

Notes on Luke

2 0 1 2 E d i t i o n

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Introduction

WRITER

Several factors indicate that the writer of this Gospel was the same person who wrote the Book of Acts. First, a man named Theophilus was the recipient of both books (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Second, Acts refers to a previous work by the same writer. Third, both books have several common themes, some of which do not receive the same emphasis elsewhere in the New Testament. Fourth, there are general structural and stylistic similarities, including the use of chiasms and the tendency to focus on specific individuals.

The writer also acquired his knowledge of Jesus' life and ministry from research rather than from eyewitness observations (Luke 1:1-4). Therefore he was not one of the disciples who traveled with Jesus.

The early church identified the writer as Luke. The heretic Marcion is the earliest witness we have to Luke's authorship (ca. A.D. 135). The Muratorian Canon (ca. A.D. 180) mentioned Luke as the writer too. It described him as the physician who accompanied Paul on his journey (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1—28:16; Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11). Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 180-185) also believed Luke wrote this Gospel and called him the "inseparable" companion of Paul.¹ Later church fathers likewise referred to Luke as the writer of this Gospel.

Luke was evidently a Gentile (cf. Col. 4:10-14). However some scholars believed that Colossians 4:11 and 14 do not necessarily mean that Luke was a Gentile and that he may have been a Hellenistic Jew.² Church tradition identified Antioch of Syria as Luke's hometown, but this is has not been validated.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The main doctrines of systematic theology that Luke stressed were Christology, soteriology (especially redemption), pneumatology, angelology, and eschatology.

"Luke is the only synoptic evangelist to use the noun 'salvation' (*soteria* four times [1:69, 71, 77, 19:9]; *soterion* twice [2:30; 3:6]) and 'savior'

¹*Against Heresies*, 3:14:1.

²E.g., R. P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty*, p. 146; and John Wenham, "The Identification of Luke," *Evangelical Quarterly* 63:1 (1991):16.

(*soter* [1:47; 2:11]), and he used the verb 'save' (*sodzo*) more than any other book in the New testament (although this is mainly because of Luke's greater length)."³

There is also much emphasis on the glory of God, prayer, miracles, the divine plan that Jesus fulfilled, Israel, believing, discipleship, forgiveness, and God's Word. About 20 of Jesus' parables are unique to this Gospel. Luke also related certain events in Jesus' life to secular history, and he emphasized Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem.⁴

Luke stressed Jesus' concern for all people, especially for individuals that Jewish society of His day despised such as Gentiles, the poor, women, children, and "sinners." He used the Greek term *nomikos*, which means "lawyer," rather than the Hebrew term *grammateus*, meaning "scribe." He emphasized Jesus' practical teachings, such as what He taught about money (cf. chs. 12 and 16).

"In terms of its worldview, its theology, and its practical presentation of principles, this Gospel explains how we can serve God better."⁵

Luke showed interest in purpose, fulfillment, and accomplishment. He documented the joy that resulted from Jesus' saving and healing works. He stressed Jesus' call for people to become His disciples. He portrayed Jesus as dependent on the Holy Spirit and on the Father through prayer. Finally, Luke recorded many examples of Jesus' power. Muslims respect the Gospels, and probably more Muslims have been brought to faith in Christ through Luke's Gospel than any other, because of its emphases.

"Luke's Gospel gives a reader a more comprehensive grasp of the history of the period than the other Gospels. He presented more facts about the earthly life of Jesus than did Matthew, Mark, or John."⁶

Luke is the longest book in the New Testament, Matthew is second, and Acts is third, but only slightly shorter than Matthew. Together with Acts, Luke comprises about 27 percent of the Greek New Testament. Furthermore Luke wrote more verses in the New Testament than anyone else: 2157 in Luke and Acts. Paul wrote the second largest number of verses (2032), then John (1416), then Matthew (1071), then Mark (678), and finally the lesser contributors.⁷

PURPOSES

The Gospel of Luke is one of the books of the Bible that states the purpose of the writer. Luke said that he wrote to inform Theophilus about the truthfulness of the gospel that Theophilus had heard (1:4).

³Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 220.

⁴For an excellent summary of Luke's theology, see Darrell L. Bock, "A Theology of Luke-Acts," in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 87-166.

⁵Idem, *Luke*, p. 26.

⁶John A. Martin, "Luke," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, p. 201.

⁷Bock, *Luke*, p. 17.

In Acts, Luke said he had written previously about the things that Jesus began to do and teach before His ascension (Acts 1:1-2). He then proceeded to record the things Jesus continued to do and teach after His ascension through His apostles in Acts. Presumably Luke wrote both his Gospel and Acts with a larger audience than just Theophilus in view.

The distinctive emphases of the Gospel help us to identify secondary purposes. Luke demonstrated zeal to convince his readers of the reliability of the facts that he recorded so they would believe in Jesus and become Christians, as well as the significance of what God had done in Christ.⁸ These concerns are also clear in Acts.⁹ Obviously he wrote to preserve the record of events that happened during Jesus' earthly ministry, but few ancient writers wrote simply to narrate a chronicle of events.¹⁰ They wrote to convince their readers of something, and they used history to do that. Notwithstanding historical accuracy was important to them.¹¹ We believe that Luke's Gospel is an accurate continuation of biblical history that God preserved in Scripture. This Gospel constitutes an apologetic for Christianity that would have been of special interest to Greeks because of Luke's selection of material, vocabulary, and style.¹² It would give them a reason for the hope that was in them (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE

Evidently Theophilus was a real person.¹³ His name is Greek and means "lover of God." He appears to have been a fairly recent convert to Christianity from Greek paganism. Consequently it appears that Luke wrote for people such as Theophilus originally. Before his conversion, Theophilus may have been one of the Gentile God-fearers to which Luke referred several times in Acts. The God-fearers were Gentiles who had a certain respect for and who wanted to learn more about the God of the Jews. They came to the Jewish synagogues and listened to the Jewish Scriptures read there. Luke's orientation of his Gospel to the secular world and his references to Judaism also suggest that he wrote his Gospel with these people in mind. His use of the Septuagint version and his interest in the God-fearers suggest this too. The God-fearers had turned from Greek polytheism to Jewish monotheism, but many of them were not familiar with Palestinian geography and culture. Luke clarified these matters for his readers when necessary. The God-fearers were the Gentiles whom Paul found to be the most receptive soil for the gospel seed. Luke himself may have been one of this group, though there is no way to prove or to disprove that possibility.

⁸Carson and Moo, p. 212.

⁹See I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*.

¹⁰Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," in *Matthew-Luke*, vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 800.

¹¹See A. W. Mosley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965-66):10-26.

¹²See William J. Larkin Jr., "The Recovery of Luke-Acts as 'Grand Narrative' for the Church's Evangelistic and Edification Tasks in a Postmodern Age," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43:3 (September 2000):405-15, for suggestions for using Luke-Acts in a postmodern age.

¹³See my comment on 1:3.

"[Luke] writes to reassure the Christians of his day that their faith in Jesus is no aberration, but the authentic goal towards which God's ancient dealings with Israel were driving."¹⁴

By the first century most of the pagan Greeks had stopped believing in the gods and goddesses of their mythology and had abandoned fatalism. Many of them were following Eastern "mystery" religions that competed with Christianity for their allegiance. Both beliefs offered saviors, but the Savior of Christianity was a personal resurrected Lord whereas the savior of the mystery religions was impersonal and ideal. Luke evidently wrote to persuade these people to believe in Jesus and to give them a solid factual basis for their faith.

