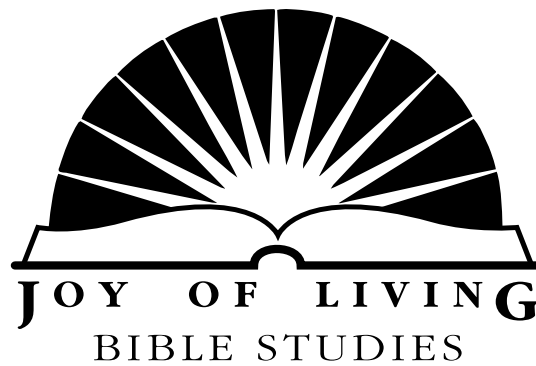


Luke Lesson 1



Introduction

We are about to begin a study of the book of Luke. We will be searching other books of the Bible as we study Luke. The Bible is one book of history, *His Story, God's Story*. The Old and New Testament mesh together to give us GOD's complete word. The Bible contains 66 books written by 40 authors as the Holy Spirit inspired them and it was all recorded over a period of 1600 years. The Old Testament was recorded in the Hebrew language with a few short passages in Aramaic. Then about 100 years before Christ's appearance on the earth, it was translated into the Greek language. The New Testament was also recorded in Greek.

Have you ever studied or read any other book that has survived this length of time with such a unity of purpose? The Bible portrays Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord for any who will believe and receive Him. It is amazing that 40 authors over a period of 1600 years should have this one theme portrayed in all of their writings. How is this possible? Only as the Spirit of God moved in their hearts and led them to put down God's written revelation of Himself could this have ever come about. This book, the Bible is like a ship that has managed to sail down the river of time safely preserved by God's own hand. Other books have set sail at nearly the same time, and have joined the Bible in this sail down the river of time. Some of these books have been shipwrecked in various ways and lost, others have completely disappeared without our ever having known that they had existed. But this is not true of God's Word to us, the Bible. It has sailed safely down this river of time all of the way to us in this present century. Why has it had such a safe journey? Why has it not suffered a shipwreck or a quiet harbor death? Because it is God's personal message to us. He has preserved this message in the book we call the Holy Bible. God saw to it that this very special book, the Bible, was preserved through all of the storms of time so that we could have His message to us. He wants us to know that He loves us and has a plan for each one of our lives. He preserved the book that shows us His love, and His plans for each one of us.

Some famous men have found God's love and His plan for their lives in the Bible. Isaac Wafts said of the Bible, "Here are my choicest treasures hid." John Newton said, "I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good and sound, but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to be a small amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one Book worth them all, called the Bible."

Charles Graham once said, "It is said of the mines of Cornwall, England, that the deeper they are sunk the richer they prove; and though some lodes have been followed a thousand and even fifteen hundred feet, they have not come to an end. Such is the Book of God. It is a mine of wealth which can never be exhausted. The deeper we sink into it the richer it becomes." So as we embark on this study, let us think of ourselves as miners searching for the wealth of God's truth in the Bible which can never be exhausted!

Someone said recently, "I'm finally beginning to think of the Bible as an operator's instruction manual. It's of little value to me personally until I start studying it with an eye to seeing how it tells me to operate my life. I can read it and even memorize it, but I won't even get out of the garage unless I start doing the things it tells me to do. If I turn on the ignition, the engine will start. If I shift into reverse and press down on the accelerator I can back out onto the street. If I shift into drive and press down on the accelerator I start moving toward the corner. If I step on the brake, the car comes to a stop."

Are you willing to start studying your instruction manual, the Bible? Are you willing to start doing the things it tells you to do? The instructions may not always be easy, but they are always clear, and God provides the power to follow them! (Zechariah 4:6; John 16:13,14)

Our basic text this year will be the book of Luke in the New Testament, but you will need an Old Testament also, as the two testaments are inseparably intertwined in their message to us. We would suggest that you not only use a King James Version but also a modern language translation, particularly if you are very new to Bible study. The New International Version, New American Standard or some other good translation could be read and compared with the King James Version. If you are Catholic you will enjoy reading and comparing the Catholic Living Bible Paraphrase with the New Jerusalem Bible. There is a New Testament which is most helpful called the Layman's Parallel New Testament. It contains side by side in parallel columns the King James Version, the Amplified New Testament, the Living New Testament, and the Revised Standard Version. We would suggest that you underline favorite verses in your Bible as you find them.

