

(S) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. First, we will learn about the origin of each Bible book: who wrote it and when and where he wrote it. Second, we will learn about how the Bible book may be divided into parts. Third, we will learn the main contents and messages of each Bible book. Finally, we will learn how to understand some difficult parts of the Bible book.

Today's teaching is: THE INTRODUCTION OF LUKE - PART 2. Today we will learn about the characteristics, the purpose, the contents and the division of the Gospel of Luke.

POINT 5. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LUKE

First. The Gospel of Luke is related to contemporary history.

One. Luke covers a longer span of history than Matthew and Mark.

In its beginning, the Gospel of Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus back all the way to Adam, the father of all humans on earth. In its end, it records the ascension of Jesus to heaven and even makes an allusion to the coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Two. Luke relates his narrative to contemporary historical events.

He records that the priest Zechariah received a promise of the birth of his son in the days of king Herod of Judea (1:5); that Jesus was born during the census that took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria (2:1-2); that John the Baptist began his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar etc. (3:1). Luke also made other kinds of chronological references, like "When Jesus was twelve years old" he visited the temple in Jerusalem (2:42) or "Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his ministry" (3:23). He also states that the transfiguration of Jesus took place about eight days after Peter's confession of Christ (9:28) and that darkness came over the whole world between the sixth and ninth hour on the day Jesus was crucified (23:44).

Second. The Gospel of Luke has some real differences with the Gospel of Matthew.

The differences between the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew can be explained. For example:

One. The genealogy of Luke 3 differs from the genealogy of Matthew 1.

Matthew's genealogy is much shorter and he skips more generations. Matthew has only 16 names between David and Shealtiel, while Luke has 22. Matthew has only 13 names between Shealtiel and Jesus, while Luke has 22. This means that the words "son of" means "descendant of".

Matthew says Jesus is "the son of David, the son of Abraham", because he writes to show the significance of the Messiah for the Jews. Luke says Jesus is "the son of Adam, the son of God", because he writes to show the significance of the Messiah for the entire human race. And this human race is derived from God himself. It has no animal origin!

Matthew shows the *legal descent* of Jesus through Joseph, his relationship to Abraham, the father of the Jews, and his right to inherit the throne of king David. Luke says, "Now Jesus himself, supposedly the son of Joseph, was about thirty years old when he began his ministry, being a son of Heli, etc.". *Heli is believed to be the father of Mary*. Luke shows the *strict personal descent* of Jesus through Mary and his relationship to Adam, the father of the human race. According to the genealogies and Luke 1:32, both Joseph and Mary were direct descendants of king David. Matthew shows that Joseph is a descendant of David through Solomon, while Luke shows that Mary is a descendant of David through Nathan.

Two. The rejection at Nazareth.

While in Matthew 13 and Mark 6, the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth took place towards the end of his Galilean Ministry, Luke places this event at the very beginning. From the contents it is clear that they all describe the same event. On a Sabbath Jesus enters his hometown and teaches in the synagogue. The result is first astonishment, then adverse criticism and finally rejection. In all three Gospels he says that only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour (Mk 6:4). Even the historical background in Luke 4:23 shows that his rejection at Nazareth did not take place at the beginning of his Galilean ministry, but much later. The reason why Luke puts this at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry was to *summarise the general trend with respect to people's attitude towards Jesus*: the crowds first show enthusiastic interest and amazement in Jesus' work and words, but later reject him everywhere.

Three. The place of the Sermon on the Mount.

While the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew took place on a mountain (Mt 5:1; 8:1), in the Gospel of Luke Jesus stood with his disciples on a level place (Lk 6:17). This seeming contradiction disappears when we assume that Jesus delivered this sermon on a mountain plain.

Four. The time when Jesus taught the Lord's prayer.

While in Matthew Jesus taught the Lord's prayer as a part of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:9-13), Luke taught it in answer to a request of one of his disciples. This is not a contradiction, because Jesus may have taught this prayer several times in different situations to more than just his own disciples. Moreover, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew may include sayings that belong to another period.

POINT 6. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

First. Luke's first purpose was the spiritual well-being of just one person.

