

Theo 210, Week #08:
Questions about the Gospel of Luke (ANSWER KEY)
The University of St. Francis

According to the Gospel of Luke

True/False

1. **False** The author of the Gospel of Luke addresses his work to a man named Paul of Tarsus.
The man's name was "Theophilus" or "lover of God."
2. **True** A long, central section of the Gospel of Luke, the "Greater Interpolation" of Luke 9: 51-18: 14, is a miscellaneous compilation of Jesus' teachings while he was on the road from Galilee to Jerusalem.
3. **True** One of the main thematic interests of Luke is Jesus' and the disciples' use of prayer.
4. **False** In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus does not stress the dangers of wealth or material possessions as strongly as he does in the other Gospels.
5. **True** Luke 6 contains a briefer version of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew called the Sermon on the Plain.
6. **True** The "Lord's Prayer" is found in Luke's Gospel. (Lk 11: 1-4)

7. False The Gospel of Luke modifies Mark's version of Jesus' end time discourse by emphasizing that the Parousia will come immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem.
8. True More than any other Gospel writer, Luke emphasizes the innocence of Jesus and his followers of any crime against Rome.
9. True According to the Gospel of Luke, when a centurion standing by sees the manner of Jesus' condemnation and execution, the centurion declares, "Beyond all doubt, this man was innocent." (Lk 23: 47)
10. False Luke omits the tradition found in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus would appear in Jerusalem and sets all of the resurrection stories in Galilee.
11. True Luke emphasizes the physical reality of Jesus' resurrection when he portrays the resurrected Christ as eating fish and capable of being touched. (Lk 24: 36-44)

Short Answer

1. Who wrote the Gospel of Luke? Is there a "Luke" in the New Testament? To what audience is Luke written?

As with the other gospels, the authorship of Luke is not certain. The name "Luke" does appear in at least three Pauline letters (Col 4: 14, 2 Tm 4: 11, Philemon 24) as is depicted as both a companion and a physician. Written for a non-Christian Roman Official (Theophilus, meaning "God lover") or other cultured non-Christians (e.g. the Hellenists or Gentiles)

2. Luke's account is written in two parts. Name them.

a. *Part I: The Gospel of Luke*

b. *Part II: The Acts of the Apostles*

3. Mark calls his text a "Gospel." Matthew's text is seen as a textbook. How does Luke approach his writings? Why is that important?

Luke sees his gospel more as a "history" and attempts to depict his gospel as an accurate account of Jesus' (and his apostles') ministry.

4. The Gospel of Luke is often associated with what other New Testament book?

a. The Gospel of Matthew

c. The Gospel of John

b. The Gospel of Mark

d. *The Book of Acts*

5. Luke, the traditional author of the Gospel that bears his name, was associated with what profession?

a. *Physician*

c. Carpenter

b. Politician

d. Fisherman

6. According to some traditions in the early church, the author of Luke was a traveling companion of what apostle?

a. *Paul*

c. John

b. Peter

d. James

7. Luke shows Jesus' solidarity with the entire human race by tracing Jesus' genealogy back to what Old Testament figure?

a. *Adam*

c. Abraham

b. Moses

d. King David

8. Luke is the only Synoptic Gospel writer to refer to Jesus using what unique title?
- a. Messiah
 - b. King
 - c. Priest
 - d. *Savior*
9. Explain how Luke sees the role of Mary, as distinct of that of Matthew & Mark. How does Mary respond to the call of faith in Luke 1: 26-38 (as opposed to Joseph's response or Zechariah's response)?

Whereas the story of Joseph seems more central in Matthew's gospel, it is Mary's role (especially her acceptance of Gabriel's calling as the Lord's handmaid) that sets her apart as the model of servanthood in scripture.

10. It is said that about 35% of Mark's gospel is found in Luke. How does Luke utilize Mark's gospel in his gospel?

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Luke incorporates 65% of Mark's 661 verses; Marcan passages make up one-third of Luke's 1149 verses. The main parallels between Luke and Mark occur thus:

Luke 4: 31-6: 19 follows Mark 1: 21-3: 12; Luke 8: 4-9: 50 follows Mark 4: 1-9: 41 Luke 18: 15-21: 38 follows Mark 10: 13-13: 37. Yet, some sections seem to have come at times from Matthew through Mark: for example, Luke 4: 1-3 relies immediately upon Mark 1: 13, which may have depended on Matthew 4: 1-3; other similar cases are Luke 5: 26; Mark 2: 12; Matthew 9: 8; or again Luke 8: 25; Mark 4: 41; Matthew 8: 27; or again Luke 8: 44; Mark 5: 27; Matthew 9: 20.

