

Easter: Luke- The Gospel for All

Luke 1:1-4; Luke 2:25-35; Isaiah 49:5-6; Genesis 3:14b-15; Isaiah 53

Jesus' crucifixion does not negate his claim to be the Messiah. Rather, it confirms the claim.

Who was Luke?: Luke was a physician, so he was educated and possibly wealthy. The Apostle Paul associates Luke with his Gentile co-workers, so Luke was not Jewish. This explains the universal scope of his Gospel. The book of Luke is very much the message of salvation for ALL. Luke's purpose is to show the fulfillment of God's plan to bring his light to the whole world through Israel.

What makes Luke unique from the other Gospel accounts?: First, it is the only Gospel account written by a Gentile. Luke brings a very unique perspective. It is a well-researched ethnography (a well researched, documented book written about a group of people) written for Theophilus (likely a Roman soldier). (*see Luke 1:1-4*)

Second, the book of Luke is the longest of the Gospels. It begins with the miraculous conception of Jesus and ends with the ascension of Jesus. It is the only Gospel to tell anything about Jesus' childhood.

Third, it is only part 1... The book of Acts is part 2. Luke tells the story of the early church in the Book of Acts as a seamless continuation of the Gospel.

Who did Luke say Jesus is?: Luke presents Jesus as the suffering servant Messiah who came to restore Israel and offer salvation for all nations from the beginning. (*see Luke 2:25-35*) We see from the very beginning of Jesus' life on Earth, He was recognized as the Messiah and there was a plan in place. God's Spirit revealed who He was to those who had the eyes to see and ears to hear. This passage in Luke is a direct reference to a passage in Isaiah 49:5-6.

We will be going much deeper into the significance of how Luke presents Jesus in the books of Luke and Acts in the next few months. For now, we need to understand that the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus was written about hundreds of years before Jesus' birth. The King that we celebrate today came as a servant. He surrendered humbly to the pain and humiliation of being despised. He loved those who cursed Him and died for those who hated Him.

Why did Jesus have to die?: Nothing could bridge the gap between God and humanity except God Himself. No sacrifice. No prayer. No ceremony. No Law. Only Jesus. It goes much further back than even the book of Isaiah. In fact, all the way to the beginning.

"Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
(*Genesis 3:14b-15*) Adam and Even invited death to be a part of the human experience. The only

way to overcome the power of the fear of death was for God to show us once and for all that he has the ultimate power over life AND death! The plan was in place from the moment it was needed.

God tried to find a human who could carry the weight of this mission, (Noah, Moses, Abraham, Issac, Jacob, David...) but no person was able to be the perfect bridge between God and humanity. So God humbled himself and became human. He filled the gap that we created although He didn't have to.

Luke reminds us over and over that Jesus did not just come to restore Israel. He came to provide hope, salvation, and freedom for ALL of humanity. The story is just as relevant now as it was before it was even written down. Jesus is just as relevant to you as He was to His closest disciples. Easter is just as relevant today as it was when the tomb was found empty. Do you believe that? Have you allowed the truth of what I just said to transform your life?

Open your mind. Search your heart as you read this passage from Isaiah. Allow your heart to be filled with gratitude to the Messiah who came as a sacrifice for you.

“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of man, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53)

Discussion Questions:

- 1. What role does gratitude for Christ's sacrifice play in your life choices?**
- 2. How does reflecting upon what Christ has done for you inspire you to obey Him?**