Luke made a very thorough research and wrote a very long book to his friend, Theophilus. We do not know who he was, but because he is addressed as "most excellent" (1:3), he was probably a person worthy of honour and a representative of the intellectual class at Rome.

Second. Luke's second purpose was to teach the gospel especially to the people from the Greek-speaking Roman world.

His Gospel gives very accurate information to people who were still seeking the truth and were considering becoming followers of Jesus Christ. But his Gospel also strengthens the faith and lives of new Christian converts, especially converts from the Greek speaking heathen in the Roman Empire.

Third. Luke's third purpose was to proclaim the gospel to all the nations in the world.

He writes to Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles. His Gospel is grounded in God, who created the first man, Adam, the human ancestor of Jesus. Luke makes his appeal to all people in the world. His Gospel is founded on the Old Testament prophecies, which speak of God's purpose with the Gentiles. For example, in Luke 2:31-32 is written that Jesus Christ is the salvation that God prepared for all his people in the world. Jesus Christ is *the light* to the Gentiles and *the glory* to the Jews. This means that he reveals the true knowledge about God and salvation to the Gentiles and that he is the visible manifestation of God's presence to the Jews.

Fourth. Luke's fourth purpose was to bring sinners and outcasts to Jesus.

Luke writes his Gospel as good news for the outcasts on earth. In chapter 7, Luke tells of the woman who had lived a sinful life in the city. In chapter 10, he tells of the good Samaritan, a race despised by the Jews. In chapter 15, he tells of the lost son, who had lived in an irresponsible way and had squandered his whole inheritance to bad friends. In chapter 18, he tells of the humble tax collector who in the end was more righteous than the proud religious leader. In chapter 19, he tells of Zacchaeus, who had become a rich man by cheating. And in chapter 23, he tells of the thief on the cross, who was a convicted criminal. Luke's purpose is to tell all the people in the world that nobody is a hopeless case. There is hope for salvation for everyone who repents and believes in Jesus Christ!

POINT 7. THE CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

First. The Gospel of Luke compared to the Gospel of Mark and Matthew.

Luke like Matthew made use of the Gospel of Mark. In the original language, the Gospel of Mark has 661 verses. While Matthew uses about 500 of these, Luke uses only 350 of these. The Gospel of Luke has 1149 verses. Thus two thirds of the Gospel of Luke contains no material from the Gospel of Mark.

Generally we can say that the Gospel of Luke alternates non-Mark blocks with Mark blocks of material. The non Mark blocks in the Gospel of Luke are: Luke chapters 1-3, then around chapter 7 (6:17 to 8:3), then around chapters 10 to 17 (9:51 to 18:14), then the first half of chapter 19 (19:1-28) and finally most of chapter 24. Especially the central section of the Gospel of Luke contains only one seventh of the material from Mark and about one half of the material from Matthew.

Second. The most important material that is unique in the Gospel of Luke.

One. The birth of Jesus.

Most of Luke chapters 1 to 3 are unique. They describe the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Two. The ministry of Jesus in Perea.

Especially the middle section of the Gospel of Luke, chapters 10-19 contain much material that is unique to Luke.

Three. The parables.

Except chapter 9, every chapter from Luke 6 to 20 contains a parable. The Gospel of Luke has 27 parables, of which 3 are also found in Matthew and Mark, 6 are also found in Matthew, but 18 are unique in Luke. Of these unique parables 17 are found in Luke chapters 10 to 19.

Four. After the resurrection of Jesus.

Luke 24 describes the appearance of Jesus to two men from Emmaus and finally his ascension into heaven.

Third. The time and place indications of the material in the central section of the Gospel of Luke.

One. The central section of the Gospel of Luke consists of Luke 9:51 to 18:14.

This beautiful section contains miracles, sayings of the Lord and especially many parables. It is a section that strengthens the faith of the Christian.

Two. In this section, Luke gives very little indication of the connection between the various incidents reported and the next.

Luke hardly gives any definite reference to when and where these incidents took place. Luke almost omits all definite time and place references. For example, in Luke 9:57 he says "As they were walking along the road" and in Luke 10:25 he says "On one occasion". Although Luke writes an orderly account (1:3), he does not intend to write a strict chronological account.

