

Lecture 11: New Testament Survey

Luke Distinguished from the Twelve Apostles

He was different from the Twelve Apostles. Unlike the other Evangelists, he was more desirous of keeping a precise historical record (Luke 1:1–2, 25:1–2, 2:13).

Luke as a Companion of Paul

He was a close companion of the holy Apostle Paul. And since both were men of learning, they were bound together in a special fellowship.

Luke Did Not Witness Christ's Earthly Ministry

He had not seen with his own eyes the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:2). Some suppose that he may have believed either in Antioch or in Troas.

Luke's First Encounter with Paul

His first meeting with the Apostle Paul was likely during Paul's second missionary journey at Troas (Acts 16:11). From there he sailed with Paul to Philippi (Acts 16:12–17).

Luke Remaining at Philippi

Luke abode in Philippi (Acts 17:1). When Paul returned again to Philippi, Luke rejoined him (Acts 20:5).

Luke as a Faithful Messenger

It seems that Paul sent him, along with Titus, to carry the second letter unto the Corinthians.

Luke as Paul's Closest Friend

The holy Luke was among the dearest and closest friends of the Apostle Paul.

The Beloved Physician

Saint Paul referred to him as **“the beloved physician”** (Colossians 4:14). Whenever Paul came near his city, Luke would go forth to meet him.

Luke's Companionship with Paul

Luke accompanied the Apostle Paul on his last journey (Acts 20:6–21:18). He was also with Paul on that prisoner ship bound for Rome, which was caught in the great storm at sea (Acts 27:2).

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While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Luke abode with him. When Paul wrote to the Colossians and to Philemon, Luke ministered unto him as his faithful companion (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24).

He also remained with Paul in his second imprisonment, when the Apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:11).

When others forsook Paul, Luke continued steadfast and faithful by his side.

The Date of Composition

It is said that the Gospel according to Luke was written between **A.D. 58 and 63**.

This Gospel contains the record of nearly **thirty-five years of history**, and in this sense it may be called a complete Gospel.

The Recipient of the Gospel

The Gospel was addressed particularly to a man named **Theophilus** (Luke 1:3).

The name signifies *“lover of God”* or *“friend of God.”*

Some hold that Theophilus was a Roman officer, perhaps a governor or magistrate, for Luke addressed him as **“most excellent Theophilus”** (Luke 1:3; Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25).

It is believed that, though Roman by birth, Theophilus had embraced the faith of Christ through the fellowship of Paul and Luke.

The Wider Audience of Luke’s Gospel

In a general sense, the Gospel of Luke was written for the **Greek world**.

The Greeks were seekers of the **ideal man**.

In their art, religion, and literature, the vision of a perfect man was the supreme concept.

To the Greeks, the ideal man was one of **beauty, wisdom, dignity, and grace**.

This differed from the Roman concept, for the Romans exalted **power and dominion** as the true ideal.

Since Luke himself was Greek, he possessed a natural sympathy and deep compassion for the Greeks and for all nations beyond Israel.

The Purpose of the Gospel According to Saint Luke

Concerning the purpose of the Gospel written by Saint Luke, we need not speculate, for Saint Luke himself has declared it (Luke 1:1–4). He states that his intent in writing this Gospel is to provide a coherent, complete, and trustworthy historical account of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ—events that were witnessed by those who beheld them with their own eyes.

Saint Luke also desired that those who had received Christ might know with certainty that their faith rests upon reality—upon historical truth and divine fact, not upon imagination or fable.

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The Presentation of Christ as the Perfect Man

The Gospel according to Saint Luke further presents our Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect Man. Since this Gospel was written particularly for the Greeks, for whom the concept of the perfect or ideal man was of great importance, Luke portrays Christ in this very light—as the true and complete Man.

1. The Genealogy of Christ Traced to Adam

Saint Matthew records the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ as far as Abraham, writing with a distinct Jewish perspective. Yet Saint Luke carries the genealogy back to Adam, the first man (Luke 3:38). Thus Luke demonstrates that Christ came not for the Jews alone, but for the whole of mankind.

2. The Humanity of Christ in His Earthly Experiences

The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the human experiences of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is the only Gospel that records an event from His childhood (Luke 2:7).

These simple words reveal the perfect humanity, humility, and solidarity of Christ with ordinary men—that He was not born in a royal palace but in a manger (Luke 2:40, 46–50; 2:51–52; 3:23).

3. The Prayer Life of Christ

Saint Luke, more than any other Evangelist, gives prominence to the prayer life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He portrays Him as Man, utterly dependent upon the Living God—His Father.

The following passages highlight this truth:

- Luke 3:21
- Luke 5:16
- Luke 6:12
- Luke 9:18, 29
- Luke 11:1
- Luke 18:1
- Luke 22:32, 41
- Luke 23:34, 46

All these references reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity, seeking the Father's will and strength through prayer.

Further Evidences of the Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Hunger and Eating of Christ

The Gospel of Luke testifies that the Lord Jesus Christ experienced hunger and ate food (Luke 4:2; 24:41–43).

