

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
- 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
 - Part 2 [10-24]
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).



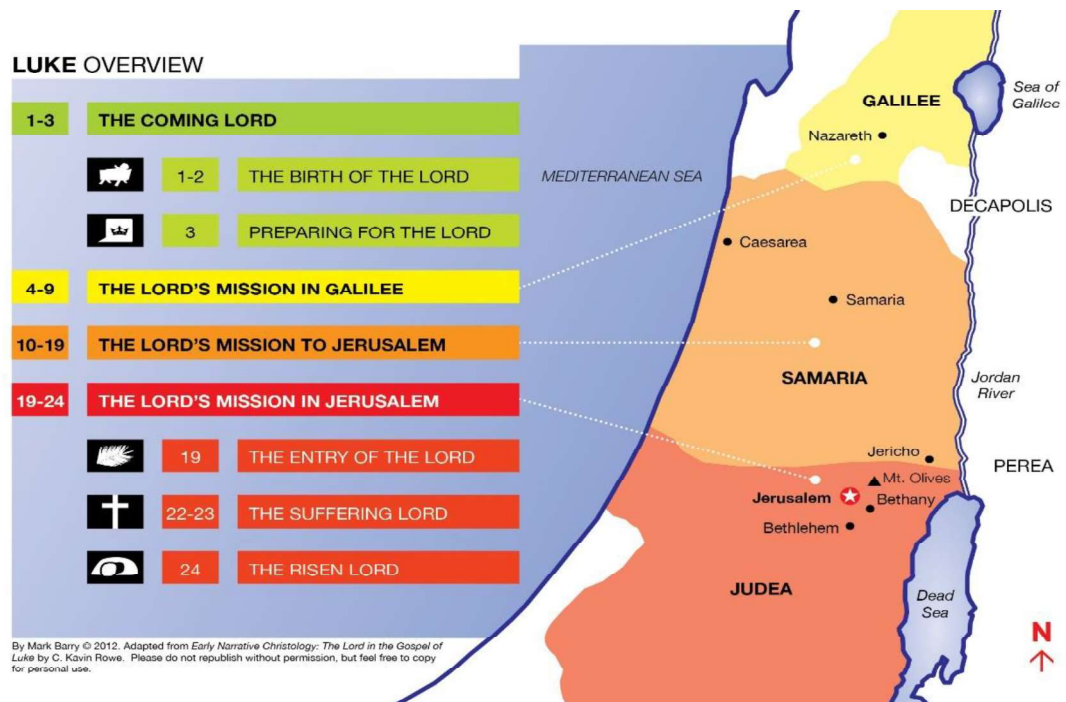
E- Why do we symbolize this gospel as an OX?

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/+nkahjqy>

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

Chapter 2

Servant's preparation:

A sermon from Upper room app bible study about chapter 2

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

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.

Remember:

Last lesson we discussed how St Luke introduced his gospel and started it with some great news about the birth of John and Christ the savior. St Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit and she humbly obeyed God's request to be born of her, telling the angel, "I am His maidservant". She was teaching us how to submit to God's will in our lives and never complain but yet be ready to serve Him.

Main points in the Chapter:

- 1) Our friend's Birth 1- 7
- 2) The Shepherd's Heraldry 8 – 20
- 3) The Lord's Circumcision 21
- 4) The Sacrifice offering 22- 24
- 5) The Praise of Simon the Elder 25- 35
- 6) The Praise of Hannah, the Daughter of Phanuel 36 -38
- 7) The Return to Nazareth 39 -40
- 8) Jesus in the Temple 41-52

Opening activity: ENGAGE THE WORD "The Greatest Minds"

The purpose of this activity is to help your students begin to realize the kind of splendor that God could have chosen--and perhaps by human logic should have chosen--for the birth of Jesus.

