
Notes by Linda Monyak. Last Update December 3, 2000

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1. Luke, the historian
(Reference: Eckhard Plumacher in Anchor Bible Dictionary)
1.1. Follows the model of Thucydides, making similar claims (Luke 1:3)
1.2. Luke's prologue appears to be based on the instructions Thucydides gave on writing history
1.3. “We” passages often recount travels by sea because a trustworthy historian must be well-traveled (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-8, 21:1-18)
1.4. Speeches in Acts, as in other ancient histories, don't necessarily match their context
   ■ Purpose of speech is to interpret the surrounding event
1.5. Action develops as a sequential series of events
1.6. Luke writes in a specific style of Hellenistic historiography, the tragedy/pathos-centered historiography
   ■ Makes use of highly dramatic events to reach the reader
1.7. Answers specific problems of the early Christians
   ■ Delay of the parousia, the second coming
   ■ Predominantly Gentile church that grew out of Jewish origins

2. Luke, the theologian
(Reference: I. Howard Marshall in Anchor Bible Dictionary)
2.2. Conzelmann believes Luke's theological aim to explain delay of the parousia
   ■ Christians not living in the last days
   ■ Era of the Church part of God's salvation history, preceded by Israel
2.3. Conzelmann criticized by those who see continuity between Luke's theology and that of the other gospels
2.4. O'Toole's view: Luke wrote an orderly salvation history with the purpose of strengthening the faith of those who read it
2.5. Luke writes a 2 volume history
   ■ With parallel accounts of the story of Jesus (Luke) and the story of the church (Acts)
   ■ Demonstrates that the church is a continuation of the Jesus-story
   ■ Demonstrates that Jesus' proclamations have come to fruition in the church
2.6. Luke differs from the other gospels in referring to Jesus as Lord before his exaltation on the cross
2.7. More extreme scholars (Sanders) view Luke as having written an anti-Jewish diatribe; most scholars see this rhetoric as reflecting an internal struggle over the proper extent of Christian subjugation to Jewish law
2.8. The Spirit plays an important role in Luke-Acts both in preparing Jesus and the church to fulfill their divinely appointed tasks

3. Luke, the gospel
(Reference: L. T. Johnson in Anchor Bible Dictionary)
3.1. Introduction
   ■ Style
   ■ Structure
   ■ Themes
3.1.2. Ancient sources do attribute both volumes to the same author, Luke, a companion of Paul
3.1.4. Recognizes findings of source and form criticism, but gives deference to the present structural integrity of the work
3.2. Circumstances of Composition
3.2.1. Luke’s status as companion of Paul supported by Pauline epistles (Philemon 24; Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11) & “we” passages of Acts
3.2.2. Date of composition varies to as late as the 2nd century
3.2.3. Lack of reference to Paul’s letters is evidence of a date early enough that the epistles had not yet been collected
3.2.4. Stylistic characteristics
   - An elegant Greek style familiar with the use of rhetorical conventions
   - Rich knowledge of Hebrew scripture
   - Vivid vignettes and parables
3.2.5. Intended audience - Gentile Christians

3.3. Genre and Purpose
   - Rich Fool (12:13-21)
   - Lazarus and Dives (16:19-31)
   - Prodigal Son (15:11-32)
3.3.2. Had gospel of Mark as a model and source
   - Uses Mark so skillfully that without Matthew for comparison, would be difficult to identify
   - Follows Hellenistic tradition of rewriting source
   - Able to write in a variety of styles: compare prologue, infancy narrative, and Pentecost sermon
3.3.3. Main contribution: extended the story of Jesus into the story of the church and gave it a historical foundation that began with Adam (3:38)
3.3.4. Prologue states that Luke intends to write a sequential narrative (1:3 & 1:1)
3.3.5. Part of the meaning of the text is found in sequence of events itself
3.3.6. Acts portion of work is a commentary on the gospel portion
3.3.7. Most important character is God, who is behind everything that happens in Luke
3.3.8. Scholars expend much energy in determining Luke’s genre because the ancient world valued adherence to conventional forms to convey specific meanings where our culture values novelty
   - 3.3.8.1. Hellenistic romance or novel (Cadbury and Pervo)
   - 3.3.8.2. Hellenistic history
   - Prologue matches form specified for histories and resembles prologues to other histories of the period
   - Only NT author to place his story in the context of crucial events in the larger ancient world (1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1-2)

3.4.1. Style: Skillful redaction of Mark
   (Compare healing of the Gerasene demoniac in Luke 8:26-36 and Mark 5:1-20)
   - Only NT author to place his story in the context of crucial events in the larger ancient world (1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1-2)
   - Events in Luke move in a sequential manner
   - Appears to be as accurate as other ancient historians
3.4.1.1. Corrects Mark’s infelicitous phrases
   - Changes “I adjure” of Mark 5:7 to “I beg” (Luke 8:28)
   - Improves tense sequence of Mark 5:14 to a more consistent one in Luke 8:35
3.4.1.2. Clarifies certain confusions in Mark’s gospel
   - Clarifies location of the Gerasenes (8:26)
   - Informs reader that Jesus stepped onto land,
   - Herdsmen witness the events before they flee
   - Gives motivation for people’s request (8:37)
3.4.1.3. Gives the narrative a more logical order
- Explains the demoniac's actions by reference to his disorder (8:28-29) as compared to an initial statement (Mark 5:3-6)
- Prepares the reader for later reference to the city (compare Luke 8:27 with Mark 5:14)
- Tells the reader that the man was naked before exorcism (compare Luke 8:27 with Mark 5:15)

