

# The Gospel According to St. Luke

## Middle school Ministry



# Introduction

**The 4 Gospels comparison**

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
To whom it was written	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Christians
Subject	The Messiah the king	The Messiah the conqueror of Satan	Christ the lover of mankind	Christ the Incarnate Word
Main message of Jesus	Fulfills the Law	Performs wonders	Saves mankind	Dwells among us
Gospel content	Focuses on prophecies	Focuses on deeds	Focused on history	Focused on theology
Symbol	The human face	The lion	The Ox	The Eagle

**Symbols of the Four Gospels**

Matthew Winged Man      Mark Winged Lion      Luke Winged Ox      John Eagle

## 1- Servant's preparation:

- 1) Explanation of the gospel of St Luke chapters 1-12 and an introduction for Bishop Yousef  
<https://www.suscpts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/holy-gospel-according-to-st-luke/>
- 2) A link for Fr. Doud Lamei 's bible study in Arabic  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHedjI0\\_e2nk5yEwV9kLxOBn-oJwCt5OK](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHedjI0_e2nk5yEwV9kLxOBn-oJwCt5OK)
- 3) The reference book for Fr. Tadros Malaty → see separate attachment
- 4) Upper room app → Sermons → Bible study → Luke , you will find sermons for each chapter, links provided at the beginning of each lesson below.
- 4) Two illustrative videos that could be used by servants to prepare or to show at the beginning of each unit.
  - Part 1 [chapter 1-9]  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIb\\_dClxzo0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIb_dClxzo0)
  - Part 2 [10-24]  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26z\\_KhwNdd8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26z_KhwNdd8)

## 2- Book introduction:



### A- Who is St. Luke?

- ❖ The word “Luke” is probably an abbreviation of the Latin word “Lucanus” or “Lucuis”, which means ‘the carrier of the light’ or ‘the enlightened’.
- ❖ He is the only one among the writers for the Testament who was not a Jew, but a Gentile
- ❖ St. Luke was a doctor, a painter, and a Gentile from Antioch. He accepted Christianity at the hands of St. Paul the apostle and became his companion on his numerous journeys.
- ❖ He met St. Paul on his second missionary journey in Troas and accompanied him to Philippi. Then, he joined him again on his third journey heading to Jerusalem. It appears that he may have stayed in Palestine during the two years’ imprisonment of St. Paul in Caesarea. They also travelled to preach in Rome together (Acts 28:30).
- ❖ He was not one of the disciples, nor one of the apostles.
- ❖ It came by oral tradition that he had painted the first picture of the Virgin Mary.
- ❖ He departed in Bithynia at an old age. Some say that he was martyred during the reign of Nero at age 84.

### B- Characteristics:

- ❖ He wrote this Gospel and the Book of Acts to an Alexandrian nobleman named **Theophilus** (Luke 1:3), calling him “most excellent”, which is a special title for one who holds an important position within the Roman Empire. Some say that Theophilus is one of these three:
  1. He might be someone whose name the apostles did not want to mention, instead, calling him Theophilus which means ‘he who loves God’ in order not to reveal his identity and cause him harm.
  2. Or someone who truly bore this name. The apostle wrote him the Gospel of truth (the Gospel of St. Luke) to understand the Church and its mission (the Acts), in order to attract him to the faith rather than resist the Church.
  3. Luke was a doctor and a servant; he may have treated his own master before setting him free. In order to show his gratitude and give the most precious thing he could offer; he wrote him the gospel of our Lord Jesus and the history of the first Church
- ❖ St Luke did not meet Jesus in person but believed later when he met St Paul. In order to record accurate details about the whole story of Jesus, he interviewed eyewitnesses like St Mary and the disciples and may be main characters he wrote about like the Samaritan and Zacchaeus to be able to collect accurate and reliable understanding of all things and document them for all generations in a perfectly historical way.
- ❖ Picture a scientist going about some great work. He or she is searching for the cure for some horrible disease or making some marvelous new discovery. First the scientist digs for facts, looking deeply, studying carefully, investigating every clue, relentlessly hunting for any and every fact that will make the discovery deeper, richer, and more accurate.

- ❖ Similarly, in this study, we are going to look at Jesus through the eyes of those who actually witnessed Him, and then told their story. That is what a witness is: a person who sees or experiences something, then tells others what he or she has seen.