"That he wrote for an urban church community in the Hellenistic world is fairly certain."¹⁵

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

Experts in Greek literary styles acknowledge Luke's style and structure as superb.¹⁶ No one knows Luke's educational background, but clearly he had training in Greek composition as well as medicine and a talent for writing. Luke used many words that the other Gospel writers did not, and many of them show a wide literary background. He also used several medical and theological terms that are unique. Luke's use of Semitisms shows that he knew the Hebrew Old Testament well. However, his preference for the Septuagint suggests that it was the version his readers used most. Perhaps Luke was a Gentile who had much exposure to Semitic idioms from Paul and other Jews. He was a skillful enough writer to use chiasms as a major structural device.¹⁷ Chiasms were both Jewish and Greek literary devices that gave unity to a composition or section of text. Acts also contains them. Luke also repeated similar stories with variations (cf. 1:80; 2:40; 2:52). This literary device aids learning while giving additional new insights. He also tended to use a particular term frequently in one or more passages and then rarely or never after that. This makes the term stand out and calls attention to it where it occurs.¹⁸

DATE

Practically all scholars believe that Luke wrote his Gospel before he wrote Acts. Many conservative scholars hold that he wrote Acts during Paul's first Roman imprisonment during which the book ends (A.D. 60-62). Luke accompanied Paul during much of that apostle's missionary ministry. At times Luke was not with Paul, but he was ministering as Paul's representative in one or another of the churches that Paul had founded. Evidently Paul was Luke's primary source of information for his Gospel and Acts, as Peter was Mark's primary source for the second Gospel. Luke may have written his Gospel during

¹⁴Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 187.

¹⁵I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 33.

¹⁶See Henry J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*.

¹⁷See Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*.

¹⁸See Henry J. Cadbury, "Four Features of Lucan Style," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 87-102.

Paul's first imprisonment in Rome along with Acts. However, it seems more likely in view of how Luke introduced these two books that he wrote the Gospel sometime earlier than Acts. Luke had the most time to write this Gospel during Paul's Caesarean imprisonment (A.D. 57-59, cf. Acts 24:1—26:32). This seems to me and some other writers to be the most probable date of writing.¹⁹

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction 1:1-4
- II. The birth and childhood of Jesus 1:5—2:52
 - A. The announcement of John the Baptist's birth 1:5-25
 - 1. The introduction of John's parents 1:5-7
 - 2. The angel's announcement to Zechariah 1:8-23
 - 3. The pregnancy of Elizabeth 1:24-25
 - B. The announcement of Jesus' birth 1:26-56
 - 1. The introduction of Mary and Joseph 1:26-27
 - 2. The angel's announcement to Mary 1:28-38
 - 3. Mary's visit to Elizabeth 1:39-56
 - C. The birth and early life of John the Baptist 1:57-80
 - 1. The naming of John 1:57-66
 - 2. Zechariah's song of praise 1:67-79
 - 3. The preparation of John 1:80
 - D. The birth and early life of Jesus ch. 2
 - 1. The setting of Jesus' birth 2:1-7
 - 2. The announcement to the shepherds 2:8-20
 - 3. Jesus' circumcision 2:21
 - 4. Jesus' presentation in the temple 2:22-38
 - 5. Jesus' development in Nazareth 2:39-40
 - 6. Jesus' visit to the temple as a boy 2:41-50
 - 7. Jesus' continuing growth 2:51-52
- III. The preparation for Jesus' ministry 3:1—4:13
 - A. The ministry of John the Baptist 3:1-20
 - 1. The beginning of John's ministry 3:1-6
 - 2. John's preaching 3:7-18
 - 3. The end of John's ministry 3:19-20
 - B. The baptism of Jesus 3:21-22
 - C. The genealogy of Jesus 3:23-38
 - D. The temptation of Jesus 4:1-13

¹⁹E.g., Mark L. Bailey, in *The New Testament Explorer*, p. 102. For additional introductory information, see Earle E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*; and Carson and Moo, pp. 198-224.

