel's message? What similar temptations to unbelief do you face? Why ought Zechariah to have believed, and why ought we to believe?
- 3 Verses 1–4. What do these verses tell us of: (a) the sources of Luke's information, (b) the importance that he attached to giving a truthful record, and (c) his purpose in writing the Gospel?

Note. Verse 3. The title 'most excellent' suggests that Theophilus was a high official, probably not a Christian, but with some knowledge of and interest in Christianity.

STUDY 2 LUKE 1:26–38

- 1 Verses 31–33, 35. How many features of the person and mission of the promised child can be discerned in the words of the angel? Make a list of them.
- 2 Contrast Mary's reception of the angel's message with that of Zechariah (see previous study, Question 2). Cf. verse 45. What did Mary's response involve? Are you prepared similarly to ask the Lord to fulfil his word in you?

Note. Verse 31. 'Jesus' is the Greek form of Joshua, which means 'God saves'. Cf. Matt. 1:21.

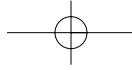
STUDY 3 LUKE 1:39–56

- 1 What does Mary's song reveal about: (a) the character of God (see especially verses 49, 50), and (b) His way of working among men (verses 51–53)? How were these facts demonstrated in the manner of the Saviour's coming?
- 2 What features in Mary's character are revealed in this song? What can we learn from her example?

STUDY 4 LUKE 1:57–80

The song of Zechariah may be divided thus: verses 68–70, thanks to God for the coming of the Messiah; verses 71–75, the purpose of the Messiah's coming; verses 76, 77, the mission of John; verses 78, 79, a further picture of the Messiah's coming.

- 1 Trace in the song of Zechariah the successive stages in the unfolding of God's



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plan of salvation through the Old Testament and up to the coming of the Messiah. How does it reveal the unity of the Old and New Testaments?

- 2 What, according to this song, is the *purpose* of salvation? Is this your experience?

Notes

- 1 Verse 69. 'A horn of salvation': i.e., one who is strong to save. The horn of an animal was a common symbol of strength; cf. Ps. 18:2.
2 Verse 80. 'The desert': the desolate region around the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

STUDY 5 LUKE 2:1–20 □

- 1 What may we learn from the circumstances of our Saviour's birth, and the status of his first worshippers?
2 What do the angel's message and the rejoicing of the heavenly host teach us of the *importance* of the birth of Jesus? How is the shepherds' response to this message an example to us?
3 Verses 1–7. How do these verses illustrate that God controls all human affairs, bringing about his own purposes through the free actions of men? Cf. with verse 4, Mic. 5:2.

STUDY 6 LUKE 2:21–39 □

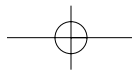
- 1 What did the appearance of Jesus mean to Simeon and to Anna? What, according to verses 30–32, was to be the scope of his work?
2 Verses 34, 35. What was to be the effect of Jesus' coming on different classes of people? What would be the cause of men's falling and rising? Cf. 1 Pet. 2:6–8.

Notes

- 1 Verses 21–24. After the circumcision of a child, two rites had to be performed: first, his presentation to God (verses 22, 23; cf. Exod. 13:2); second, the sacrifice of purification for the mother (verse 24; cf. Lev. 12:2–8).
2 Verse 25. 'Waiting for the consolation of Israel': i.e., for the coming of the Messiah. Cf. verse 38 and 24:21.

STUDY 7 LUKE 2:40–52 □

- 1 Verse 49. What was the consequence in his life of Jesus' unique relationship to God? In what way does this truth apply to us, as sons of God? Cf. John 14:31.
2 How does the story illustrate the truths of verses 40 and 52?



STUDY 8 LUKE 3:1–22

- 1 What, according to the preaching of John, are the cause (verses 7–9, 16, 17), nature (verses 8, 10–14), and outcome (verses 3, 15–17) of repentance?
- 2 What did Jesus' baptism, and the voice from heaven, mean: (a) to Jesus himself, and (b) to the others present? Cf. John 1:32–34.
- 3 Consider the fearless honesty of John. Note also its result (verses 19, 20).

Notes

- 1 Verse 1. The date is thus fixed probably as AD 28–29. See NBD, p. 194.
- 2 Verse 22. The voice combines references to the Old Testament Messianic figures of the Son of God (Ps. 2:7) and the suffering Servant of the Lord (Is. 42:1), thus setting the tone of Jesus' ministry.

