

The New Testament Gospel of Luke

The gospel according to Luke is the third and last of the synoptic gospels. It appears that Luke was a man of education and culture, an accurate and able historian and a companion of Paul '*the beloved physician*' Colossians 4:14 – NRSV- and, it seems, a Gentile convert. Unlike Matthew, Luke uses only half of his major written source from the earlier gospel of Mark and his gospel is mainly written for non-Jewish readers. Considerable parts of the Book of Common Prayer come from Luke's infancy narratives of Jesus, namely the Benedictus, the song of Zechariah -1:68-79, the Magnificat, the Song of Mary - 1:46-55 and the Nunc Dimittis, the Son of Simeon -2:29-32.

The gospel begins and ends in Jerusalem, with 1:26-39 describing the angel's message and the birth of Jesus, and concluding with the ascension 24:50-53.

Many of the major themes of this gospel are contained in Christ's words in the Nazareth synagogue, which is unique to Luke: '*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has annointed me to preach good news. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour today this scripture (the Prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2) is fulfilled in your hearing*' 4:18-19 & 21 JB.

The gospel also contains, also unique to Luke, a considerable number of parables, many not recorded in other gospels, the most well-known being the good Samaritan, 10:25-37 and the prodigal son, 15:11-32, emphasising Luke's particular concern for the sick and marginalised.

The gospel of Luke, in a commentary I have, is said to have an overall theme that 'God's way triumphs' and at this time of concern over the two major worldwide problems of global warming and its consequences and the Covid-19 pandemic, we should, I feel, be encouraged by this assurance.

Wishing you a happy and virus free New Year

Ian Silcox