3.4.2. Biblical imitation
- 3.4.2.1. Gospel begins by sounding like LXX (except for Prologue) and gradually becomes more Greek as the gospel enters the Greek world
- 3.4.2.2. Skillful use of biblical allusions
  - Annunciation scene (Luke 1:28-38 and Judges 13:2-7)
  - Transfiguration and Moses (Luke 9:35 and Deut 18:15)

3.4.3. Use of narrative devices esp. in Acts
- 3.4.3.1. Summaries (Luke 1:80)
- 3.4.3.2. Speeches (Luke 4:16-30)
- 3.4.3.3. Journeys (Luke 9 - 19)
- 3.4.3.4. Parallelism
  - Mary overshadowed by Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34-35) and Mary and disciples overshadowed by Holy Spirit (Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4)
  - Peter (Acts 3:1-10) and Paul (Acts 14:8-11) do miracles that reflect those of Jesus (Luke 5:17-26)
  - Stephen's trial (Acts 6:8-15) is a reprise of Jesus' trial (Luke 22:66-71), a connection made by the author himself in Acts 7:56
  - Makes character connections and joins the narrative

3.4.4. Literary Structure
- 3.4.4.1. Geography - in Luke, everything moves toward Jerusalem; in Acts, the action proceeds outward from Jerusalem
- 3.4.4.2. Prophecy
  - 3.4.4.2.1. Finding prophetic fulfillment of Hebrew scriptures in the life of Jesus a standard element of Christian apologetic
    - Characters in Luke's gospel utter prophecies that come to pass such as Jesus' predictions of his death (9:22, 44; 18:34-33) - called literary prophecy
    - Some of these literary prophecies actually interpret for the reader the events that follow such as Simeon's prophetic statement in Luke 2:34 that sets up the entire gospel as the story of a prophet who created a division in God's people
    - Some prophecies set up a literary irony like Jesus' saying that a prophet not acceptable in his own nation (Luke 4:16-30)

3.4.5. Prophetic Structure (Acts as the fulfillment of Luke)
- 3.4.5.1. Apostles as prophets - filled with the Spirit, they proclaim the good news and do miracles among the people
- 3.4.5.2. Jesus as the prophet like Moses - Pentecost as fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 and Deut 34:10-12
  - Jesus as the prophet "God raised up" (see Deut above)
  - Spirit of Jesus empowers the disciples (Acts 2:33; 4:10; 13:30,33)
  - Explicit connection between Jesus and Moses (Acts 3:22-23 & Deut 18:15, 18-19)
- 3.4.5.3. Jesus life follows the Mosaic pattern of the necessity of suffering before glory (Luke 24:25-27)
- 3.4.5.4. Gospel in the light of Acts
  - Tells of the first sending, the people's rejection, and the prophet being "raised up"
  - Acts tells of the 2nd sending (of the disciples) and judgment of God
  - This pattern is hinted at in the gospel in the narrative of the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11-16)
3.5. The Prophet and the People

3.5.1. The Infancy Account

- 3.5.1.1. Luke 1-2 viewed by scholars as a haggadic midrash
- 3.5.1.2. Complex internal structure
  - Annunciation to Zechariah (1:8-23) and to Mary (1:26-38)
  - Birth of John (1:57-66) and Jesus (2:1-21)
  - Annunciations followed by Mary’s visitation of Elizabeth (1:39-45) and Mary’s canticle (1:47-55)
  - Births followed by visit to temple for purification and Simeon’s canticle (2:22-38)

- 3.5.1.3. John and Jesus are both prophets with special meaning for Israel
- 3.5.1.4. Simeon’s canticle and prophecy prepare us for what comes later (2:29-35)

3.5.2. The Prophetic Messiah

- 3.5.2.1. Expressed in Jesus’ rejection in Nazareth (4:16-30) - story found in Mark, but at a later point in his ministry instead of its inauguration
- 3.5.2.2. Jesus is messiah because he is anointed by the Spirit (4:18; Isaiah 61:1-2)
- 3.5.2.3. Elijah and Elisha are prophets through whom God “visits” those outside Israel (4:25-27) and the residents of Nazareth reject Jesus for this
- 3.5.2.4. Luke 4:18 is fulfilled in Luke 6:20-26 where the poor are blessed and the rich are cursed with woes; generally, the role of the poor is played by the sinners and tax collectors of the narrative and the rich are the Pharisees and teachers of the law
- 3.5.2.5. Just as Elisha healed a foreign diplomat with the intercession of a Jewish maid (2 Kings 5:1-14) so Jesus heals a centurion’s servant with the intercession of Jewish elders (Luke 7:1-10)
- 3.5.2.6. Elijah raised a widow’s son (1 Kings 17:17-24); Jesus raises a widow’s son (Luke 7:11-15)
- 3.5.2.7. Jesus is rejected by the pharisee in whose home he dines but is recognized by the woman who anoints him (Luke 7:36-50)
- 3.5.2.8. Elijah raised a widow’s son (1 Kings 17:17-24); Jesus raises a widow’s son (Luke 7:11-15)
- 3.5.2.9. Jesus is rejected by the pharisee in whose home he dines but is recognized by the woman who anoints him (Luke 7:36-50)

3.5.3. Formation of the People

- 3.5.3.1. Begins with a core group of 12 and some women (8:1-3)
- 3.5.3.2. Disciples are given authority like Jesus’
Primary Reference

Anchor Bible Dictionary. Ed. by David Freedman.
Anchor/Doubleday.