Begin the session by asking your group to: ***Imagine with me that a very powerful "think tank" has come up with some incredible discovery that will revolutionize humankind. We are to choose the 10 most important people in the world to be the first to hear of the discovery.***

- You can have them make this list individually, by small groups, or as a class. Make a combined list on the chalkboard.
- Next ask your students to select a place for the presentation. Encourage them to be creative—the more spectacular the better. Remember, this is a discovery that will change the course of history!
- After they have completed these two tasks, ask them to brainstorm for a few moments what they think was the most important discovery, invention, idea, or event in the history of the world. Write their suggestions on the chalkboard.
- If they do not include the birth of Jesus on their list, suggest that they consider how the world was revolutionized by His life and ministry. Also suggest that logic would dictate that the birth of such a universally and eternally important individual should be surrounded by the most splendid of accommodations and delivered to the most important people first. However, in the story of Jesus, we see how humble He was. Even being the most important event in history, it occurred at the simplest place and was announced to shepherd who were the lowest class at that time.

Goal we learn: [Jesus's humble birth connects us to Him]

Our goal today is to understand that the humbleness surrounding the birth of Jesus was God's way of demonstrating His concern for all humankind so let us rejoice that God cares for us and respond to God's love with obedience.

Perspective

Is there anyone in your community who is not familiar with the picture of Mary and Joseph watching over the Baby Jesus in the manger? But how accurate is this picture? How distorted by centuries of romanticism and embellishment? And how relevant is this picture, and the event it portrays, to contemporary youths?

This session will help your youths see that the birth of Jesus wasn't romantic. It was humble to the point of being primitive. But that was part of God's plan to bring the Messiah to the earth not as a king but as a servant. In choosing humble surroundings, God provided a connection to all humankind—including us.



Lesson overview:

Please go over main events of the chapter briefly as follows

- ❖ After Luke's careful record in chapter one of God's meticulous orchestration of the events leading to the birth of Jesus, in today's scripture we come to that birth.
- ❖ First, Luke explains what Mary and Joseph were doing in Bethlehem. Residents of Nazareth in Galilee, the northern part of Israel, the two had traveled to Bethlehem because it was the headquarters of the tribe of David. Joseph, a descendent of the Israelite King, had to report there for the Roman census.
- ❖ What a difficult journey that must have been for Joseph and Mary, now nine months pregnant with her first child. They were poor people and could not afford traveling comforts. Arriving in Jerusalem with little money and less influence, they were forced to join the others in similar circumstances in the courtyard or stable of an inn. We all have in our head the sweet picture of beautiful Mary in pretty robes, laying her smiling child on a bed of clean straw in the privacy of a rustic but charming stable. That picture, though, is more romantic than real. After days of travel, Mary and Joseph were no doubt exhausted, had dirty clothes, and frustrated. With the entire countryside traveling for the census, the condition of the stables at any inn in Israel would be far from clean. And the birth of Jesus probably took place in the midst of a noisy crowd of similar travelers.
- ❖ And let us not forget that this was Mary's first delivery. She was far from home, far from her parents, far from the women of her village who would have normally helped her in this time. She was also very young (probably 14-16 years old), still unmarried, certainly the subject of much gossip and no doubt very frightened.
- ❖ In these circumstances--more primitive and cruel than romantically "humble"--the Savior of the world was born.
- ❖ On the hillside outside Jerusalem a band of shepherds were tending to their flocks. Again, the romanticizing of this story has prevented us from seeing the real picture. Shepherding was a job on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. These men and boys were poor, uneducated, and uncultured. But God chose them to be the first to hear the glorious news. To them the angels announced the birth of a Savior, a Messiah, and a Lord (v. 11). These three titles indicate three roles in the life and ministry of Christ.
- ❖ The word "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah." So "Jesus Christ" means "Jesus, the Messiah." It is not his last name. We understand that the word "firstborn" does not only mean that others follow him, but it generally means he who has not been preceded by anyone in birth.
- ❖ We can find several messages in the fact that Jesus was born in crude surroundings. Perhaps the most important message is that God deliberately chose these surroundings in order to demonstrate His love and concern for those of us who are common, ordinary people. The life of Christ was a constant irritation to the rich, the powerful, and the "religious" because He taught that money, power, and outward demonstrations of piety were worthless.
- ❖ Shortly after Jesus' birth, His parents participated in three required Jewish rituals: the circumcision of the child, the purification of the mother, and the offering of sacrifice. This indicates that Mary and Joseph were devout and obedient Jews.

