

Introduction to NT Books

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III. Luke

A. The Authorship of Luke

1. External Evidence

- a. Early patristics such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen ascribed the Gospel to Luke.
- b. The Muratorian Canon (c. AD 180) reported the Lukan authorship.
- c. It is difficult to understand why a Gentile would be assigned authorship if he were not the author.

2. Internal Evidence

- a. Author was not an eyewitness, but he used scholarly methods in his historical research to write his Gospel (Lk. 1:1-4).
- b. The author was not a Jew (cf. Lk. 4:15; Acts 1:19; Col. 4:10-14).
- c. The Gospel's unity with Acts is important: same recipient, similar medical language, a former treatise, Acts is a continuation of Luke.
- d. The "We" sections in Acts point to Luke; all other possibilities are

eliminated.

- e. Since Luke was a constant companion of Paul (Acts 20:1-6 II Tim. 4:11), the Lukan authorship of Luke-Acts is affirmed.

B. The Date of Luke

1. It must be dated before the Book of Acts.
2. Acts ends with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment, or about AD 60, the time of the writing of the Prison Epistles.
3. Therefore, Luke must have been written sometime in the middle to late 50's (cf. I Tim. 5:18).

C. The Origin and Destination

1. Several possibilities have been suggested for the origin of this Gospel, including Greece, Caesarea and Rome.
2. Luke wrote to the individual Theophilus, the "lover of God," who needed additional edification about the person of Christ and His Great Commission.

D. The Purpose: To edify this believer by putting a written account of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ into his hands.

E. The Characteristics of Luke

1. Luke emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit, and the value of prayer in our lives as well as in the life of Christ, in this most comprehensive and longest Gospel.

2. Luke emphasized the individual, regardless of station in life. He gives sufficient attention to the down and out (cf. Lk. 4:18) and the role of women in his Gospel.

F. His Gospel is characterized by historical clarity and literary polish and beauty.

G. He used unique medical terms (cf. Lk. 16):

1. v. 20 “*full of sores*” (ἡλκωμένος); Luke used this *hapax* participle as did the ancients with reference to “being ulcerated.” The word “ulcer” comes from the French *ulcere* which came from the Latin *ulcus* which came from the Greek noun *elkos* (ἔλκος [see v. 21]).

2. v. 21 “*licked*” (ἀπέλειχον); using another *hapax* verb, Luke recorded that the dogs licked Lazarus’ ulcers. It may be that Luke, familiar with zoopharmacognosy, or animal wound licking, realized that the good Lord gave the only medicinal help Lazarus received through the benefit of the dogs’ saliva.

3. v. 23 “*torments*” (βασάνοις)