11. Besides the Gentiles, the Gospel of Luke is notable for the degree to which the author stresses the role of what specific group in the ministry of Jesus?

- a. **Women**
- b. Priests
- c. Pharisees
- d. Pontius Pilate

12. In Luke 1: 20, what happens to Zechariah when he doubts what the angel Gabriel has told him?

- a. He is unable to walk
- b. **He is unable to speak**
- c. He is unable to see
- d. He rejoices with the angel

Luke 1: 11-23 tells how the angel comes to Zechariah to tell him that his prayers have been answered for a son. When he doubts Gabriel, the angel makes him silent until the birth of his son, whom he will name John.

13. There are many differences between the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke. Name three of the infancy stories *unique* to the gospel of Luke.

Of the many choices...

- a. ***The emphasis of Joseph's story over Mary's in Matthew 1***
- b. ***The story of the wise men.***
- c. ***The flight to Egypt; slaughter of the innocents.***

14. Unlike Mark and Matthew, Luke records another quotation from Isaiah, which Jesus reads aloud at the beginning of his public ministry. How does this passage begin?

- a. ***All Israel shall hear the word***
- b. ***The Spirit of the Lord is on me***
- c. ***The heavens shake with righteousness***
- d. ***The trees of the field shall clap their hands***

“He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.’”

The Holy Spirit is another major theme of Luke’s gospel. If Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit leading the early church in mission, then Luke is the story of the Holy Spirit leading Jesus. In this same chapter, for example, we are told that Jesus returned from his baptism “full of the Holy Spirit”; was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert where he faced temptation and, subsequently, returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit.”

15. What differences can you cite between the ways Luke’s Gospel approaches the character of John the Baptist vs. the other two gospels?

Primarily, the story of John is covered only in Chapter three as the precursor for what is yet to come. The story does not say whether John himself baptized Jesus but it does point out the difference between his type of baptism and the one that is yet to come.

16. What is John the Baptist’s role in Luke’s description of Jesus’ baptism?

John is the prophet that tells of the Lord’s coming. The last great prophet prior to the Lord. Luke does not say whether John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

17. How long did Jesus’ ministry appear to take place (following his baptism)?

Luke’s gospel mentions Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem only once, at the end of Jesus’ ministry.

18. Luke's story of the Prodigal Son is actually the third part of three parables.

a. What is so remarkable about the lost coin story?

That the woman who holds a celebration that would have cost more than the worth of the coin itself.

b. What is so remarkable about the lost sheep story?

That the shepherd would abandon the 99 found sheep for the one lost one.

c. Name the two morals that come from the Prodigal Son Story.

a. *That the focus of faith is to find the lost.*

b. *That those who are welcomed into the fold should focus more on finding the lost than on embracing what they already have.*

19. Luke's gospel, similar to Matthew's, focuses on the theme "table fellowship with sinners." Cite one example and explain this theme.

Luke 19: 1 ff. (the story of Zacchaeus), among others Luke 19: 1 ff. (the story of Zacchaeus), among others Luke 19: 1 ff. (the story of Zacchaeus), among others.

20. Compare and contrast the Beatitudes, as presented in Luke's gospel (vs. Matthew's gospel).

In Matthew's version (5: 1 ff.), Matthew focuses only on the "positive" beatitudes. In contradistinction, Luke focuses on those who do not follow the beatitudes as well (see Luke 6: 24-26)

21. How many times, in the gospel of Luke, does Jesus predict his death?

- a. Zero
- b. One
- c. Two
- d. **Three**

Jesus predicts his death in Luke 9: 21-27, 9: 43-45 and 18: 35-43.

22. At the beginning of Chapter 8, Luke provides some detail about those that travelled with Jesus. What is unusual about this list?

- a. It includes journalists
- b. It includes children
- c. It includes protective staff
- d. **It includes women**

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means."