### C- The Time for his writing

- There is no sure tradition regarding the time of this writing or its site. St. Irianus thinks it was written before the martyrdom of St. Paul.
- Since the gospel was written before the book of Acts, and the book of Acts was written before the martyrdom of St. Paul the apostle, therefore many believe that it was written between the **year 63 and 67 AD.**

### D- Its Aim:

- ❖ ***This Gospel was recorded for the Greeks***, who are known for their own philosophy and literature, which is why it was written in a refined and poetic style.
- ❖ ***He offered Jesus to the Greeks as a Lover of mankind***, who cares for the educated and uneducated, the philosopher and the unwise, the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the man, the woman and the child. St. Luke presented Christ to the Gentile world as a Mean to find their inner happiness and joy. He began the Gospel with joy with announcing [the birth of Jesus] and concluded it with joy [Jesus rose from the dead]; something the Greek legends and philosophies lacked.
- ❖ Jesus Christ came as a Friend to support us; praying in many places: (3:21; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 22:39-46), and teaching about praying (Our salvation is not philosophy).



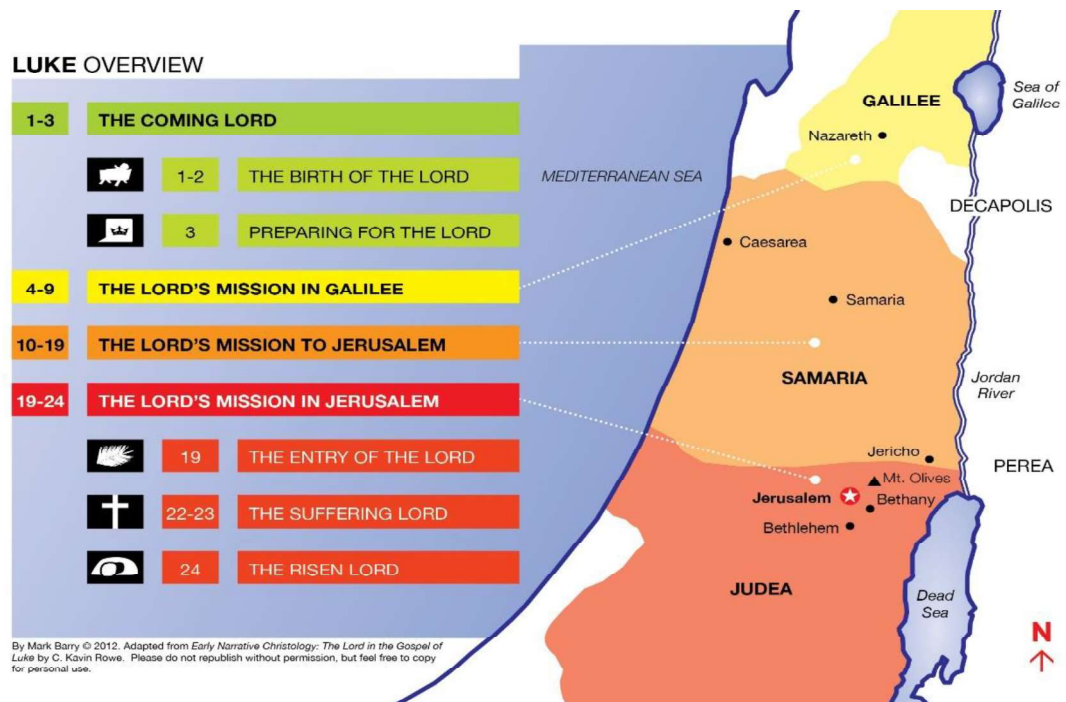
### E- Why do we symbolize this gospel as an OX?

The ox associated with the Gospel of Luke fits well since it speaks to the great sacrifice of Jesus, and the ox was an important animal for sacrifice as required in the Torah.

### 3- Book outline

Its sections:

1. Unit 1: Our Friend became like us and was tempted like us, **chapters 1-4**
2. Unit 2: Our Friend feels our suffering, **chapters 5-18**
3. Unit 3: Our faithful Friend, **chapters 19-23**
4. Unit 4: Our Friend, the Risen from the dead, **chapter 24**



## Unit 1: [3 lessons]

### Our Friend became like us and was tempted like us chapters 1-4

St Luke presents the Son of God as a Friend, One that we can befriend not fear.

