

A. Luke's Sources, Author, and Audience

1. Luke's Material

a. From Mark

b. Luke's unique material

c. From Q

Luke seems to alternate between Mark and Q

- 3:1-6:1 draws from Mk
- 6:20-8:3 draws from Q – “the little interpolation” (Sermon on the plain)
- 8:4-9:50 draws from Mk
- 9:51-18:14 draws from Q – “the big interpolation” (Luke's travel narrative)
- 18:15-24:11 draws from Mk

d. Luke and Acts

2. Audience

3. Author

a. Historian

b. Luke the physician (?)

- Col 4:11 [Gentile] and 14 [physician];
- Phlm. 24;
- 2 Tim 4:11.
- References to the “eye-witnesses”: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16.
- Muratorian Canon (170-80 CE)

c. Where?

d. When?

B. Characteristics of Luke's Gospel

1. Emphasis on Jerusalem

2. Worship

a. Begins and ends with scenes of worship

Luke 1:8

Luke 24:52

b. The first two chapters filled with "liturgical material"

The Magnificat (= "glorifies"): 1:46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Lk 1:46-55).

The Benedictus (= "Praise be"): 1:68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them" (Lk 1:68-79).

Gloria in Excelsis Deo (= "Glory to God in the Highest"): 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Lk 2:14).

Nunc Dimittis (= "You now dismiss"): 2:29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word"

3. Prayer

4. Emphasis on Food & Table Fellowship

a. Nineteen meals

b. Five parables about banquets

Lk 14:7-11. 14:7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 14:8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 14:9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. 14:10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 14:11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Lk 14:12-14. 14:12 He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 14:13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14:14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Lk 14:15-24. 14:15 One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 14:16 Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. 14:17 At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 14:18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' 14:19 Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' 14:20 Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' 14:21 So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 14:22 And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room." 14:23 Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. 14:24 For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

Lk 15:25-32. 15:25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 15:26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 15:27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 15:28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 15:29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 15:30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 15:31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 15:32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Lk 16:19-30. 16:19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 16:20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 16:21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 16:22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 16:23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 16:24 He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 16:26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 16:27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house-- 16:28 for I have five brothers--that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' 16:29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 16:30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

c. Table fellowship & discipleship

Lk 7:44-46. 7:44 Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 7:45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 7:46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

Lk 14:7-14 (see above)

Lk 22:27. 22:27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

d. Jesus' table fellowship is criticized

Lk 5:30. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Lk 7:34. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

Lk 15:1-2. 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 15:2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

e. Why the table fellowship motif?

(1)

(2)

(3)

5. Emphasis on Oppressed & Marginalized

Lk 1:52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; 1:53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Lk 6:20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 6:21 Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh."

Luke 12:16-21. 12:16 Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 12:17 And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 12:18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 12:19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 12:20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 12:21 So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." (NRSV Lk 12:16-21).

Luke 19:1-10. Salvation comes to the house of Zacchaeus after he decides to give up his wealth and help the poor .

6. Emphasizes women

a. Infancy narrative Mary is emphasized over Joseph

b. Only Luke mentions certain women

- Elizabeth (1:24-25; 41-55)
- Anna (2:36-38)
- The woman from Nain (7:36-50)
- The homeless women (7:36-50)
- Mary and Martha (10:38-42)—Mary sits at the feet of Jesus (cf. Acts 22:3)
- Several women who supported Jesus (8:1-3)
- The woman with a blood disease (8:43-48)
- The “daughter of Abraham” (13:10-17)
- The poor widow (21:1-4)
- The “daughters of Jerusalem who lament Jesus (23:27-31)
- Women who watched the crucifixion (23:49)
- Women who report the resurrection (23:55-24:11)

c. Luke’s concern for the oppressed included women

Luke 11:27-28. 11:27 While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" 11:28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"

In **Luke 11:27**, a woman shouts out to Jesus, “**Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you.**” In the first century, that was high praise for Jesus’ mother. Jesus’ mother was given credit, using the only way the culture had permitted. A woman was valued in relation to other men, her father, husband, or son. She lived her life through them.

In contrast, notice how Jesus undermines patriarchal domination. Jesus responds, “**Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!**” (**Lk 11:28**). Jesus is in effect saying a woman’s value is determined by her relationship to God not as a function of her relationship with certain males. The vision and program of Jesus was a domination-free order. No men over women; no rich over poor; no insiders over outsiders.

7. Emphasis on the Holy Spirit

8. Emphasis on Promise & Fulfillment

9. Emphasis on Salvation

10. Acts: The sequel to Luke's Gospel

C. Major Theological Themes

1. Jesus

a. Models from the Jewish world

(1) The Prophet

John the Bapt.