- IV. Jesus' ministry in and around Galilee 4:14—9:50
 - A. Jesus' teaching ministry and the response to it 4:14—5:11
 - 1. An introduction to Jesus' Galilean ministry 4:14-15
 - 2. Jesus' teaching in Nazareth 4:16-30
 - 3. Jesus' ministry in and around Capernaum 4:31-44
 - 4. The call of Peter, James, and John 5:1-11
 - B. The beginning of controversy with the Pharisees 5:12—6:11
 - 1. Jesus' cleansing of a leprous Jew 5:12-16
 - 2. Jesus' authority to forgive sins 5:17-26
 - 3. Jesus' attitude toward sinners 5:27-32
 - 4. Jesus' attitude toward fasting 5:33-39
 - 5. Jesus' authority over the Sabbath 6:1-5
 - 6. Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath 6:6-11
 - C. Jesus' teaching of His disciples 6:12-49
 - 1. The selection of 12 disciples 6:12-16
 - 2. The assembling of the people 6:17-19
 - 3. The Sermon on the Mount 6:20-49
 - D. Jesus' compassion for people ch. 7
 - 1. The healing of a centurion's servant 7:1-10
 - 2. The raising of a widow's son 7:11-17
 - 3. The confusion about Jesus' identity 7:18-35
 - 4. The anointing by a sinful woman 7:36-50
 - E. Jesus' teaching in parables 8:1-21
 - 1. The companions and supporters of Jesus 8:1-3
 - 2. The parable of the soils 8:4-15
 - 3. The parable of the lamp 8:16-18
 - 4. The true family of Jesus 8:19-21
 - F. Jesus' mighty works 8:22-56
 - 1. The stilling of the storm 8:22-25
 - 2. The deliverance of a demoniac in Gadara 8:26-39
 - 3. The healing of a woman with a hemorrhage and the raising of Jairus' daughter 8:40-56
 - G. Jesus' preparation of the Twelve 9:1-50
 - 1. The mission of the Twelve to Israel 9:1-6
 - 2. Herod's question about Jesus' identity 9:7-9
 - 3. The feeding of the 5000 9:10-17
 - 4. Peter's confession of faith 9:18-27
 - 5. The Transfiguration 9:28-36
 - 6. The exorcism of an epileptic boy 9:37-43a
 - 7. Jesus' announcement of His betrayal 9:43b-45
 - 8. The pride of the disciples 9:46-50

- V. Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem 9:51—19:27
 - A. The responsibilities and rewards of discipleship 9:51—10:24
 - 1. The importance of toleration 9:51-56
 - 2. The importance of self-denial 9:57-62
 - 3. The importance of participation 10:1-16
 - 4. The joy of participation 10:17-20
 - 5. The joy of comprehension 10:21-24
 - B. The relationships of disciples 10:25—11:13
 - 1. The relation of disciples to their neighbors 10:25-37
 - 2. The relation of disciples to Jesus 10:38-42
 - 3. The relation of disciples to God the Father 11:1-13
 - C. The results of popular opposition 11:14-54
 - 1. The Beelzebul controversy 11:14-26
 - 2. The importance of observing God's Word 11:27-28
 - 3. The sign of Jonah 11:29-32
 - 4. The importance of responding to the light 11:33-36
 - 5. The climax of Pharisaic opposition 11:37-54
 - D. The instruction of the disciples in view of Jesus' rejection 12:1—13:17
 - 1. The importance of fearless confession 12:1-12
 - 2. The importance of the eternal perspective 12:13-21
 - 3. God's provisions for disciples 12:22-34
 - 4. The coming of the Son of Man 12:35-48
 - 5. The coming crisis 12:49-59
 - 6. A call to repentance 13:1-9
 - 7. A sign of Jesus' ability to affect change 13:10-17
 - E. Instruction about the kingdom 13:18—14:35
 - 1. Parables of the kingdom 13:18-21
 - 2. Entrance into the kingdom 13:22-30
 - 3. Jesus' postponement of the kingdom 13:31-35
 - 4. Participants in the kingdom 14:1-24
 - 5. The cost of discipleship 14:25-35
 - F. God's attitude toward sinners ch. 15
 - 1. The setting for Jesus' teaching 15:1-2
 - 2. The parable of the lost sheep 15:3-7
 - 3. The parable of the lost coin 15:8-10
 - 4. The parable of the lost son 15:11-32
 - G. Jesus' warnings about riches ch. 16
 - 1. Discipleship as stewardship 16:1-13
 - 2. Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees for their greed 16:14-31