You will be interested to note that the word "testament" means a covenant, an agreement, a promise. The "Old Testament" is the covenant promise that God made with man about His salvation. (Look up salvation in the dictionary!)

This was before the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth. The “New Testament” is the agreement God made with man after the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth.

The Old Covenant or promise stated very simply that a sacrifice had to be made for sin. Therefore, the plan was that the priests would kill the lambs in the Temple for a sin offering and present the blood for the forgiveness of the sins of their people. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement” (Leviticus 17:11).

The New Covenant is simply that the Lord Jesus Christ came as the Lamb of God to earth and shed His blood for sin. Read the following statements and summarize what they have to say concerning this.

Hebrews 9:22, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Matthew 26:28, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Now for a little background on the book of Luke before we begin our study. It is believed to have been written by Luke, a Greek. Luke was a medical doctor. He was an educated man. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he recorded the Gospel of Luke. You will find that he gave very careful attention to details for he had been trained in the medical profession to be very observant in diagnosing his patient’s illnesses. Luke was a close personal friend of Paul. Paul referred to him as the “beloved physician.” Read 2 Timothy 4:11 and write down its significance to what has been stated.

As we study this book, note that Luke gave special attention to medical details. Read Luke 5:12 and record the example given in this passage.

Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Compare Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1. To whom did Luke address himself in both of these books?

Each Gospel presents different aspects of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will be looking into each of the Gospels at different times during our study.

JOHN presented Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of all who believe in Him.

MATTHEW presented Jesus as the King to the Jews.

MARK presented Jesus as the Servant of Jehovah to the Romans.

LUKE presented Jesus as the Perfect Man to the Greeks.

Not only were these Gospels written for the Jews, Romans and Greeks, but also for us! Luke reveals to us the Saviour with all of His sympathies, feelings and powers—a Saviour suited for each one of us. He portrays the God of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming down to our level, entering into our conditions and into life on this planet earth. He shows us the one perfect God-Man who was sinless, yet was in all ways tempted as we are. Read Hebrews 4:15 and put it into your own words. “For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Jesus understands our needs and provides for us in them. We will learn this as we study this book of Luke.

Luke is a poetic book and opens in chapter 1:14-17 with what is called “the song to Zacharias.” Next we find what is called “the song to Mary” in Luke 1:46-55. We find the “angel’s song” at the announcement of the birth of Christ in Luke 2:14. The book seems to end with a song “praising and blessing God” in Luke 24:53. Anyone who reads and believes this message receives the same joy as Luke did when God led him to write this Gospel.

It does not appear that Luke ever saw the Lord Jesus Christ in person but the Lord led him to many eye witnesses; people who were with the Lord Jesus throughout His life and ministry here on earth! (See Luke 1:1-3.) It is believed that Luke recorded this Gospel about 61 A.D. Luke accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys also. Read Acts 16:10 where the word “we” is used as Luke records Acts. In the preceding chapters you will note that Luke used the word “they” when recording Paul’s journeys. This would indicate that it was at this point in Acts 16 that Luke joined Paul on some of his missionary journeys. Find the word “we” or “us” in Acts 20:15; 27:1; and 28:15. Luke also remained with Paul when he was a prisoner in Rome (2 Timothy 4:11). This letter, 2 Timothy, is believed to have been the last letter ever written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome.

We have seen how God prepared Luke to be an instrument that He could use to record His everlasting message in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

He is seeking to prepare us for some great plan also. How are we going to be prepared by God?

A man bought a new power lawnmower. When he brought it home he was anxious to try it out. With his mechanical aptitude, he felt capable of handling this new device without difficulty. He filled it with gasoline, then tried to start it. But when he grabbed the starter handle and pulled, nothing happened. He choked the engine and pulled again. Nothing. He jostled it and pulled. No response. He puffed and he tugged. He grunted and he yanked and he cursed. Nothing—absolutely nothing happened except that his wife came out to see what was going on.

“What’s wrong?”, she asked. “Isn’t your mower any good?”

“How do I know?”, he answered sharply. “It won’t start.”

“Did you read the instruction booklet?” she asked innocently.

“I’ve been handling mechanical things like this all my life,” he evaded guiltily.

“Just remember,” she cautioned, “When all else fails, read the instructions.”

In just a few minutes after reading the instructions the mower was purring across the lawn.