Only Luke records this information and it is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it shows that Jesus was happy to welcome women among his travelling companions, a fact that would have scandalized respectable Jewish society. It is yet another example of Luke promoting Jesus' acceptance of the outsider. Secondly, it shows that Jesus' appeal transcended social barriers. Finally, it suggests that, unusually for the time, these women had independent means and were happy to use them to back Jesus financially.

23. One of Jesus' most famous parables is found in Luke 10 and tells the story of a violent robbery. Help comes from an unexpected source. Who is the hero of this parable?

- a. A Leper
- b. A Donkey
- c. The High Priest
- d. **A Samaritan**

"But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his

wounds, pouring on oil and wine."

The enmity between Jews and Samaritans went back centuries. It began in the sixth century BC with the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem. Many of the leading Jews were deported and, at the same time, the Babylonians repopulated the area with other peoples from their empire. These intermixed with the Jews left behind to form the basis of the Samaritan people, who developed different customs and practices to the Jews in Babylon. Samaria lay between Judaea and Galilee and, such was their hatred, that many Jews traveling between the two extended their journey rather than cross Samaritan territory. The parable arose from Jesus being asked to define the word "neighbor" in the phrase "Love your neighbor as yourself". His response suggests that he saw it as anyone in need, regardless of creed, color or culture.

24. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man focuses on what theme?
- a. A loving father who forgives his wayward son.
 - b. A dramatic reversal of fortunes in the afterlife.**
 - c. A wedding party at which the wine runs out.
 - d. A dishonest tax collector who begs God for mercy.
25. The three parables in Luke 15, dealing respectively with sheep, a coin, and two sons, are tied together by what theme?
- a. Things that are beyond human understanding.
 - b. Things that are of inestimable value.
 - c. Things that can cause pride and jealousy.
 - d. Things that were lost and then found.**

26. When Jesus is brought to trial before Pilate, the Roman governor, Pilate realizes that Jesus is a Galilean, so he sends Jesus to be tried by what Roman Official?

a. Herod Antipas

b. Caiaphas

c. Tiberius

d. Joseph of Arimathea

27. What does Jesus ask God to do to his executioners before dying on the cross in the Gospel of Luke?

a. Call for his mother.

b. Turn his blood into wine.

c. Ask God to forgive his executioners.

d. Declare his innocence.

28. After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to two disciples who were travelling home from Jerusalem. What was their destination?

a. Jericho

c. Sidon

b. Emmaus

d. Bethlehem

Emmaus was about seven miles from Jerusalem. One of the two disciples is named as Clopas. The other is unnamed although there is a school of thought that she is Clopas' wife. This is based upon the gospel of John which records "Mary the wife of Clopas" as being present at the crucifixion. If this is true, it would again be noteworthy, by the standards of his day, that Luke includes her on equal terms with her husband.

29. How many ascension stories does Luke present in the New Testament?

Two. Once in the Gospel (Luke 24: 1-53) and once in Acts (Acts 1: 9-12)

30. The narrative in Luke's gospel begins and ends in the same place. Where?

- a. *The temple in Jerusalem*
- b. The house of Peter
- c. A café bar in Beersheba
- d. The Mount of Olives

The gospel begins with Zechariah serving as a priest in the temple. He sees an angel who announces that he and his wife will have a son whom they are to name John - John the Baptist. The gospel concludes with the ascension of Jesus into heaven: "Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God" (Luke 24: 52-53).

Jerusalem and its temple form a key motif for Luke. In the gospel, everything looks towards Jerusalem. This includes a considerable amount of material that Luke unfolds against the backdrop of one long and final journey to the city (Chapters 9 to 19). In Acts, this is reversed. The story starts in Jerusalem with the day of Pentecost and then the Christian message moves out into the wider world as predicted in the words of Jesus: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

Essay

1. According to Johnson, how would you describe the geographical structure of Luke-Acts?

Luke uses geography as a literary and theological instrument. The center of his story is the city of Jerusalem. The whole movement of the Gospel is toward Jerusalem. Thus, the infancy account leads to the presentation of Jesus in the temple (Luke 2: 22) and to his discovery there after being lost (2: 41-51). The Lukan temptation account reverses Matthew's order for the last two temptations, so the climax is reached in Jerusalem (4: 9). The transfiguration at the end of the Galilean ministry explicitly prepares for the journey to Jerusalem and

Jesus' death (9: 31). The journey itself begins with a solemn announcement (9: 51), followed by multiple references, during the journey, to Jesus' destination (13: 22, 33-34; 17: 11; 18: 31; 19: 11, 28). After Jesus' resurrection, all his appearances take place in the environs of Jerusalem, the last of them ending with his instruction "Stay in the city" (24: 1-49).