- ❖ While they were at the temple for the last of these rites, they encountered Simeon, a righteous and devout senior citizen who was one of the 72 scribes assigned to translate the OT 300 years before Jesus and he was hesitant to translate Isaiah's prophesy that a virgin will get a baby, so an angel told him, he will live a long life till he witnesses that baby. Upon seeing the baby, Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized the child as the Messiah.
- ❖ In the first verses of Luke's Gospel, we are told that he researched the life of Jesus before writing. Tradition holds that he spent time interviewing Mary. No doubt she told him many stories about Jesus 'childhood and adolescence. But Luke chose only one of those stories to record in his Gospel.
- ❖ The story Luke chose occurred when Jesus was 12. The family had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover. After the feast the family left, no doubt in a large company of other pilgrims from Galilee. In the confusion, Jesus was left behind. When Mary and Joseph finally found Him, He was "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." There was nothing strange about this activity. That was how Jewish boys were taught. What was special, however, was the depth of His understanding. Those listening were "amazed."
- ❖ The real significance of this story is in Jesus' response to His mother when she chided Him for not being with them. Mary said, "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." Jesus replied, "Don't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" When Mary said father, she meant Joseph, but when Jesus said Father, He meant God. At the age of 12, Jesus understood that His relationship to God was special.

Lesson delivery:

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT (2:1-20)

For many people, this section is one of the best-known children's stories. It's right up there with Rudolph and his red nose, the three little pigs, and Winnie the Pooh. For them it has become a "fairy tale." But it is much more than a child's holiday story. It is history.

This needs to be emphasized in our day. So many legends, such as Santa Claus, have become intertwined with the Christmas story that people lump them all together and forget that the birth of Jesus Christ as reported in the Bible is true history. Some may ask, "Who cares if it's history or not? The story about the virgin Mary, the Christ child, the angels, the wise men, the shepherds, and all that stuff is a heartwarming tale that children love to hear. It helps everyone focus on peace on earth for a few brief days every year. So, what difference does it make if it's really true or not?"

It makes all the difference in the world. If it's just a heartwarming legend, you can choose to believe or disbelieve it. It's your option, based on how it makes you feel. It's a completely subjective decision, binding on no one.

- Note in verse 5 the official relationship between Mary and Joseph. Keep in mind how incredible they were to remain faithful to their mission in spite of their difficult position. What is so special about their situation?

- We've all heard about the mothers who give birth in the taxi on the way to the hospital. Mary was miles from home without even a decent bed to lie down on. She and Joseph were part of a large group of peasants, not lucky or wealthy enough to secure a room at the inn, who bedded down in the courtyard or the stable. There she gave birth. Again, don't let the familiarity of this story prevent you from seeing what really happened. How do you think Mary felt having to give birth to her first child under these circumstances?

- Shepherds were some of the lowest people on the socioeconomic ladder. They were uneducated, poor, and powerless. Why do you think God chose them to be the first to hear the news of the birth of His Son?

GROWING UP ISN'T EASY FOR ANYONE (2:21-52)

Shortly after Jesus' birth, his parents took him to Jerusalem to participate in traditional Jewish rituals.

- Three Jewish rituals are mentioned in the first three verses of this section: circumcision, purification, and sacrifice. Even if you don't have any idea what these rituals are about, what do you know about Mary and Joseph from the fact that they were so carefully obeying the religious law? Could this be one of the reasons God chose them to be the earthly parents of His Son?

- The old man Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Since the time of the Old Testament, the Jews had been in similar circumstances and, based on God's promises to them, they expected a special leader to come and rescue them. This person would be the Messiah. Some expected him to be a great military and political figure who would force the Romans out of Israel and establish a great kingdom like that of King David. Others, like Simeon, expected a spiritual leader who would lead the Jewish people back to devotion and righteousness. What did the circumstances of Jesus' birth and childhood indicate about what kind of Messiah He would be?

Take home Prayer

Dear Lord, let me understand the significance of your nativity scene as it shows how tiring it was for you, St Mary, and St Joseph. It shows me how you chose to be among the most neglected people on earth to prove your love and care. Let me learn to think like you when I choose friends, let me look for the simplest people who could easily relate to you and not pick the arrogant ones that like to show off and look down on others. Teach me Lord to be as humble as you were from the first minute you joined humans on earth. Help me remember this important message when I celebrate Christmas and not focus on glittery decoration and gifts.

Memory Verse:

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11).