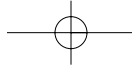
STUDY 9 LUKE 3:23–4:13

- 1 Notice the time of the temptation, immediately after the revelation of 3:22, and at the start of Jesus' ministry. What light does this throw on the devil's challenge, 'if you are the Son of God' (4:3, 9)?
- 2 Consider the special subtlety of each temptation, and the means by which Jesus in each case countered them. Cf. Eph. 6:17. What does this teach us for our own defence against temptation?
- 3 What can we learn from this passage about the nature of temptation? Note, e.g., at what times temptation may come, what sort of circumstances the tempter may use (4:2; cf. Mark 14:38), etc. How does the passage show that temptation is not sin?

Note. 3:23–38. The genealogy differs from that of Matthew in that: (a) it goes back beyond Abraham, and the origin of the Jewish race, to Adam, and the origin of the whole human race; (b) the list from David to Jesus is different except for two names. For the explanation of this last fact, and the significance of the genealogies, see NBD p. 402.

STUDY 10 LUKE 4:14–30

- 1 Verses 16–21. Jesus speaks to the people of Nazareth, his own home town. What does his use of Is. 61:1, 2 teach them of his mission? Why is the claim of verse 21 so startling?
- 2 Verses 22–30. The people were moved but not convinced (verse 22). How did Jesus interpret to them their unspoken thoughts (verse 23), and what did he go on to imply (verses 25–27)? What made them so angry?



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STUDY 11 LUKE 4:31–44

- 1 What two facts about Jesus particularly impressed the people in the synagogue? Note also the even more discerning testimony of the demons (verses 34, 41). Why did Jesus silence this?
- 2 This passage illustrates the busyness and urgency of Jesus' mission (see especially verse 43). Why then did he retire to a lonely place (verse 42)? Cf., in this Gospel, 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; etc. What can we learn from this example? *Note.* Verse 40. The Jewish day ended at sunset. The people waited until the Sabbath was over, and then brought their sick for healing.

STUDY 12 LUKE 5:1–11

- 1 Put yourself in the place of Simon. Trace the development of his attitude to Jesus in the successive phases of the story. In what ways is he an example to us?
- 2 Jesus needed fellow-workers. How and where did he find them? What marked out Simon and his colleagues as suitable? What were, for them, the conditions of being used?

STUDY 13 LUKE 5:12–26

- 1 Compare the faith of the leper with that of the friends of the paralytic. Of what was the former uncertain? And how did the latter display their faith? What can we learn from these miracles about prayer?
- 2 Verses 21–24. What claims are implied in Jesus' answer to the scribes' challenge?

STUDY 14 LUKE 5:27–6:11

- 1 These verses record four encounters with the scribes and Pharisees. What were the grounds of their growing opposition to Jesus? And what were the truths and the principles that (as his answers reveal) determined the actions of Jesus?
- 2 5:36–39. What happens when formal religion encounters the new life that Jesus brings? How do the incidents in today's passage illustrate the truth of these verses? Cf. 1 Sam. 15:22; Heb. 10:8, 9.
Note. 6:1. This was allowed on other days (Deut. 23:25), but was regarded by the scribes as work, and therefore prohibited on the Sabbath.



STUDY 15 LUKE 6:12–36

- 1 Verses 20–26. Contrast Jesus' picture of a blessed life with the world's idea of happiness. Why is a Christian happy in such circumstances? What makes the difference?
- 2 Verses 27–36. A picture of unselfish love. What should be the source and pattern of our love (verses 35, 36)? Think of practical cases in your own situation to which the principles laid down in these verses apply.
- 3 Verses 12–19. Note the increasing pressures on Jesus (verses 17–19; cf. verse 11). What two special actions did he take?

STUDY 16 LUKE 6:37–49

- 1 Verses 37–42. What sort of attitude towards the faults of others does Jesus prescribe, and why? What positive actions are commanded here?
- 2 Verses 43–49. On what does effectiveness and stability in the Christian life depend? What is the remedy for a weak or inconsistent Christian life?

STUDY 17 LUKE 7:1–17

- 1 Verses 1–10. What are the characteristics of the centurion's approach to Jesus? What can he teach us about a right attitude in prayer?
- 2 What do we see in these two stories of the character of Jesus concerning: (a) his appreciation of, and love for, people, and (b) his unique authority? Cf. John 5:24.

