



### Why study Luke?

- a. Obeying Jesus' words - "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you"
- b. Breathtaking theology, practical application & historical background
- c. Verse by verse study with freedom to divert

*Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.*

Whenever you read a letter you're asking 4 main questions. Who wrote this? Who's it addressed to? Why was it written and how can I be sure it's true?

## 1. Luke – Author

- a. Luke wrote Acts & by inference also the gospel.
  - i. Humble – doesn't even really mention himself.
  - ii. 'former book' referred to at the beginning of Acts
  - iii. both addressed to Theophilus.
- b. He's a highly educated medical doctor.

Impeccable educated Greek writing style

Col. 4:14 **Luke** the beloved physician greets you

- c. Paul's travelling companion ('beloved Luke' 'fellow worker')
- d. Faithful (2 Tim 4 'everyone's left me apart from Luke')
- e. From Antioch in Syria, never married and never had children & died at age 84 (from 4<sup>th</sup> century preface to gospel)

## 2. Recipient – Theophilus

Theophilus 'one who's loved by God'. Could be a group?

Most likely an individual. 'Most excellent' = high ranking Roman official

Quite possibly Theophilus was a wealthy benefactor who supported Luke in some way, giving his resources to extend the gospel.

## 3. Why is he writing?

*"That you may **know** with **certainty** the things you have been taught."*

'know' also is a special word. It means a deep, thorough knowledge

'certainty' – placed at the end of the sentence for emphasis.

Luke is opposed to blind faith – Luke writes a 52 chapter book complete with research. The opposite to a blind leap of faith.

*"There are forty-one parts of Luke that are not in any other Gospel, and had Luke not investigated it and written it down, had Theophilus not funded it and commissioned it, we wouldn't know any of these forty-one things about Jesus. So there's some treasure in here that you can't mine anywhere else"* Mark Driscoll

#### 4. How can we know it's true?

***3*** ***it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past***

- careful research – he did not receive it uncritically
- closely = accurately
- sceptics have been brutal to Luke claiming that his history was flaky at best and deliberately misleading at worst.

#### **Examples**

***Luke 2:1*** *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria*

Luke's mention of **Quirinius** as the governor of Syria during the birth of Jesus has now been proven accurate by an inscription from Antioch.

***Acts 18:12*** *But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal,*

Roman Historian Pliny never referred to Gallio as a Proconsul. Luke was mocked until the **Delphi Inscription** was discovered, dated to 52 A.D. This inscription states, "As

Lusius Junius Gallio, my friend, and the proconsul of Achaia..." Yet Gallio only held this position for one year hence Pliny who wrote in 2<sup>nd</sup> century never knew about it.

*"The historical framework is exact. In terms of time and place the details are precise and correct." A. N. Sherwin-White*

*Sir William Ramsay, was able to give reasons for 'placing the author of Acts among the historians of the first rank...For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming .... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted*

***many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us***

Luke quotes 60% Mark – clearly had Mark's gospel but he adds much to it from his own research

***just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us***

"Handed down" was sometimes a technical term in the ancient world. Disciples of rabbis normally passed down first-generation traditions carefully. Oral storytellers were also adept at memorizing and passing on stories accurately. Because Luke writes while eyewitnesses are still alive, and because they were accorded a place of prominence in the early church, we may be sure that his traditions are reliable.

Some of them will have known Jesus, including perhaps the now elderly Virgin Mary herself, since Luke's birth and infancy narrative, including the intimacies of the Annunciation, is told from her viewpoint and must go back ultimately to her