Three. There are, however, three clear time or place indications:

In Luke 9:51 we read, "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." In Luke 13:22 we read, "Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem." In Luke 17:11 we read, "Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee."

Four. These references are not parallel to those in the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John shows that Jesus, during the final 6 months before his crucifixion, made more than one trip to Jerusalem. Some Christians think that Luke 9:51 is parallel to John 7:2, when Jesus travelled to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles; Luke 13:22 is parallel to John 11:17, when Jesus travelled to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead and Luke 17:11 is parallel to John 12:1, when Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem to attend the final Passover. However, there is nothing in the Gospel of Luke to show that these three passages correspond to those three passages in the Gospel of John!

Five. These references are parallel to those in the Gospel of Mark.

Luke 9:51 has a tone of finality and is rather parallel to Mark 10:32, which describes Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem. There are definite time and place links between Luke and Mark's description of the Perea Ministry of Jesus. The Gospel of Mark states that Jesus travelled by way of Jericho and Bethany during his final journey to Jerusalem. This is written in Mark 10:32,46 and 11:1. Likewise, the Gospel of Luke indicates that Jesus travelled in the same order by way of Jericho and Bethany to Jerusalem. This is written in Luke 9:51; 10:30 and 10:38.

Six. Luke uses the parallelistic style of writing.

Luke states the purpose of Jesus' journey and thereafter twice retraces his steps and restates the purpose. The parallelistic style of writing is quite biblical. The parallel passage functions as an amplification, a clarification, a reminder or a repetition of the first passage. For example, the creation of the man and the woman in Genesis 2 is parallel to the creation of the man and the woman already stated in Genesis 1. The description of how John the Baptist was beheaded in Mark 6:17-29 is parallel to the statement that king Herod had beheaded him in Mark 6:14-16. The first letter of John and the book of Revelation are definitely parallelistic. We therefore conclude that the above three statements about journeying to Jerusalem are parallelistic and refer to one and the same final journey of Jesus to Jerusalem.

Seven. The central part of the Gospel of Luke has as its basis the Perea Ministry of Jesus.

These events took place between December A.D. 29 and April A.D. 30. The Perea Ministry of Jesus was about 4 months long. It is mainly a ministry of words and teachings of Jesus. Although the Perea Ministry is the main background for the central section of the Gospel of Luke, Luke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit allows himself the freedom to include incidents and sayings from the Great Galilean Ministry and the Retirement Ministry in this part, just like Matthew did in his Gospel. For Luke the *topical* connection is often more important than the *chronological* or *geographical* connection.

POINT 8. THE DIVISION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The Gospel of Luke may be divided into *six* parts. They are exactly the same as the parts in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Only the contents of the Perea Ministry of Jesus is far more extensive and should rather be described as a ministry of words and teachings. For the sake of clarity, the two Judean ministries of Jesus, which are only recorded in the Gospel of John, are included in this division.

Part one. The preparation of Jesus.

This is written in Luke chapter 1 and 2. Jesus is born in 5 B.C.

Part two. The inauguration of Jesus.

This is written in Luke 3:1 to 4:13. These events took place between December A.D. 26 and April A.D. 27. This period was about 4 months long.

Part three. The early Judean Ministry of Jesus.

This is not described in Luke, but only in John 2:13 to 4:47. These events took place from April to December A.D. 27. This period was about 8 months long.

Part four. The Great Galilean Ministry of Jesus.

This is written in Luke 4:14 to 9:17. These events took place between December A.D. 27 and April A.D. 29. This period was about 16 months long.

Part five. The Retirement Ministry of Jesus.

This is written in Luke 9:18-50. These events took place from April to October A.D. 29. This period was about 6 months long.

Part six. The Later Judean Ministry of Jesus.

This is not described in Luke, but only in John 7:1 to 10:39. These events took place from October to December A.D. 29. This period was about 2 months long.

Part seven. The Perea Ministry of Jesus.

This very large part is written in Luke 9:51 to 19:27 and is mainly a ministry of words and teachings of Jesus. These events took place between December A.D. 29 and April A.D. 30. This period was about 4 months long.

Part eight. The death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

This is written in Luke 19:28 to 24:53. These events took place in April and May A.D. 30. This period was about seven weeks long.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. During the next week, read through Luke chapters 16-20.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".