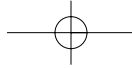
STUDY 18 LUKE 7:18–35

- 1 Verses 18–23. What exactly was the doubt in John's mind? Do you find a clue to this perplexity in 3:16, 17? What is the significance of Jesus' reply? Cf. Is. 35:5, 6; 61:1.
- 2 Verses 24–35. How had the Jews gone wrong in their reaction to John's preaching? What had they failed to see? What does Jesus' estimate of John teach us concerning the greatness of our privilege? Cf. 10:23, 24.

Note. Verses 26–28. John, the last and greatest of the prophets of the 'old covenant', marks the beginning of a new and better era, 'the kingdom of God'.

STUDY 19 LUKE 7:36–8:3

- 1 Compare the Pharisee's attitude to Jesus with that of the woman. How did



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Jesus answer the Pharisee's criticisms of verse 39? How did the parable of verses 41, 42 apply to him?

- 2 What made the woman act as she did? Cf. 8:2, 3. Have you a similar incentive? How can it be expressed?

Note. 7:47. 'For' here indicates the evidence rather than the cause of her forgiveness.

STUDY 20 LUKE 8:4–21


- 1 Verses 4–15. What sorts of people do the four kinds of soil represent? What experience have you of the truth of this parable in yourself and in others?
- 2 Verses 16–21. What do these verses teach about: (a) the responsibilities and (b) the privileges of Jesus' followers?
- 3 Why did Jesus now adopt the method of teaching by parables (verses 9, 10)? Do verses 4 and 18 provide a clue?

STUDY 21 LUKE 8:22–39

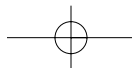

- 1 Verses 22–25. 'Where is your faith?' In what way was their faith defective? What did they learn from the incident?
- 2 Verses 26–39. Compare the man's condition before and after he met Jesus. What evidence can you find of the reality of the change? What can we learn from this about Jesus' power to save?
- 3 Verses 35–39. What caused the different reactions to Jesus of the cured man and his fellow countrymen? Why did Jesus grant the request of those who wanted to be rid of him, and refuse that of the man he had saved?

STUDY 22 LUKE 8:40–56


- 1 Verses 43–48. Try to enter into the woman's hopes and fears. What made her touch different from that of the rest of the crowd? Do you have any experiences or a testimony similar to hers?
- 2 What do these two stories teach us about the importance and nature of faith, and the need to continue in faith? Cf. Heb. 3:14.

STUDY 23 LUKE 9:1–17


- 1 Verses 1–6. A new development in the work. Picture the twelve travelling as described here. What lessons would they themselves learn, and what would be the impact on those who saw and heard them?
- 2 Verses 10–17. What light do these verses throw on the unselfish love of



Jesus, and on his concern for both physical and spiritual needs? Putting yourself in the place of the disciples, what would you have learned from the incident?

STUDY 24 LUKE 9:18–36


- 1 Verses 18–27. Trace the connection between the three sections: verses 18–20; 21, 22; 23–27. What does this teach us concerning: (a) the goals that Jesus was out to reach, and (b) the demands he makes on those who would follow him?
- 2 Verses 28–36. What lessons would the disciples learn from this experience about the real character and mission of Jesus? Can you find any connections with the truths they had been taught the previous week (verses 20–27)?

Notes

- 1 Verse 23. ‘Take up his cross’: like a condemned criminal on the way to execution.
- 2 Verse 27. See *NBC*.
- 3 Verse 30. Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets. They were God-given guides whose endorsement of fresh teaching was important. Cf. Mal. 4:4–6.

STUDY 25 LUKE 9:37–56


- 1 Verses 37–43. Note the disciples’ failure (verse 40). Do you find any significance in the fact that this followed a week of new revelations (verses 22–27)? What ought we to learn from this?
- 2 Verses 43–56. Further failures of the disciples. Why did they find it so hard to understand Jesus’ teaching or to practise it? Do you find the same difficulties? How are they overcome? Cf. Phil. 2:3–8.

Note. The Analysis shows a new section of the Gospel begins at verse 51. But verses 51–56 are included in this study because they also record an example of failure on the part of the disciples.

For Studies 26–47 on the second part of Luke’s Gospel, see p. 18.