The Spirit of the Lord.

Moses.

Jesus the Prophet.

Luke 7:16. A great prophet has appeared among us.

Luke 24:19. The disciples on the road to Emmaus identify Jesus as "a prophet, powerful in word and deed."

Acts 3:22-24. 3:22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. 3:23 And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people.' 3:24 And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days.

Acts 7:37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up.'

(2) The Messiah

Lk 2:11. Jesus is "Savior ... Christ the Lord".

Lk 9:20-21. 9:20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." 9:21 He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone,

Lk 24:25-27. Jesus opens the disciples' eyes to Scripture and showed them that the Christ had to suffer and then enter glory. He was speaking about himself .

Lk 24:44-47. ⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-- that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

(3) Son of Man

Lk 22:69 But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

Acts 7:55-56. 7:55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 7:56 "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

(4) Suffering Servant

Isa 42:1-4. 42:1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 42:2 He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 42:3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 42:4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Lk 22:37 For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, '*And he was counted among the lawless*'; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled."

Isa 53:12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and *was numbered with the transgressors*; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Acts 8:30-35. 8:30 So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 8:31 He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. 8:32 Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a*

lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. 8:33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." 8:34 The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 8:35 Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

b. Models from the Greco-Roman world

(1) Philosopher

Diogenes Laertius called *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (early 3rd century CE).

(2) Immortal

(3) Benefactor

Lk 2:10-11. 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 2:11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Acts 10:38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good ["as a benefactor"; *evergetōn*] and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

(4) Why would Luke use pagan imagery?

2. Salvation

a. Salvation connected to Jesus life, not death

In Matthew and Mark, salvation is linked to Jesus' death on the cross (Mk. 10:45; Matt 20:28; 26:28) and is therefore something that God gives after Jesus' death. As Matthew 1:21 says, Jesus "will save his people from their sins."

In contrast, Luke doesn't connect salvation with Jesus death and thus salvation is not something bestowed after Jesus' death, but Jesus saves people throughout his life. As Luke 2:11 says, "To you is born this day ... a Savior". Jesus is a Savior from the day of his birth. For Luke, *salvation is tied more to Jesus life than his death.*¹

However, there may be an exception. Strauss writes, "While in general Luke does not stress Jesus' saving significance of the cross, the Last Supper is an exception, as Jesus interprets his coming death as the sacrifice which will establish a new covenant (22:20; cf. Jer. 31:34)."²

¹ Mark Allan Powell, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 105.

² Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007) 227.

b. Salvation is liberation

In Luke, salvation is both present and future, but places emphasis on the present. Notice Luke's uses of the word "today":

- "Today ... a Savior is born" (2:11)
- "Today ... this scripture is fulfilled" (4:21)
- "Today ... we have seen strange things" (5:26)
- "Today ... I must stay at your house" (19:5)
- "Today ... salvation has come to this house" (19:9)
- "Today ... you will be with me in Paradise" (23:43)

In Luke, salvation means different things to different people:

- To the blind, being able to see (18:43)
- To a leper, being made clean (17:19)
- Peace (2:14)
- Forgiveness (7:48)
- Healing from infirmities (6:10; 8:48)
- Release to the captives, freedom to the oppressed (4:18-19)

c. How does Jesus "save" after his death?

"If salvation for Luke is the result of a liberating encounter with Jesus, then how can people experience salvation in a world where Jesus is no longer present?"³

Recent scholarship focuses on Jesus' ascension as Jesus exaltation or enthronement. "Jesus is not absent—except in the relatively insignificant sense of no longer being on earth in bodily form. Standing now at the right hand of God in heaven (Acts 7:56), Jesus continues to bring God's salvation to people on earth."⁴

Acts shows that liberating encounters with Jesus continue even after Jesus death, resurrection, and ascension. In a mysterious way, Jesus continues to come to people (Acts 3:20-21). Peter proclaims to the paralyzed man, "Jesus Christ heals you!" (Acts 9:34). This happens through the Holy Spirit or "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:70). People continue to be healed (Acts 3:6; 16:18) and forgiven (Acts 10:43) in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:21; 4:12).

Luke seems to have combined a Hebraic and a Hellenistic view of salvation. As the Messiah of Israel, Jesus leads a New Exodus that liberates people from bondage to sin, disease, death, and the devil. As Lord of all nations, Jesus is a supreme benefactor granting divine gifts such as peace, health, and forgiveness.

3. Mission and Expansion

³ Mark Allan Powell, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 106.

⁴ Mark Allan Powell, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 107.