1. Introduction (**Chapter 1** v 1-4).
2. The promise of the Baptist to Zachariah and Elizabeth (v.5-25).
3. Meeting Elizabeth (v.26-38).
4. The birth of John (v.57-80).
5. The birth of Christ (**Chapter 2**)
6. The shepherds meet Him (v.8-20).
7. The circumcision of Jesus (v.21).
8. His entrance to the temple (v.22-40).
9. Jesus challenging the Jewish elders (v.41-52).
10. His baptism (**Chapter 3**) and the genealogy of Christ (v.23-37).
11. Jesus was tempted before beginning His ministry at Galilee (**Chapter 4**)

# Chapter 1

## Servant's preparation:

A sermon from Upper room app bible study about chapter 1

<https://subsplash.com/upperroommedia/lb/mi/+nkahjgy>

## Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Luke? He was a doctor, a painter, and a Gentile from Antioch. He accepted Christianity at the hands of St. Paul the apostle later after resurrection.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Greek after collecting testimonies from eyewitnesses to accurately record all details of Jesus's life.
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? ***St Luke offered Jesus to the Greeks as a Lover of mankind***, who cares for the educated and uneducated, the philosopher and the unwise, the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the man, the woman and the child.

## Main points in the Chapter:

1. An introduction to the book 1-4
2. The good news to Zacharias of John's birth 5-17
3. Zacharias' dumbness 18-25
4. The Annunciation of the Divine Incarnation 26-38
5. Mary's Encounter with Elizabeth 39-45
6. The Virgin's hymn of Praise 46-56
7. John's Birth and the Circumcision 57-66
8. Zacharias the priest's Prophecy 67-80

## Lesson overview:

Please go over main events of the chapter briefly as follows

The gospel of St. Luke started with a short introduction that mentioned how, why and to whom was the book written. We explained that in the previous introduction.

### **John the Baptist's birth: 1-25**

- Because St. Luke was a man of science, being a physician, he clearly defined the date of the event of John's birth
- Even though that time, there was corruption and there were no prophecies for 3 centuries, God saw Zacharias and Elizabeth, noticed their righteousness, and honored them to get John the forerunner before the Christ.

- In this conversation that occurred between the archangel Gabriel and Zacharias the priest inside the Altar, we notice that Zacharias did not believe the angel's words, in spite of seeing the angel and listening to the angelic voice in a tangible way which made him blameworthy of it, particularly because the holy history mentions living examples of elderly people who begot children whereas their wives was barren, such as Sarah, Abraham's wife for not having children.
- In (Luke 1: 17) "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah". The Scholar Oreganus comments on this statement saying, "He did not say in the soul of Elijah, but rather 'in the spirit of Elijah and his power'. The spirit that dwelt in Elijah also dwelt in John, and the power in Elijah was also in John.
- The archangel declared himself that he is Gabriel, he came carrying the divine promise and the good news, but he also had to discipline Zacchaeus with dumbness as God commanded.

### **The Annunciation of the Divine Incarnation 26-38**

- God chose a virgin who is betrothed to a man [engaged but for the Jews, it is like married without physical union]. God's choice was perfect because Jesus had to come from a virgin but if she were seen pregnant without being married, people would stone her thinking she was a sinner.
- The Holy Spirit came on her to sanctify her womb and start her conception, this happened the minute she agreed to accepting the assignment of being the mother of God. Her obedience opposes Eve's disobedience. She was more obedient than Zacchaeus who questioned the angel.

### **Mary's Encounter with Elizabeth 39-45.**

- The virgin St. Mary has now carried in herself He who carries the burdens of the world, and He who provides for everything, she did not worry about what is hers, but rather in the receiving spirit, she hastened to the hills to the city of Judah, so as to serve Elizabeth.

### **The Virgin's Hymn of Praise 46-56**

- When Elizabeth's tongue was released in blessings to the Virgin because she has believed the promises and has carried the Word of God in her womb; likewise did the Virgin's tongue began do praise God.

### **John's Birth and the Circumcision 57-66**

- John's birth became a preaching sermon, though it had begun mysteriously, but the Lord has become a companion to him so as to support him; for God took John to the wilderness while young, and there He took care of him and raised him, so that he appears to Israel at the appropriate due time.

### **Goal we learn: [Submit to God's will]**

In this chapter, we have many points to learn from, but we will focus on St Mary and her submissive response to the angel. **"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."** Luke 1:38

In this chapter we will look at the last few days before Jesus entered Jerusalem. Chapter 18 begins with the parable of the persistent widow. In this parable a judge who "neither feared God nor cared about men" refused to grant a poor widow justice against her adversary. This judge was not Jewish but was part of the Roman justice system. Unfortunately, the system was something less than just, and the judges usually decided in favor of the party who offered the biggest bribe. The poor widow had no money to bribe the judge. Time after time she returned to plead her case. Finally, in desperation, the judge granted her petition.

