

## ABIDE: A BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

# JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

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## THE PERFECT LIFE

### LUKE

Luke's Gospel is about the perfect man, Jesus Christ. Matthew focuses on the Messiahship of Jesus. Mark focuses on the servanthood of Jesus. Luke focuses on the humanity of Jesus.

Luke is one of those individuals that we would like to have as a friend. In **Colossians 4:14**, Paul calls Luke the 'beloved physician' because he was so special to him. This was a man who had it all. He was a historian, he was a faithful friend and traveling partner, he was a medical doctor, he was an accomplished and polished writer, but best of all, Luke was a die-hard, sold-out, no-compromise follower of Jesus Christ.

Luke was consumed and passionate about the message of His Savior and presenting it in the most accurate way possible. That is exactly what a good historian would do, and Luke was an absolutely marvelous historian. He was careful to write and record every pertinent detail of the life of Christ. And we not only can see this from Luke's Gospel itself, but we also see this from his own admission at the beginning of the book. Luke writes in the first verses of his Gospel,

*"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."* — **Luke 1:1-4**

Let's see if we can unpack some of this information:

**Luke's Shared Passion:** Luke first acknowledges that he was not the first to take on the task of writing the glorious Good News of Jesus Christ. He said "many" had it in their heart to make the same declaration he was making.

**Luke's Sure Proclamation:** Luke mentions that not only was the Gospel worthy of repeating, but he was honest about how the information was obtained. He interviewed, just as a good historian would, eyewitnesses of the accounts and other sources that led him on his way to completing this work.

**Luke's Special Perspective:** Luke also understands that the eyewitness accounts were not the only reason his message could be trusted. He said that he received "...perfect understanding of all things from the very first..." It was Luke's understanding that God's hand was in this entire process. When Luke tells us that he received perfect understanding, that phrase can also be translated as Luke saying that he received this information "from above." It is the same phrase Jesus used when He spoke

to Nicodemus in the middle of the night. When Nicodemus was asking about salvation, Jesus told him that he must be born again, or in other words, that he must be born “from above.”

Also, when Luke writes about the “certainty” that can describe this message, he means that it can be held onto with stability and firmness. If you’re looking to your leaders in government, you have to be cautious when considering the words that they say and the promises that they make. When you’re listening to authorities on the weather, or experts in the field of historical science, you have to be cautious because as time passes, you could find that the information given, while well intended, was completely wrong. When trying to use veteran stock advisors to find out where to put your money, gain all the information you can and diversify as much as possible, because it just might be that your money could disappear very quickly.

But when it comes to the message of the Gospel, Luke tells us that because this message came from above, it can be held onto with stability and firmness. In other words, it’s worth believing.

All of this information was written to a man named Theophilus (meaning “Lover of God”), but you could just as well place your name right there. Luke wanted you to know that Jesus loves you and wanted to save you. He wanted you to know that this record is verifiable and could be trusted with your eternity.

What a friend we have with Dr. Luke!

### *How to Think About Luke*

Luke, once again, is the Gospel that focuses on the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. You’ll notice right away that Luke spends more time on the birth of Jesus and the boyhood of Jesus than all of the other Gospels. Eighty verses in the first chapter and fifty-two verses in the second chapter, all completely dedicated to the setting of the scene of Jesus’ miraculous conception, Jesus’ physical birth, and Jesus’ life growing up.

Now, why do you think that is? Well, Luke, being a Doctor, is a man who spends his time thinking logically and practically. He knows full well that a birth like Jesus’ is a physical impossibility had God not intervened in a special way. He also did not want the person of Jesus to get lost in the world of legend. That Jesus simply came out of nowhere and suddenly was among us. Luke is stressing the point that Jesus was born, just as you and I are born, but also showing that this birth was unlike any birth that ever existed or ever will exist. Jesus was born naturally, as a human, but supernaturally as God.

This is also why Luke, like Matthew, gives us a list of genealogies. However, Luke approaches Jesus’ family line in a different way. Matthew lists Jesus’ family in a way that proves Jesus belongs in the line of Judah. Matthew gives us Jesus’ family line that proves he belongs to the royal line of king David. Luke gives us Jesus’ family line that proves he belongs to the bloodline of the human race. Matthew catalogs Jesus’ legal lineage from Joseph’s side of the family, and Luke records Jesus’ literal lineage from Mary’s side of the family.

