

41. Jesus in Luke

October 19, 2017

Life is full of surprises. Would you agree with that? But more than that, our God is full of surprises! He has a history of pulling off surprises to mankind. When we think that we have just figured out what God would do, He completely blows away our expectation and logic.

The best example of this is the salvation through Jesus Christ who was born in a human form with full divinity. It was the best kept secret! Even though it was prophesied throughout the entire Old Testament, no one, not even Satan could figure it out until it was too late for him to stop it.

An old Jewish couple and a Jewish teenager and her husband-to-be were about to face God's incredible plan and they didn't know that they were the supporting roles in His unbelievable real life drama.

A. AUTHOR

Doctor Luke, the apostle Paul's companion in his missionary journeys, was probably the only Gentile writer of any portion of the New Testament. He wrote this book as well as the Book of Acts.

I think that Dr. Luke was a perfectionist. I know, it takes one to know one. Luke really cared about the nuts and bolts, the fine-line issues of Jesus' life like no other Gospel writers. Luke's own introduction to his Gospel indicates that Luke composed the letter with the purpose of providing a careful rendering of the events of Christ's life in chronological order. As a physician, Luke would have been trained as a careful observer, a quality that would have been invaluable in this project. The result was the first part of a two-volume work written to Theophilus – this Book and Acts.

Luke was a well-educated Greek physician. Unlike the modern day doctors, though his occupation was a physician, he was classified as a slave. According to Colossians chapter 4, the great apostle Paul referred to the doctor "*Luke the beloved physician*". In other epistles, Philemon and 2 Timothy, Luke was considered "a fellow worker" and the only companion at the last moment of Paul's life. He was Paul's personal physician and companion at various times on the missionary journeys.

B. COMPOSITION

According to the theologian Merrill Tenney, Luke's Gospel is the most complete account of the life of Jesus that has survived from the apostolic age. None of the other three Gospel writers give us a more detailed or descriptive analysis of the Savior's birth, childhood, and manhood. Obviously, Dr. Luke had to interview Mary, the mother of Jesus, to get all these details that no other writers included.

Dr. Luke's style is extremely appealing and interesting because he was a gifted writer who recorded such memorable stories as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Rich Man and Lazarus. As we can tell, he was a master of character descriptions. He wrote this Book with the mind of a physician and scientist, but with the heart of an artist and storyteller.

By the way, have you noticed that Dr. Luke did not include the visit of the wise men from the East altogether? I did not figure this out until yesterday. The story of Jesus'

life began with the announcement of His birth by the angels to Mary, Jesus' mama, then to Elizabeth, and her husband Zechariah, then it proceeded to the Savior's birth, and finally it described the Baby dedication at the temple on the eighth day. But in chapter 2 verse 41, Dr. Luke skips forward to when Jesus ditched His mama and Joseph to stayed behind in the temple when he was 12 years old. You would think that the Gospel of Luke would include the incident of the Wise Men's visit, but in our God's sovereign reason, He didn't.

Another notable thing missing is the way of Hebrew prophecies. I don't believe that there are not even 10 OT prophecies recorded in this Book. Contrary to this, the Book of Matthew is filled with over 50 in total. Since the target audience was predominantly Greek people who had limited interest in and knowledge of the OT, Luke didn't spend much time in the OT predictions.

Neither did this good doctor use many Hebrew and Aramaic words, unlike the other three Gospel writers. For example, in explaining the crucifixion story in chapter 23, Luke didn't use the word "Golgotha" which is an Aramaic word. Instead, he used the Greek word "kranion" from which we get our English word "Calvary". The exact definition of "Calvary" is "Skull" and "Golgotha" refers to "the Place of Skull". In other words, Dr. Luke used language familiar to the Greek mind.

While Matthew presented Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and King, Mark painted the picture of Jesus as a suffering Servant. But Luke emphasized the humanity of Jesus and presented Him as the perfect Man. Who would be better qualified to bear witness to the humanity of Jesus than a doctor?

Did you know between chapters 9 and 19 of the Book of Luke, there are over 30 sayings, parables, stories, and scenes of Jesus? How can we possibly talk about the Christmas story without visiting chapter 2 verses 1 through 15 of this Book? No other Books in the Bible talk in this detail. By showing us all these details, the Holy Spirit accomplishes the total humanity of Jesus through a medical doctor and author Luke.