The movement of Acts is away from Jerusalem. Jesus says in Acts 1: 8, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." This is fulfilled by the narrative: the ministry centered in Jerusalem (chaps. 1-7) is followed by the evangelization of Judea and Samaria (chaps. 8-12), then Asia Minor and Europe (chaps. 13-28). Each outward movement, in turn, circles back to Jerusalem before reaching out still further (see Acts 12: 25; 15: 2; 18: 22; 19: 21; 20: 16; 21: 13; 25: 1).

Jerusalem is therefore the center of the narrative.

2. According to Johnson, what are the elements of Luke's portrayal of his leading characters as prophets?

Many of the distinctive literary features of Luke's work, furthermore, can be best appreciated when seen as serving his overall purpose: his emphasis on the fulfillment of OT prophecy, his characterization of the early Christians as spirit-inspired prophets, his development of a prophetic Christology and model of authority, and his use of the story of Moses for the structuring of the two volumes. It is to these literary dimensions of Luke-Acts that we now turn.

Specifically Lukan is the use of literary prophecy. Things predicted by characters within the story are later shown to be fulfilled explicitly in the narrative...

Of particular importance for interpreting Luke's narrative are his programmatic prophecies. These are spoken by characters at critical junctures within the narrative and provide an interpretation of the narrative that follows... A similar fulfillment pattern is found within

smaller units. Luke arranges speech and narrative so that a story immediately following upon a saying fulfills the saying, often ironically. That Luke uses speeches in Acts as a means of interpreting the narrative (Acts 2: 14–36; 3: 11–26; 17: 22–31) has long been recognized. But Luke uses this technique of the Hellenistic historian in his Gospel narrative as well.

3. According to Johnson, how does Luke describe the disciples of Jesus differently from Mark?

(The) presentation of Jesus as the Holy One helps us appreciate Mark's two-edged portrayal of the disciples. One side of the portrayal is positive; the other side of the portrayal is almost unrelievedly negative: Peter denies even knowing him (14: 66–72); and none of them stays with him to the end – “They all fled” (14: 50).

These literary observations suggest something of Mark's religious purpose in shaping the story of Jesus and the disciples in this fashion. Mark's readers would naturally, as we still do, identify themselves with the disciples. Mark therefore uses that relationship to teach his readers. The message is mainly one of warning against smugness and self-assurance. He seems to be saying “If you think you are an insider, you may not be; if you think you understand the mystery of the kingdom and even control it, watch out; it remains alive and fearful beyond your comprehension. If you think discipleship consists in power because of the presence of God, beware; you are called to follow the one who suffered and died. Your discipleship is defined by his messiahship, that is, in terms of obedience and service.”

Beginning in Luke 9: 1, Jesus prepares a foundation for authority within the people to replace the Jewish leaders who reject the prophet. He sends out the Twelve with “power and authority” to preach the kingdom and to heal (9: 2) – to engage, that is, in precisely the activities of Jesus himself (see, e.g., 9: 11). When they return, Jesus has them distribute food to feed the five thousand (9: 10–17). Luke thereby establishes a connection, which he consistently makes, between

authority among the people and service at table fellowship. That these Twelve will take over the leadership of Israel is suggested in the Lukan parables of the pounds (19: 11-27) and the vineyard (20: 9-18).

4. According to Johnson, how and why are the infancy narratives in Luke different from those in Matthew?

The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke have little in common beyond the characters of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Even here, however, there are differences: in contrast with Luke's account, Joseph is a more dominant character than Mary. Moreover, while the two Gospels interpret Torah midrashically, they do so in very different ways. They also use distinct literary devices and divergent geographical emphases. Each, in short, is fitted to the distinctive witness of the Gospel it begins.

