

The Gospel of Luke

An Introduction to Redaction Criticism

Luke-Acts

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were written by the same author.

Both are addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1); Acts 1:1 refers to 'the first book'.

In his gospel, Luke uses Mark, sayings material also common to Matthew (Q?), and material unique to Luke (L).

Authorship - Origin - Date

Gospel is linked to Luke, the companion of Paul (cf. Philemon 24; Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:11).

The author was educated (cf. Col 4:10-14: 'Luke the beloved physician) and the 'we' passages in Acts have been interpreted as pointing to eyewitness testimony (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).

A gospel for those interested in Judaism ('God-fearers'), possibly located in Greece or Syria.

References to the destruction of the Temple (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24) suggests a date after 70 CE.

Content of Luke's Gospel

Infancy Narratives (1-2): Jesus and John the Baptist; emphasis on Mary; childhood narrative (2:41-42).

Preparation for Public Ministry (3:1-4:13): Jesus' genealogy through Joseph (from Adam). Note emphasis on the Holy Spirit (cf. 4:1, 14, 18).

Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50): reading from the scroll in the synagogue (Isaiah 61 interpreted as Jesus' mission statement).

Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27): this is presented as an extended travel narrative (cf. 9:51; 13:22; 17:11).

Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38): conflicts are the occasion for further teaching in the Temple.

Last Supper, Death and Burial (22:1--23:56)

Resurrection Appearances (24:1-53): Jesus in Jerusalem and Emmaus

Lukan Emphases

Salvation: who is the 'true Israel'?

Concern for the Poor and the Oppressed.

Women

Holy Spirit

True Discipleship: importance of humility and prayer.

Redaction Criticism

Important redaction-critical studies include those by Günter Bornkamm (Matthew), Hans Conzelmann (Luke-Acts), Willi Marxsen (Mark).

The Gospel writers are not simply the collectors of existing tradition, but conscious and creative editors ('redactors') of that material.

Redaction criticism compares the way in which different writers use the same material. How do they arrange and structure their material?

Luke and Redaction Criticism

Hans Conzelmann: emphasis on Luke's eschatology as a response to a delayed parousia.

The Holy Spirit takes the place of imminent eschatological fulfilment.

Redaction criticism is accused of 'circularity of method' (theological redaction or unchanged use of existing material?)

Christology of Luke: emphasis on Jesus as Prophet, Royal Messiah, Righteous One, Saviour.