### **The Lowly Worship (the Pharisee and the tax collector) 9- 14**

The next parable contrasts the prayers of a Pharisee and a tax collector. Both men went to the Temple to pray. But the Pharisee didn't really pray at all. He bragged to God about his piousness. The tax collector, on the other hand, prayed earnestly for God's forgiveness. It was this contrite prayer of confession that was answered.

### **The Return to the Children's Simplicity 15- 17**

One of the ways in which Jesus taught was to use the things around Him. The parable of the four soils probably was occasioned by a nearby farmer sowing in His field. At the Pharisee's dinner table Jesus used three dining illustrations. And in verses 15-17 He uses the children who were being brought to Him for blessing. Although the disciples had tried to prevent the parents from intruding, Jesus called the children to Him. "Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (v. 17), He told His listeners. No doubt one of the qualities of children that Jesus was thinking of was their easy faith. Being innocent of the wicked and scheming ways of adults, they have not yet learned to distrust. And when they have done wrong, their sorrow is genuine and all-encompassing. When they are forgiven, they skip away happy in the knowledge that they are loved.

### **The Release from the money worship 18- 30**

- ❖ The next person to capture Jesus' attention was a young ruler. He asked the question many others were asking: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (v. 18). After hearing this young man's claim to have kept the commandments all his life, Jesus indicated that he was still lacking one thing: "Sell everything you have and give to the poor" (v. 22). At this, the young man became sad.
- ❖ Is Jesus saying in this parable that all disciples must give up their worldly possessions? Some have thought so. Over the centuries, priests, monks, nuns, and other religious workers have taken the vow of poverty. And while such a step is admirable, that is not what Jesus is commanding at all. Jesus was speaking specifically to this one individual. If you will recall from chapter 10, another young man summed up the Law like this: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (10:27). That much the rich young ruler had apparently done. But there was another element: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is where the young man in chapter 18 was lacking. And it was exactly that deficit that Jesus put His finger on. No doubt He had looked into this man's heart and had seen that he was unable to commit himself to the Master at this one point. Jesus knew that unless the young man was ready for a change in his behavior, his attitudes, and his basic value structure, he was not ready to enter the Kingdom.



- ❖ Jesus' commented that it is hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom--not because God has any prejudice against the rich, but because the rich have difficulty letting go of their love for money. "The eye of a needle" is not a literal sewing needle or else Jesus would imply it is impossible, but it is the name of a door in Jerusalem where people had to bend to get through it [be humble].
- ❖ Remember in chapter 16 Jesus had said "You cannot serve both God and Money" (16:13). That is exactly the point here.
- ❖ St. Basilios the great: He did not tell us to sell what we have since these are naturally evil things nor throw them away as bad things, otherwise God would not have made them but rather to distribute them and give them away. No one is condemned because he possesses something, but because he ruins what he possesses. According to God's commandment, let us put these things aside for the forgiveness of our sins and so as to be blessed with the kingdom.

### **Accepting the Cross 31- 34**

Then in response to Peter's claim of having left all to follow Jesus, Jesus said that anything sacrificed on this side of eternity will be rewarded on the other side. This harkens back to Jesus' teaching in 6:20-26. While there may not be justice in this world, there will be in the next. Those who are on top now will be toppled over then. And those who suffer now will be greatly rewarded. That is the justice of the Kingdom.

Only days away from entering Jerusalem, Jesus tried once again to prepare His disciples in 18:31- 34. Here He speaks very plainly, but still they were confused. To us it seems so simple. But remember how strange these words must have sounded to them. They were used to being the toast of every town they visited, the companions of a famous traveling rabbi. Most of them were probably expecting the same thing the people were expecting, a political kingdom ruled by Jesus with themselves as lieutenants. These words were so opposite to what they had in their minds that there was no understanding them.

### **The Enlightenment (opening the eyes of the Blind) 35- 43**



Most of Jesus' time in the last few chapters has been spent in Perea, the area on the east side of the Jordan. Now, as He is moving toward Jerusalem, He passes through Jericho, on the west bank of the Jordan. In Jericho He meets two people, two very different people.

He first encounters a blind beggar, sitting by the roadside leading into Jericho. We know that by this point a large crowd was following Jesus. In typical rabbinic fashion, He was teaching as He walked.