Matthew's version is distinguished by its genealogy (1: 1-17) and dense clustering of formula citations (1: 23; 2: 6, 15, 23). They help define the place of Jesus within traditional Jewish messianic expectation. For Christians in conversation with an aggressive Pharisaic movement (see 23: 15), proclaiming Jesus as resurrected Messiah was insufficient; the credentials of a Davidic king required demonstration. For this, Jesus' dubious parentage and lowly place of origin were problematic (see John 1: 46; 7: 27). The formula citations prove that Jesus meets prophetic expectations, and the genealogy connects him to the royal line. Together, they answer—at least to this community's satisfaction—the questions of who Jesus is and whence he came.

Luke's infancy account (chaps. 1-2) is a form of haggadic midrash: his language evokes both specific texts from Torah and the general atmosphere of the biblical world. The infancy account, in short, roots the story of Jesus in the longer story of Israel. At the same time it points forward to the ministry of Jesus and beyond, by establishing motifs that are later developed by means of programmatic prophecies.

The infancy account has a complex internal structure. It contains two sets of contrasting narratives. The annunciation to Zechariah (Luke 1: 8-23) is contrasted to the one made to Mary (1: 26-33), and the birth of John (1: 57-67) is placed against that of Jesus (2: 1-21).

5. Explain the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke's writings.

(From The Jerome Biblical Commentary) Luke constantly alludes to the role of the Spirit (1: 15, 35, 41, 67; 2: 25-27; 3: 16, 22; 4: 1, 14, 18; 10: 21; 11: 13; 12: 10, 12). Where Matthew 7: 11 speaks of the good things the heavenly Father gives to those who ask, Luke 11: 13 speaks of the Holy Spirit who is the gift par excellence. Once given to the OT judges, this Spirit is now sent to John the Baptist (1: 15, 80) and his parents (1: 41, 67). Jesus is conceived through the power of the Spirit (1: 35) and is himself filled with the Holy Spirit (4: 1). What happened to Jesus must continue to happen to the Church-until the parousia. The Spirit, consequently, occupies the same prominent position in Acts. The implication is clear enough. The Church continues the mission of Jesus; the eschatological age, inaugurated by Jesus, persists until the Spirit brings it to perfection at some future moment.

6. In Luke's passion narrative, is the Judean responsibility for Jesus' death expanded or minimized when compared to Matthew's version?

While Matthew follows Mark's Passion narrative closely, Luke significantly alters his Markan source. He deletes the anointing at Bethany (7: 36-50 is another story altogether) and the shepherd citation from Zechariah. He shifts two elements of the Passion to Acts: the death of Judas (see Acts 1: 16-20) and the false witnesses who accuse Jesus of speech against the temple (see Stephen in Acts 6: 11-14). Luke also adds significant materials. He attributes Judas' betrayal to Satan's entering his heart (22: 3). He expands the last-supper sayings to include a discourse on leadership as service within the community (22: 24-38). He also includes a separate hearing before Herod (23: 6-12). Moreover, the entire crucifixion scene is richer, with Jesus addressing both the crowds around him as he carries his cross

(23: 28–31) and the two criminals crucified with him (23: 39–43). The cry of abandonment from the cross found in both Mark and Matthew becomes in Luke a prayer of acceptance (23: 46), and it is preceded by words of forgiveness (23: 34) and promise (23: 43).

These alterations make Luke's Passion narrative the closest of the Synoptics to John's Passion account. Two emphases emerge, however, that are distinctively Lukan: the image of Jesus as sophos, and the role of the populace in his death.

7. Luke's gospel connects discipleship to poverty. Specifically, compare Luke's story of the rich ruler from 18: 18-30 to Mark's story of the rich man in 10: 17-31.

From the IBC

Luke merits to be called the "Gospel of the Poor." This spirit shines brightly in the Infancy Narrative, where the poor and insignificant are chosen for the greatest privileges: the childless couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth; Mary and Joseph from unknown Nazareth; shepherds from the countryside; an old man and elderly widow at the Temple. Luke preserves the strong regard for actual poverty in his beatitudes; in writing happy are you poor," he keeps the direct address of the second person and does not add, like Matthew, "poor in spirit" (Luke 6: 20). He includes the full Isaian text about the poor to whom the gospel is brought (4: 18; 7: 22). The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is exclusive to Luke (16: 19-31). Still other words about poverty, including a parable, are found only in Luke (12: 13-21).

Luke and Mark both focus very sternly on radical poverty as a means to discipleship, as illustrated in the comparative texts.