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# UNIQUE MESSAGES OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

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DAY 3: LUKE

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## AUTHOR AND DATE

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Luke is the **longest** of the four gospels, and the book called Luke is only the **first half** of his work—**Acts** being the second half. We break them apart because of how the New Testament was put together but Luke intended them to be read together.

The final version of Luke should be dated **after Mark** wrote his work, but internal evidence suggests it may have been at least started while he and Paul were at **Caesarea in 57-58** (Acts 23-26) and continued when they were in **Rome** together (Acts 28).

Luke was a **physician** (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Muratorian Canon) and **Paul's missionary companion** (at least during the “**we**” chapters in Acts). Unlike modern society, being a physician was considered a lowly position in society. This is due to the fact that many physicians were slaves or former slaves. It is possible that Luke was thus a former slave, but someone of good heart whom Paul would have been comfortable making his friend and companion. Luke's services may have also been valuable to Paul as he traveled and labored under the difficulties of the road (and his many persecutions and challenging circumstances).

Luke is a gifted **storyteller**. His **Greek** is very good, using Greek **dictions** and **rhetorical** conventions. He quotes the **Torah**, tells striking vignettes and parables. It is **complex** and **sophisticated** account.

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## AUDIENCE

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He wrote to a Gentile audience, as shown by his **genealogy** going back to **Adam** (not just Abraham as Matthew did) and his **exclusion** of Jewish **traditions** and **names/titles** that are found in Mark in the same stories. He uses **Judea** for the larger area of Palestine, not just the area around Jerusalem as a Jew would do.

Specifically, Luke addresses his writings to a person named Theophilis, which means ‘friend of God’ in Greek (1:1-4; Acts 1:1; JST Luke 3:13). Some have supposed, based on the name, which it is a title for Jesus' followers, but he seems to be a real person, based on the language Luke uses.

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## THEMES

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The **temple** plays an important role in Luke. The record starts in the temple with **Zacharias** (1:5-22); Jesus' life starts in the temple with his **dedication** and the blessings of **witnesses** there (2:22-38). Jesus comes to the temple at **12** to teach and enlighten (2:42-48). At the conclusion of the **temptations**, Jesus ends up at the temple (4:9-12), whereas in Matt he ends on a high mountain (4:8-10). And Luke **ends** in the temple, with the disciples **daily worshipping** there (24:53).

Related to that, **Jerusalem** is at the heart of Luke's story. The Transfiguration prepares them for the final trip to Jerusalem, which is announced as he "set his face" to go there (**9:51**). The journey takes several chapters but Luke consistently reminds us of that destination (**13:22, 33-34; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28**). The resurrection appearances in chapter 24 are in Jerusalem, and the disciples are instructed to stay there (24:49). (The movement in **Acts** is the **opposite—away from Jerusalem and toward Rome**, though each journey **circles back to Jerusalem** at the end.)

For Luke, Jesus is the **universal Savior**. In fact, only Luke uses the term **Savior** (except for John 4:42). Luke uniquely refers to Jesus as "**Lord**" before his resurrection. Jesus is concerned for the **poor** and **outcast**. He sends for the **Seventy** (10:1-12), representative of all nations (compare Genesis 10 which has seventy nations coming from Noah and his sons) and takes the gospel to the **whole world** (Acts 1:8).

It is the **Spirit** that demonstrates God's will in Luke's writings; especially the early characters are filled with the Holy Ghost—John the Baptist (1:15,35); Elizabeth (1:41); Zacharias (1:67); Simeon (2:25-27); Jesus (3:16, 22).

Luke tells the stories of **women**—Mary (1:26-38), Elizabeth (1:39-45), Anna (2:36-38), and faithful female disciples who supported Jesus (8:1-3). Mary, sister of Martha is praised in Luke (10:42), and faithful women stayed with him on the cross (23:49) and were the first to see the resurrected Jesus (23:55-56; 24:1-10).