Most people are like this man. They’re sure they can handle any of life’s problems without ever reading the basic instructions provided by the Bible. But 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and giving instruction for right living.” What’s in that for me? Do I wait until all else fails before consulting the Bible? Wouldn’t I prevent some of the problems if I studied it first?

Are you willing to take the time to prepare by studying the Bible this week? Will you give God at least one-half hour or one hour out of the 24 hours that He has given to you? This is such a small part of a day to give back to God! Daily questions have been prepared for you to help you to look into God’s Word, the Bible, and find His personal, special message for you. Please do not use a commentary of any kind to answer your questions. Let God speak to you directly through the Bible. We suggest that you begin by prayer, asking God to open your mind and your heart to His message for you. You may have many doubts at this point. Be honest with God in your prayer about them, and He will help you with them.

If you are studying this course with a group, it would be wise to have a discussion group of not more than 16 people. Meet weekly to discuss what you have studied individually in your homes. No one should speak at length about a question unless they have a written answer on their study sheet, so please record what God shows to you in your study this week. You will not be required to share if you feel something is a personal matter between you and God, but we are sure there will be many things you will discover and want to share with your discussion group.

You will find that there will be a song in your heart as God’s message from the Bible comes through to you! There will begin to be a new joy in living as you find that God speaks to you personally and gives you the strength to meet each day’s responsibilities. Whatever your situation is, whatever the problem is—God knows all about it. He will be your help.

As your body needs to be fed daily to remain healthy, so it is with your spiritual strength. We need to feed our bodies daily. If we don’t, we become weak and unable to cope with life. The same thing is true of our spiritual lives. We need to feed ourselves daily in prayer and from the Bible or we will also be unable to cope with life.

What would happen if you saved up all of your food in the refrigerator for the week and then ate it all in one day? You would be very weak and helpless all week long, and you couldn’t possibly eat all of the food you had saved up for the one day. It would be impossible to hold it all, let alone digest it properly! The same principle is also true in the spiritual world. We need to feed ourselves daily on spiritual truths. If you save the lesson up for one day in the week, you will find it just as impossible to hold it all and also just as impossible to digest it all! We encourage you to do a portion of your lesson daily!

Ask yourself this question now: “What shall I sacrifice this week in time, so that I may spend time with God?” Make a daily appointment with God. Find a quiet spot. Take your Bible, pencil or pen, and your lesson with you. If you have a busy phone you may have to remove it from the hook. Remember your appointment with God is more important than your annual dental checkup, and we wouldn’t dream of missing that. Keep your appointment with God daily. Pray now and ask yourself the following:

1. How many minutes do I want to give to the Lord each day?
2. What do I need to sacrifice to give the Lord this time? (Examples: Sleep, television, casual leisure reading, an afternoon nap, long telephone conversations, window shopping, etc. Each person will have to decide for himself or herself what his priorities are and what can be removed from his daily schedule to give time for God.)
3. What is my best time for my appointment with God?
4. Where is the quietest place for me to pray and study?
5. Do I really want to spend time with God?

(If your last answer is “yes” God will work it all out for you timewise. If your last answer is “no” pray that God will give you a desire, a hunger to have this time with Him. He will do this for you!)

Study Questions

Before you begin each day:

- a. Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- b. Use only the Bible for your answers.
- c. Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- d. Challenge questions are for those who have the time and wish to do them.
- e. Personal questions are to be shared with the class only if you wish to share them.
- f. As you study begin to look for a verse to memorize this week. Suggested memory verses: Luke 1:49,50, or choose a verse from the notes or lesson to memorize.

First Day: Read all of the notes and look up all of the Scriptures.

1. What was one new thought for you in the notes or lecture?

2. What was the most meaningful Scripture from the notes to you personally?

3. (Personal) Have you chosen to take up the challenge to give daily time to this study and to God? What sacrifice has God shown you to make time for Him? (Share if possible with your group, as it may help someone else.)

Second Day: Read all of Luke 1 concentrating on verses 1-25.

1. Read Luke 1:1-4.
 - a. To whom was this Gospel originally addressed?

 - b. Why did Luke write the Gospel? (See verse 4.)

2. a. What was Zacharias' work?

b. What age was this couple?

3. While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple who appeared unto him and what was Zacharias' reaction?

4. What did the angel tell Zacharias about:
 - a. His prayers?

 - b. His child's name?

 - c. What would people do at the child's birth?

 - d. John the Baptist? (See verses 15-17.)

