

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke: Introduction - 2

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord! For the Gospel of Luke that we are about to read, we would like to take some time to look at the author of this book—Luke himself. This book was actually written to a man named Theophilus. Among all the New Testament writers, Luke is the only Gentile; he was a Greek. Greek philosophy can be said to represent the essence of human culture, and what Greek philosophy pursued was human perfection. Human perfection included physical perfection—hence the Olympic Games originated in Greece. It was not only physical perfection; even the realm of the human inner life was to be perfected. Therefore, logic and philosophy also came from Greece, with figures such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as a perfect Man. To describe the perfection of Jesus, it could not be more fitting for a Greek—Luke—to write it. Luke was not only a Greek who had received a complete Greek education; he was also a physician. Physicians have a special understanding of life. Through careful observation and analysis, they draw conclusions in order to heal others.

In Luke's writings, there is a clear expression of the keen observation possessed by someone who had received rigorous scientific training. Especially noteworthy is that Luke records Mary's virgin conception and the birth of Jesus, and he also describes how Jesus died and then rose again—matters that contradict what we know from medical science. God deliberately used the hand of a physician, Luke, to record these facts. This not only gives these accounts particular credibility, but also testifies that Jesus Christ Himself is the Lord of life.

Luke most likely joined Paul's ministry team during Paul's second missionary journey, at the place called Troas. In Acts chapter 16, in the passages describing Paul's Macedonian vision, verses 8–10 say, "And they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and

pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them”. Pay special attention to the subject between verses 8 and 10. In verse 8 it says “they,” indicating that at that time Luke had not yet joined the team, since the book of Acts was written by Luke. But by verse 10 it becomes “we sought to go.” Therefore, most Bible expositors infer that Luke joined Paul’s gospel team at this point.

From that time on, Luke faithfully remained by Paul’s side, serving him. Because Luke was a physician, and Paul had certain physical ailments, he needed someone to care for him. Without Luke’s faithful service, Paul would not have been able to carry out his ministry properly. Nearly half of the books of the New Testament were written by Paul. When Paul was about to be martyred, he wrote his final book, Second Timothy. In 2 Timothy 4:11, knowing that his martyrdom was near, Paul wrote these final words: “Only Luke is with me”. Thus, Luke served Paul and remained with Paul’s gospel team all the way until Paul’s martyrdom.

Therefore, when Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, his perspective was actually consistent with Paul’s. It was under God’s sovereign authority that such a careful, considerate, and faithful physician—Luke—was placed by Paul’s side. He was also likely the New Testament author who received the most complete Greek education. For this reason, scholars generally acknowledge that the Greek used in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts is the most elegant and the most precise.

When Luke wrote his Gospel, he himself explained his method. In Luke 1:3 he says, “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account”. Luke was like a scientific researcher. When he set out to write about the deeds of Jesus Christ, in addition to receiving much information about Jesus from Paul, he himself made careful investigations. He may have personally interviewed eyewitnesses one by one, perhaps even visiting Jesus’ mother Mary, as well as the apostles who followed Jesus, and the crowds who had received Jesus’ grace and healing.

Therefore, the Gospel of Luke contains the richest source material. Moreover, Luke deliberately wrote everything in order. The Gospels are not chronicles; they are not written strictly according to a timeline. Each Gospel writer, based on his burden and on the particular aspect of Jesus he wished to emphasize, arranged his material accordingly rather than following chronological order. Only Luke states clearly in his prologue that he wrote things in sequence. As a result, only the Gospel of Luke records Jesus' childhood in such detail.

Luke carefully records the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus; the birth of Jesus; Jesus' circumcision as an infant; and Jesus going up to Jerusalem at the age of twelve as a son of the law. Concerning the first thirty years of Jesus' life, the other Gospels say very little, but Luke provides the most abundant information.

Luke was not only thoroughly trained in science and exceptionally observant; he was also a rigorous historian, recording the events of Jesus' life step by step in their sequence. He was also a gifted literary writer, skilled in storytelling. In particular, what he wrote about the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15 may be one of the most beautiful short stories in human literature. In just six or seven hundred words, he so beautifully and powerfully depicts the relationship between the father, the elder son, and the younger son.

Luke was originally a Gentile who had received a complete Greek education. He possessed keen observation, rich literary talent, and a beautiful ability to narrate events—and all of these were preparations God had made for him. Then one day, when God had a need, He caused Luke to join Paul's team. Everything Luke had learned became a powerful tool in God's hand. God used him to serve Paul, helping Paul to fulfill his commission in the work of the gospel. And God also specially used all of Luke's abilities to write the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

In terms of length, these two books together contain more chapters than Paul's thirteen epistles combined. I do not know whether you have already discovered God's calling for you today. If not, then be faithful and diligent in the position God has given you. Learn well, so that you yourself are fully equipped with tools in every

aspect, and your abilities are cultivated, perfected, and trained. When the day comes that God wants to use you, you will be able to say, “Here I am; I am ready.”

Especially to young people: do not think that what you are studying now has no connection with God’s work. Learn to be focused, diligent, and careful in everything, and do your very best in every task before you. Through such training, as you gradually mature in every aspect, one day when God’s calling comes, you will discover that everything you learned before was preparation—preparation to become a powerful instrument in God’s hand. Just like Luke the physician: perhaps when he was still a Gentile and did not yet know Jesus Christ, he nevertheless equipped himself well. Then one day, when God’s salvation came and God’s calling arrived, he realized that all the preparation of his life was for the purpose of helping Paul fulfill the ministry of the gospel. He also wrote the Gospel of Luke, testifying that Jesus is the perfect Man, and wrote the book of Acts, showing us how the church began on the earth. Therefore, let us also prepare ourselves well and wait for God’s calling.

Let us pray together: Lord, just as You used Luke, we ask that You would also help us. While we are still unclear about our calling in this life, grant us a heart that is willing to submit under the leading of Your will. No matter what circumstances, situations, or positions You place us in, we are willing to do our part with all our heart. May our knowledge and skills in every aspect be well perfected and well developed. We are willing to prepare ourselves and wait for Your calling. Help us to be serious before You, and also to be those who wait. Thank You, we pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.