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## OUTLINE

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- Prologue (1:1-4)
- Infancy and Boyhood of Jesus (1:5 – 2:52)
- Preparation for Public Ministry (3:1 – 4:13)
- Ministry in Galilee (4:14 – 9:50)
- Journey to Jerusalem (9:51 – 19:27)
- Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28 – 21:38)
- Last Supper, Passion, Death, and Burial (22:1 – 23:56)
- Resurrection Appearances (24:1-53)

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## INFANCY AND BOYHOOD (1:5 – 2:52)

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Everything in the first two chapters of Luke is unique. He recounts seven episodes related to Jesus' birth:

- Two angelic visitations with pronouncements of births (John and Jesus)
- The visit of Mary to Elizabeth (and pronouncements)
- Two birth narratives
- Presentation in the temple (with pronouncements)
- Jesus in the temple at age twelve

Look at **Zacharias'** experience in the temple (**1:4-23**); Elizabeth's and Mary's canticles (**1:42-45**; **1:46-55**; Mary's relates to 1 Samuel 2:1-10 with Hannah); Jesus in the temple at twelve (JST change in v. 46).

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## PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (3:1 – 4:13)

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Luke provides very **precise dating** for the start of John's ministry (3:1-2), bringing together six separate points of reference. This places John's message in **AD 29**.

In Luke, the Baptist gives **unique sayings** to the crowd—(3:10-14) sharing, justice, and kindness—reflect what Jesus will say later. Then he alludes to John's fate by telling that Herod will put him in prison for his words. John is implied but not mentioned in the baptismal scene, perhaps to minimize John and bring Jesus to the forefront alone.

Luke's **genealogy** takes it back to Adam (3:23-38), emphasizing the universal appeal of his mission. He gives it after the baptism but before the ministry, likely because Moses' genealogy was also given at the start of his formal ministry (Exodus 6:14-26).

In Luke's account of the **temptations** (4:1-13), the order is different than Matthew and Mark, ending in the temple (as mentioned above). It is also noticeable that there are **no angels** come to help Jesus, as in Mark and Matthew. Instead in Luke, Satan comes back in **chapter 22** at the critical time (22:3, 31, 53), and then an **angel** strengthens him (22:43).

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## MINISTRY IN GALILEE (4:14 – 9:50)

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**Reading** in the synagogue in **Nazareth (4:16-30)**. How the scripture was chosen, targum, he said more than recorded, references to Elijah and Elisha are fulfilled in his ministry when he healed a foreigner through the intercession of a Jew (7:1-10; like Naaman and Elisha in 2 Kings 5:1-14) and he raised a widow's dead son (7:11-15; like Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:17-24). This makes Jesus a great prophet (7:16).

Dinner with **Simon the Pharisee** and the **woman anointing** him all unique (7:36-50). The emphasis is on the power of **love (7:47)**.

Women support Jesus in his ministry (8:1-3).

Peter and the others were asleep during the first part of the Transfiguration (9:32), pre-figuring their inability to stay awake in Gethsemane later.

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## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (9:51 – 19:27)

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Rejection by the **Samaritans (9:51-56)**. Though he is the 'new' Elijah, he comes to teach, love, and save. Cf **12:49-50**.

Appoints the **Seventy (10:1)**.

Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:29-37).

Dinner with Mary and Martha (10:38-42).

Parable of the Rich Fool (12:16-21) and Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31). Jesus condemned the accumulation of wealth except to help the poor.

Parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32).

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### MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM (19:28 – 21:38)

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Triumphal entry, when Pharisees ask him to quiet the people, he says stones would cry out (19:39-40).

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### LAST SUPPER, PASSION, DEATH, AND BURIAL (22:1 – 23:56)

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Passover: Jesus' **desire** to have the meal is emphasized and **won't eat or drink** until this is done (22:14-18). The last is fulfilled in Luke 24:42-43.

Gethsemane: He was in **agony** (athlete's state of mind before a contest) and **sweat blood** (22:44). Though contested by some scholars (because it's not in some early mss of Luke), this is confirmed in early Church commentary and in latter-day revelation.

Softens the disciples **sleeping** (22:45).

Jesus looked at Peter when the cock crowed (22:61).

Jesus sent to Herod Antipus (23:6-16).

Women wail and he warns of Jerusalem's destruction (23:27-31).

Forgive the soldiers (JST 23:34).

Thief in paradise (23:39-43).

Veil rent before he died (Matt and Mark after) (23:45).

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### RESURRECTION APPEARANCES (24:1-53)

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Road to Emmaus (24:13-35).

Teaches from the scriptures (24:44-45)

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