

Reading Luke

The Big Picture

1-2	Birth narratives	9-19	Jesus' journey to Jerusalem
3-4	Jesus introduced and tested	19-23	Jesus' confrontation in Jerusalem
4-9	Jesus announces the kingdom in Galilee	24	Jesus' resurrection

The Purpose of Luke-Acts

**Note: Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2 show that both books were written by the same author and were meant to be read as a single continuous work.

Luke 1:1-4 shows that Luke was compiled from sources and reports from eyewitnesses of the events – for the purpose of helping followers of Jesus understand his significance and story with more certainty.

Main Themes in Luke

1. Jesus' entire life is the continuation of the covenant story between Yahweh and Israel
 - The story begins in the Jerusalem temple with a priest (Zechariah, ch.1) and prophets (Simeon and Anna, ch.2)
 - The poems in chs. 1-2 (Mary, 1:46-55; Zechariah, 1:67-79; Simeon 2:29-32) all echo Old Testament psalms and prophecies about the coming messiah.
 - John the Baptist is "Elijah" who was to prepare the way for the messiah, just as Isaiah 40 and Malachi 4 anticipated: ch.3
 - Jesus' lineage links him to David, Abraham, and Adam, the key moments in the storyline of the Old Testament.
2. Jesus' mission is to announce and bring the kingdom of God to the poor, hurting, and outsiders
 - Jesus' inaugural speech at Nazareth (based on Isaiah 61) shows that the kingdom is for those who have been excluded by Israel's religious culture and leadership:
 - The poor: 4:18, 6:20; 7:22; 21:1-4
 - The sick: see the healings in chs. 5-7 highlight Jesus mission to heal the sick
 - Samaritans: 9:51-55; 10:29-37; 17:11-19
 - The demonized: 4:33-35; 6:18-19; 9:38-44; 10:17-20;
 - Tax collectors, prostitutes, "sinners": 5:27-32; 7:36-50
 - Jesus' most famous parables in Luke focus on this theme: 15:1-32
3. Jesus must continually show that God's kingdom reverses the value-system and culture of the world
 - Jesus' "sermon on the plain" (6:17-49) is focused entirely on reversing traditional human instinct and values.
 - Status in the kingdom requires humility and repentance: 9:46-48; 14:7-11; 18:9-14
4. The kingdom should radically transform how Jesus' followers relate to wealth (**Luke contains more of Jesus' teaching on wealth and resources than any other Gospel**)
 - Jesus believed that our relationship to our resources is the truest indicator of our allegiance and heart devotion, whether to God or the world: 12:13-31; 16:1-10; 16:19-31; 18:18-30; 19:1-10; 19:11-27
5. Israel's leaders continually oppose Jesus and finally have him executed: chs. 19-23
6. Jesus' death and resurrection are the paradoxical way God's kingdom is brought into being and made accessible to all nations: ch.24, especially vv.24-27, 44-49.

