

~THE BOOK OF LUKE~
~AN OVERVIEW~

When It Was Written: The date is probably around 60 A.D when Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea (**Acts 23:31-35**). The reasons for this as a date are as follows. **One**, it was before 70 A.D. since the destruction of Jerusalem is still future (**Lk. 21:5-38**). **Two**, it was written before the Book of Acts according to **Acts 1:1** and Acts was written around 61 or 62 A.D. **Three**, it was written after Matthew and Mark (see **Lk. 1:1**) who wrote between 50-60 A.D.

Who Was It Written To: It was addressed specifically to Theophilus, a cultured Greek who was either a seeker or had come to faith in Christ. But in general, the Gentile world would have been an audience in mind.

Why Was It Written: **One**, it set Christ forward as the “ideal man” to the Greeks. **Two**, it was written either to confirm or challenge Theophilus regarding his faith (**Lk. 1:3-4**). **Three**, it was a defense of Christianity to the Greek (Gentile) world in general.

Looking At Luke 1 – The Birth of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Mary’s visit with Elizabeth

1. Passages And Information Found In Luke And Not In Matthew Or Mark

A) **Lk. 1:5-25** is the birth of John the Baptist foretold. He was a cousin to Jesus. John’s father, Zechariah, was a priest in the Temple. Note what we read about John’s future ministry (**vss. 11-17**). Regarding Zechariah’s ministry note the following,

“A Jewish priest was a minister of God who worked at the Temple managing its upkeep, teaching the people the Scriptures, and directing the worship services.

“Zechariah was a member of the order of Abijah, on duty this particular week. Each morning a priest was to enter the Holy Place in the Temple and burn incense. The priests would cast lots to decide who would enter the inner sanctuary, and one day the lot fell to Zechariah. But it was not by chance that Zechariah was on duty and that he was chosen that day to enter the Holy Place—perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. God was guiding the events of history to prepare the way for Jesus to come to earth.” – Life Application Study Bible.

B) **Lk. 1:26-38** is Gabriel appearing to Mary and telling her about the coming Savior she would give birth to. **Vss. 30-33** tells us about what would happen and what Jesus would do. **Vss. 34-35** tell us that the Virgin Birth will be a miracle wrought by God. Note Mary’s response in **vs. 38**.

Note what one study Bible says about the Virgin Birth,

“(1) Luke was a medical doctor, and he knew perfectly well how babies are made. It would have been just as hard for him to believe in a virgin birth as it is for us, yet he reports it as fact.

(2) Luke was a painstaking researcher who based his Gospel on eyewitness accounts. Tradition holds that he talked with Mary about the events he recorded in the first two chapters. This is Mary's story, not a fictional invention. (3) Christians and Jews, who worship God as the Creator of the universe, should have no doubts that God has the power to create a child in a virgin's womb.” – Life Application Study Bible

Regarding the necessity of the Virgin Birth,

“The virgin birth was the *means* whereby the incarnation took place and guaranteed the sinlessness of the Son of God. For this reason the virgin birth was essential.” – The Moody Handbook of Theology.

J.I. Packer, in his “Concise Theology,” writes regarding the Virgin Birth,

“Also, while we cannot affirm that God could not have produced sinless humanity apart from virgin birth, Jesus' humanity was sinless, and the circumstances of his birth call attention to the miracle that was involved when Mary, a sinner (Luke 1:47), gave birth to one who was not "in Adam" as she was, nor therefore needed a Savior as she did. Rather, Jesus was destined through the maintained sinlessness of his unflawed human nature to become the perfect sacrifice for human sins, and so the Savior of his mother and of the rest of the church with her.” – Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs.

C) Lk. 1:39-56 records Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Note in what is known as “Mary's Song” (vss. **46-55**) that she also needed a Savior (vs. **47**). Mary was not sinless, either before or after the birth of Christ.

D) Lk. 1:57-80 gives us the birth of John the Baptist and Zechariah's prophecy. Zechariah, of course, is the father of John the Baptist. Note vss. **76-79** where we read of John the Baptist's ministry – **what stands out in these verses.**

Looking At Luke 2-3 – The birth of Jesus, Christ in Jerusalem, and ministry of John

A) Lk. 2:1-7 records the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. This passage has been called into question because some argue that Quirinius was not governor of Syria when Jesus was born. The fact is he was a governor twice, including the time frame (7-4 B.C.) that Christ was born. Jesus' birth is a fulfillment of **Micah 5:2**.

B) Lk. 2:41-52 records Jesus, as a boy, staying behind in Jerusalem for the Passover when He was twelve years old. At twelve years old a Jewish son assumed obligations at feasts and worship. Mary and Joseph acted as any parent would who could not find their child (vs. **48**)
What are some of the things that stand out in the story?

C) **Lk. 3:1-22** records the ministry of John the Baptist. Note some key things of his ministry:

- Baptism follows repentance (**vs. 3**), not as a means of repentance.
- **Vss. 4-6** show that John fulfilled prophecy.
- **Vss. 7-14** is John's explanation that true repentance will be seen in how we live.
- **Vss. 16-17** speak of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire. **What does fire represent and what does vs. 17 tell us?**
- In **vss. 18-20** John is thrown into prison for calling out Herod's sin.
- In **vss. 21-22**, Jesus is baptized. Note that Jesus also prayed after being baptized. Why was He baptized. He did not need to repent of sin.

Here are some thoughts on why Jesus was baptized:

- 1) To identify with us who would be baptized in obedience to Him.
- 2) **Mt. 3:14-15** might give us another reason. It tells us in those verses Jesus said He was being baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." This statement, though, is hard to interpret. One thought is that it meant that Jesus would accomplish God's mission and advance God's work in the world. Another thought on this passage is that Jesus identified with sinners since He would provide righteousness to those who came to Him.
- 3) Priests would wash with water on the Day of Atonement, consecrating themselves for God's service on that day. Jesus may have been baptized as a visible sign of His public ministry.
- 4) One commentator says the following about Jesus being baptized, that He did so "**to confess sin on behalf of the nation, as Isaiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah had done.**"
- 5) To show support for the ministry of John.