Furthermore, Luke creates an emphasis around how Jesus grew naturally. **Luke 2:52**, says, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Once again, this was all to show us that Jesus had to grow, and learn, and live just like everyone else. It’s been said that Luke gives us a ‘human touch’ of Jesus’ divinity all along the way through his Gospel.

**Jesus is Coming (Luke 1:1— Luke 4:13):** In this first portion of Luke’s Gospel, he is setting up the scene from the time of Jesus’ birth, until the time when Jesus begins his preaching ministry.

**Jesus’ Birth (Luke 1-2:40)**— Here we have some powerful passages about the announcement of Jesus’ birth, the announcement of John the Baptist, Mary’s song, and two touching scenes with an old priest named Simeon and an old prophetess named Anna.

**Jesus' Boyhood (Luke 2:41-52)**— This is a passage containing the family trip to Jerusalem where Jesus makes his way to the temple as a twelve year old boy and absolutely confounds the religious leaders there with His knowledge and the questions that were asked.

**Jesus' Baptism (Luke 3:1-3:22)**— John the Baptist is on the scene here and Luke gives us a different aspect of his ministry. Then, Jesus arrives, is baptized, and we find the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

**Jesus' Background (Luke 3:23-3:38)**— Luke records the genealogy of Jesus from Mary's side of the family.

**Jesus' Battle (Luke 4:1-13)**— This passage gives us the temptations of Jesus by Satan, and we are assured that the power of sin cannot touch the power of Jesus.

**Jesus is Preaching (Luke 4:14—Luke 21):** We get to travel with Jesus on his different trips and watch His miracles and listen to His messages.

**Jesus Preaches in Galilee (Luke 4:14-9:51)**— In this passage we read of several miracles, teachings, and narratives of Jesus.

**Jesus Preaches in Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-21)**— A turning point occurs at this time of Jesus' ministry. In verse 51 we read these words, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Also, from this point forward, Luke gives us little notations about making His way to the cross. For instance, consider the following verses:

Luke 13:22 "And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem."

Luke 17:11 "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee."

Luke 18:31 "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."

Luke 19:11 "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

Luke 19:37 "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise Go with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;"

**Jesus is Suffering (Luke 22-23):** Here we have Jesus' passion where we find His arrest, trial, and execution on the cross.

**Jesus is Conquering (Luke 24):** This is Luke detailing the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

### ***What to Look for in Luke***

Luke places an emphasis on several features of Jesus' life and ministry that are a joy to pick up once you realize that they are there.

**Tenderness**—Because Luke highlights Jesus' humanity, he lists out specific touching scenes that point to this fact.

**Tenderness Toward Women:** In a world where women were looked at, in large part, as a piece of property, Luke details several interactions with women that are completely honorable and respectful towards women. More than any other Gospel, Luke records Jesus' great appreciation of women and you can see this clearly by what He says to them and what He does for them.

**Tenderness Toward Children:** Once again, more than any other Gospel Luke lists Jesus' love and tenderness toward children.

**Tenderness Toward the Poor:** When you're reading through this Gospel, note how many times the poor are mentioned inside of any particular theme and you'll begin to realize that Jesus displayed tremendous compassion on the poor.

**The Holy Spirit**— Another great emphasis exists in the mentioning of the Holy Spirit (1:15, 35,45,67; 2:25-27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12). Luke begins with a Spirit-filled family, and ends by explaining the new Spirit-filled life in Christ. It is fully understandable that this doctrine is placed as a central theme in this Gospel. With Jesus presented as the Perfect Man we see that He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father by guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus lived the exact life in His humanity that we are to walk in our lives. We are to experience a Spirit-led, and Spirit-filled life.

### ***What to Gain from Luke***

**Search and Rescue**—Luke is a precise kind of teacher. He doesn't want us to have any question about who Jesus is or what He came to do, so Luke tells us the exact purpose. In Luke 19:10 the key that unlocks the entire purpose of Jesus' coming to earth as a man, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus took the role of a perfect Man so that He could then be a perfect sacrifice. And notice how full of action this verse is: Jesus came—Jesus sought—Jesus saves. At every point, Jesus is exalted as the One who took the initiative. God came to us. Identified with us. Lived for us. Died for us. Raised for us. Ascended for us. And now, advocates for us.

Jesus, in Luke, is the Perfect Man, who becomes our Perfect Example, died a perfect death, so that we could have the perfect fellowship with God.

And to that, all God's people say, "Mission Accomplished!"



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