The crowds were no doubt pressed against Him, anxious not to miss a word. As they passed by the blind beggar, he began to shout for Jesus' attention. When some of Jesus' followers attempted to shut him up, he just shouted louder [Persistent prayer]. Hearing his cries, Jesus stopped. His compassion would not allow Him to pass by this needy individual without healing his condition.

### Goal we learn: [ The life of prayer]

In this lesson, we have many examples on how prayer should be, we learn from the widow and the blind man their persistence, we learn to focus on oneself like the tax collector and to pray from the whole heart unlike the rich man.

### Lesson delivery idea

### What are the characteristics of prayer we learn from this chapter?

#### 1- Persistent prayer:

- ❖ Is Jesus saying in the parable of the widow that we must whine and plead at God's resistance in order to achieve justice? Absolutely not. This is one of those parables that teaches by contrast. Jesus is saying that if such an unjust judge can be persuaded to grant justice, how much more will God, who loves His children, take care of their needs.
- ❖ The unjust judge thought that this woman would weary him which means make him look bad in front of others, so he helped her. Showing off is not a good reason to pray or look as if you are doing something right because God only looks at the heart. We need to pray truthfully to be saved.



- ❖ Why would God want us to be persistent in prayers? Is it because He does not care to grant us what we ask for? Not at all, He does not need us to remind Him, but he needs a relationship with Him.
- ❖ Prayer is not an equation [Pray x100= get what you want] but rather is a friendship with God. When people ask you to pray for them, you should consider this a reminder from God to pray. One time a priest had people asking him to pray for them, he used to also pray that God does not reveal to Him whether or not this prayer was answered to avoid feeling proud of himself → great thinking

- ❖ A saint once said “I don’t pray for 20 minutes but usually less but I don’t go longer than 20 minutes without praying” which means he prays continuously as the Lord commanded even if not for long, just like the arrow prayers.
- ❖ Praying continuously is a habit that a person needs to train on whether young or old until he gets it. No one achieves that without trying for long. One time a servant met elders in a dementia center and talked to one of them about God so the elder who can’t remember his own name told him that God does not exist. This shows how he trained himself all his life that God isn’t there, it is too late now to convince him of God.
- ❖ Remember Elijah the prophet who kept praying for rain and when his disciples told him that the sky is clear, he would simply go back to pray again and again until the rain started with a tiny cloud. He never stopped praying as he knows God likes persistent prayer.

## 2- Focus on yourself not others:



- ❖ The tax collector demonstrated that he understood more about God and about the Kingdom than did the Pharisee. As for the Pharisee, he approached God accusing the entire world, thinking himself to be better off than all other humans. He did not stop in preferring himself to the entire world, he rather accused the entire world as well. In this way he was the last of the whole procession and thus was not saved.
- ❖ St. Dorotheus: When the Pharisee prayed and thanked God for his righteousness, he did not lie, but he said the truth, and he was not condemned because of this. But when he looked upon the tax collector and said ‘I am not like this tax collector’ he committed the sinful accusation.
- ❖ It is scary when we think we are good just because we go to church, forgetting that church is a hospital for sick [sinners] to go and be healed. It is tempting to point fingers at others who are not healed and mention their mistakes while you assume you are praying properly. Well, remember God said this prayer is not accepted like the pharisee. Just focus on yourself and look at everyone with a pure eye.

## 3- Never go hungry:

Remember the children that God praised earlier, we can learn a lesson from them, they never let themselves go hungry, siblings might argue to get chips or candy when they want it, babies keep crying

until they are fed. Why do we allow ourselves to go days without praying to nourish our spirits or go weeks without communion?



#### **4- Pray with all your heart not part of it**

As we saw the wealthy guy hoping to inherit heaven but yet he loves his money more, so Jesus told Him that this is what is left for him, to give his whole heart not part of it.



Imagine queen Elizabeth had a precious coffee mug that has all kinds of jewels and gold covering it but yet it has a hole on the bottom, would you be able to enjoy a cup of coffee in that pretty mug if you were offered to use it? Even if it is beautiful, it is not practical to use when it has a hole. Same for your heart, you have to pray with all your heart without holes that would leak in love of money.

#### **Take home Prayer**

My dear good Lord teach me how to pray to enjoy my time with you and have a true friendship with you. Teach me to be persistent in my prayers and never stop talking to you. Help me not to look at those around me and focus on fueling myself with constant prayer time. I wish to be able to give you my whole heart not a heart with a hole!!!

#### **Memory Verse:**

**"Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"**

**18:7**