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The Power of the Holy Spirit in His Life and in the Lives of Others

Saint Luke emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit both in the life of Christ and in the lives of others (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 3:22; 4:1, 18–19; 24:49).

Christ's Compassion and True Identification with Humanity

Luke presents the Lord Jesus Christ as One who lived in real relationship with men, showing sympathy and complete identification with ordinary humanity (Luke 3:21).

Christ Strengthened by an Angel in Gethsemane

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus Christ was strengthened by an angel (Luke 22:43).

Christ's Agony in Gethsemane

The same Gospel records His intense agony in the Garden, where His sweat fell as great drops of blood to the ground (Luke 22:44).

The Confession of the Roman Centurion

Luke alone records the testimony of the Roman centurion who declared that Jesus Christ was indeed a righteous Man (Luke 23:47).

Christ's Final Words upon the Cross

At the moment of death, the Lord Jesus Christ committed His spirit into the hands of the Father (Luke 23:46).

5. Distinctive Features of the Gospel According to Saint Luke

Luke's Contribution to the New Testament

In terms of length, Saint Luke has written the greatest portion of the New Testament. His Gospel, together with the Acts of the Apostles, makes up a significant part of Holy Scripture.

The Four Songs Found Only in Luke

Only in Luke's Gospel do we find the four inspired songs:

- The Song of Mary (Luke 1:39–45)
- The Song of Zacharias (Luke 1:67–79)
- The Song of the Angels (Luke 2:13–14)
- The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:25–35)

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Luke's Emphasis upon Women

Luke gives greater attention to the place and role of women in the Gospel narrative than any of the other Evangelists.

The Authenticity of the Gospel of Barnabas

A False and Deceptive Teaching

Many people, deceived by Satan who disguises himself as an angel of righteousness, are proclaiming this blasphemous doctrine: that Jesus is the Son of God. They also reject the law of circumcision ordained by God for eternity, and they permit the eating of forbidden meats. Astonishingly, they even claim that among those deceived was the Apostle Paul himself (Gospel of Barnabas, p. 2).

The Denial of the Death and Resurrection of Christ

Some teach that Jesus truly died and rose again. Many proclaim that He is the Son of God, and among those who are misled, Paul the Apostle is also mentioned (Gospel of Barnabas, p. ...). From such citations it becomes evident that this cannot be the same Barnabas spoken of in the Holy Bible, for he was never such a man (Acts 4:36).

Misrepresentation of Barnabas

The Gospel of Barnabas claims that Jesus addressed Barnabas multiple times. For instance, Jesus is recorded as saying:

“O Barnabas, be not so sorrowful, for as God has chosen His elect from before the foundation of the world, they shall never perish.”
(Gospel of Barnabas, p. 21)

Yet here the truth is exposed: this was not the true Lord Jesus Christ speaking, nor was this ever the Barnabas of the Apostolic Church. The name “Barnabas” itself was not his given name but a title bestowed upon him by the Apostles (Acts 4:36).

The Teaching of the Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul consistently taught that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). Thus, any writing that denies this doctrine stands in direct contradiction to the apostolic witness of Holy Scripture.

Another Citation from the Gospel of Barnabas

One more extract declares:

“Whosoever does not circumcise himself with the staff of his own hand shall remain in fear, for he shall be cast out from paradise.”
(Gospel of Barnabas, p. 26)

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Circumcision as a Condition of Salvation in the Gospel of Barnabas

According to the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas*, circumcision is declared as necessary, and salvation is bound to it. Yet, this writing is not ancient Scripture, but a composition of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, containing many historical errors.

The Description of Hell

It is written therein that Jesus said unto Peter:

“Know thou that hell is but one; nevertheless it hath seven centres, one beneath another. Forasmuch as sins are of seven kinds, so in like manner hath Satan hewn seven gates for hell, and for each of these there is a punishment according to its kind.”

(*Gospel of Barnabas*, p. 171)

The Description of Heaven

And again it is written that Jesus spake, saying:

“Heaven is so vast and so glorious that it is impossible to measure it. Verily I say unto thee, the heavens are nine; yet if all the heavens and the earth were gathered together, still the paradise of God is greater than these.”

(*Gospel of Barnabas*, p. 223)

A False Depiction of Palestine

This writing described the land of Palestine in error. It is written:

“Behold how beautiful is the summer, when every tree is laden with fruit, and when the valleys and mountains resound with the songs of the joyful husbandman, who rejoiced in the harvest of his labour.”

(*Gospel of Barnabas*, p. 217)

Yet such a description better befitted Spain or Italy, but not the land of Palestine; for in Palestine the rains fall in winter, and in summer the fields are dry and barren.

The Misrepresentation of Biblical Figures

The book introduceth Lazarus, Mary, and Martha as though they were “princes of the cities of Magdala and Bethany.” Yet in those days, no such system of princes existed in the land of Palestine.

The Denial of Christ as the Messiah

According to this book, Jesus is said to have confessed:

“I am not the Christ. Verily I am but a prophet sent unto the house of Israel, to declare unto them the message of salvation. But after me shall come the Messiah, who shall be greater than I.”

(*Gospel of Barnabas*, pp. 54, 104)