There are many wonderful stories that are not mentioned in anywhere else. Let me briefly mention them:

- The power evoked as Jesus read Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah's ministry of preaching and healing in chapter 4
- The Good Samaritan in chapter 10
- Jesus' response to a worried and upset Martha in chapter 10
- Jesus' stinging response to a hypocritical synagogue ruler who protested when Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath day in chapter 13
- The Lost Coin in chapter 15
- The Prodigal Son in chapter 15
- The Rich Man and Lazarus in chapter 16
- The Persistent Widow in chapter 18
- The Arrogant Pharisee and the Tax Collector in chapter 18
- Jesus' extended grace to a man named Zacchaeus in chapter 19
- Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem in chapter 19

C. THEME

Luke 19:10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

It doesn't matter what kind of person you are, even if you say that you are not afraid to die, if a deadly threat comes to you, you will instinctively duck or move out of the

way of the threat. It is built into our human nature. What this verse tells us is that Jesus who was a 100 percent human and a 100 percent God, did not run away from the imminent death, rather, He walked right into it, because there was no other way mankind be saved.

The early chapters of Luke, chapter 1 through 3, record the "COMING" of Jesus into the world. Chapters 4-19 give the account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, Judea, and Perea – a word-and-deed ministry of "SEEKING the lost and the hurting." Then, chapters 20-24 tell us of the events leading up to and including Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, as He fulfilled His great mission of "SAVING sinful people through His sacrificial death on the cross."

D. TWO CRUCIAL LESSONS WE CAN LEARN

1) Dr. Luke points out to us that Jesus needed to spend time with His Father and pour out His heart in prayer.

Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

There was something about watching Jesus' prayer that made the disciples want to learn how to pray like Him. Just like the disciples, we need Jesus to teach us to pray.

Prayer is so simple that the smallest child can pray, but it is so profound and deep that the mightiest man of God cannot say that he truly has mastered prayer.

D.L. Moody, the great evangelist of the previous century said, "I'd rather be able to pray than to be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught His disciples how to preach, but only how to pray." The Lord did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well. To know how to speak to God is far more important than knowing how to speak to men. Not power with men, but power with God is the first priority.

Jesus also teaches us to be persistent when we pray. The Greek word for 'persistence' literally means "shamelessness." The guy asking for bread because of his hunger shouldn't be concerned about social graces. If he did, he wasn't hungry enough. He should shamelessly persist until he receives it.

Do we approach God with that same kind of bold endurance? Or do we knock one time, hear nothing, and quietly tiptoe away? Jesus is saying, "Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking!"

Why does Jesus want us to be persistent in our prayers? Is it because the Lord is hard of hearing? Or does He have selective hearing like some of us? While we come to Him persistently, it makes us depend on Him for the answer of our prayer rather than our own power, intelligence, or capabilities.

2) On numerous occasions Jesus cared about and struggled with the hurts of people.

No fault with our Lord, as we start to learn the Word of God more, it is NOT that difficult for us to have some serious spiritual chips on our shoulders in our ignorance and arrogance against those who are not believers in the Lord or even against other believers.

Everywhere Jesus went, He was very much in demand. There was always a crowd around Him, and understandably so. He was God in human form, walking through their streets. Everyone wanted something. There would be those who always wanted a touch, like the woman who had spent all of her money on doctors, trying to be cured, but to no avail. When she touched the hem of His garment, she was restored and healed. There is the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman who brought her demon-possessed child to Jesus, and the story of Jairus, who came and asked Jesus to touch his sick daughter.

Listen, we all are in ministries one way or another. A ministry without dealing with people should not be considered as a ministry, rather, a cold solitary confinement. In ministry, there are hurting people, depressed people. And there are people who offend you and agitate you, not always sweet people. They are our neighbors whom Jesus teaches us to love. As many of you are involved in our church ministries, please DO NOT FORGET that we are ministering to the people, not a regular business.

Jesus, with all of His infinite wisdom, could have chosen to thumb us down. Instead, He chose to associate with the down and out, low life tax collectors, and prostitutes without compromising His holiness. In each case, Jesus reached out and touched those who were in need. As our "Great Physician," He is moved over the things with which we struggle. He feels our pain. He cares.

If you are coming up with an excuse in your heart for what I just said, I have a Bible verse to remind you what we all should do:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.