5. In what condition did Zacharias have to remain until John was born because of his unbelief of the angel's words?
6. (Personal) As God dealt with unbelief in Zacharias, look into your own heart. Do you discover a lack of faith in the power of God to solve daily problems in your life? If so, why not trust God now to change your unbelief to belief? Ask Him to show you a miracle in your own life, just as great as the miracle of John the Baptist's birth to this elderly couple. Ask Him to meet a need, to begin to solve a problem, to begin His work in your heart today, to bring you God's peace in your circumstances. What have you asked God for today? (Record and share if you can with your discussion group or another person.)

Third Day: Read Luke 1:26-37.

1. What did the angel Gabriel tell Mary in verses 28-33?

2. Challenge: Compare the following verses:

Psalm 132:11

Isaiah 9:6,7

Luke 1:32,33

3. a. What was Mary's reply to Gabriel?

b. What was Gabriel's reply to her?

4. a. What was Gabriel's last statement to Mary in Luke 1:37?

b. Do you believe Luke 1:35,37 to be true concerning Christ's birth?

c. (Personal) Do you believe Luke 1:37 to be true for your own life's needs?

d. (Personal) Can you recall an instance when God met your needs simply because you trusted in His promise?

5. Read Matthew 1:18-25.

a. Before Mary and Joseph came together Mary was found to be with child of whom?

b. Who appeared unto Joseph in a dream?

- c. Why did the angel tell Joseph the child should be called Jesus?
 - d. Look up “saved” in the dictionary and give the meaning of the word.
 - e. What does the word “saved” mean in the Bible? Read the following verses:
Romans 10:9

John 3:16

Ephesians 2:8-9
 - f. (Personal) Has the word “saved” taken on new meaning for you today? If so, can you put it down in words?
6. Challenge: Compare Matthew 1:22,23 with Isaiah 7:14.
- a. What do Matthew 1:22,23 and Isaiah 7:14 have in common?
 - b. What does Emmanuel mean?
- Fourth Day:** Read Luke 1:36-56.
1. What relationship was there between Elisabeth and Mary?
 2. What two thoughts does Elisabeth express to Mary in Luke 1:43-45?
 3. a. How did Elisabeth know all of these things since Mary had told her nothing? See Luke 1:41.
 - b. Challenge: The Lord Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to Christians. What do the following verses state about the Holy Spirit?
John 14:26

John 15:26

Romans 8:9

Titus 3:5,6

4. Read Matthew 1:24,25. Did Joseph accept God's plan for Mary's life? Express this in your own words.
5. Does Mary accept and believe God's plan for her life?
6. (Personal) Do you believe God has a plan for your life? If you believe this, are you willing to seek this plan?

Fifth Day: Read Luke 1:57-66.

1. What did the people want to call Elisabeth's baby?
2. Did Elisabeth listen to the people or follow God's instructions for the name?
3. a. (Personal) Has God spoken to you through His Word this week? If so, have you obeyed as Elisabeth did? Be specific!

b. How do the following verses challenge a Christian to obey God?
1 Samuel 15:22

John. 12:26

Ephesians 6:6,7

4. How did Zacharias tell the people what he wanted his son to be named? See Luke 1 again.
5. In Luke 1:20 Zacharias' lips had been sealed by God because of unbelief in the power of God to give him a son in his old age. When his lips were opened what did Zacharias say?

6. What was the reaction of the people to all of this? (Note: In Luke 1:65 fear means a reverent awe.)

Sixth Day: Read Luke 1:67-80. Note: To prophesy is to speak God's words.

1. Whom was Zacharias filled with before he prophesied?

2. What did he prophesy of the future in Luke 1:68?

3. a. Challenge: Read Ephesians 1:7 and relate it to Luke 1:68.

b. (Personal) Has the Lord Jesus Christ redeemed you? Are you one of "His people" because of your faith in Him?

4. a. What are some of the things Luke 1:76-80 tell us that John the Baptist would do? List two verses.

b. Which one of these verses do you believe states the most important task of John the Baptist?

5. a. What does Matthew 26:28 say about the Lord Jesus Christ and the remission of sin? Compare with Luke 1:77.

b. What does Hebrews 9:22 say that adds to the thought in Matthew 26:28?

6. (Personal) Which verse from this lesson did you choose to memorize? Write it down by memory with the reference. Share with your discussion group if possible. Remember that there are many Christians in the world who have had their Bible taken from them, and all of God's Word that they have left is what they have memorized. How much of the Bible would you have hidden in your memory if your Bible were taken from you?