- H. Jesus' warning about disciples' actions and attitudes 17:1-19
 - 1. The prevention of sin and the restoration of sinners 17:1-4
 - 2. The disciples' attitude toward their duty 17:5-10
 - 3. The importance of gratitude 17:11-19
- I. Jesus' teaching about His return 17:20—18:8
 - 1. A short lesson for the Pharisees 17:20-21
 - 2. A longer explanation for the disciples 17:22-37
 - 3. The parable of the persistent widow 18:1-8
- J. The recipients of salvation 18:9—19:27
 - 1. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector 18:9-14
 - 2. An illustration of humility 18:15-17
 - 3. The handicap of wealth 18:18-30
 - 4. Jesus' passion announcement and the disciples' lack of perception 18:31-34
 - 5. The healing of a blind man near Jericho 18:35-43
 - 6. Zaccheus' ideal response to Jesus 19:1-10
 - 7. The parable of the minas 19:11-27
- VI. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 19:28—21:38
 - A. The Triumphal Entry 19:28-40
 - B. The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 19:41-48
 - 1. Jesus' sorrow over Jerusalem 19:41-44
 - 2. Jesus' cleansing of the temple 19:45-46
 - 3. A synopsis of Jesus' teaching in the temple 19:47-48
 - C. Jesus' teachings in the temple 20:1—21:4
 - 1. The controversy over authority 20:1-8
 - 2. The parable of the wicked tenant farmers 20:9-19
 - 3. The question of tribute to Caesar 20:20-26
 - 4. The problem of the resurrection 20:27-40
 - 5. Jesus' question about David's son 20:41-44
 - 6. Jesus' condemnation of the scribes 20:45-47
 - 7. Jesus' commendation of a widow 21:1-4
 - D. Jesus' teaching about the destruction of the temple 21:5-36
 - 1. The setting and the warning about being misled 21:5-9
 - 2. The need for faithful perseverance 21:10-19
 - 3. The judgment coming on Jerusalem 21:20-24
 - 4. The second coming of the Son of Man 21:25-28
 - 5. The certainty of these events 21:29-33
 - 6. The concluding exhortation to watchfulness 21:34-36
 - E. A summary of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem 21:37-38

- VII. Jesus' passion, resurrection, and ascension chs. 22—24
 - A. The plot to arrest Jesus 22:1-6
 - 1. The leaders' desire 22:1-2
 - 2. Judas' offer 22:3-6
 - B. The preparations for the Passover 22:7-13
 - C. Events in the upper room 22:14-38
 - 1. The Passover meal 22:14-18
 - 2. The institution of the Lord's Supper 22:19-20
 - 3. Jesus' announcement of His betrayal 22:21-23
 - 4. Teaching about the disciples' service 22:24-30
 - 5. Jesus' announcement of Peter's denial 22:31-34
 - 6. The opposition to come 22:35-38
 - D. The arrest of Jesus 22:39-53
 - 1. Jesus' preparation in Gethsemane 22:39-46
 - 2. Judas' betrayal 22:47-53
 - E. The trials of Jesus 22:54—23:25
 - 1. Peter's denial of Jesus 22:54-62
 - 2. The mockery of the soldiers 22:63-65
 - 3. Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin 22:66-71
 - 4. Jesus' first appearance before Pilate 23:1-7
 - 5. Jesus' appearance before Herod 23:8-12
 - 6. Jesus' second appearance before Pilate 23:13-25
 - F. The crucifixion of Jesus 23:26-49
 - 1. Events on the way to Golgotha 23:26-32
 - 2. Jesus' death 23:33-49
 - G. The burial of Jesus 23:50-56
 - H. The resurrection of Jesus 24:1-12
 - I. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus 24:13-49
 - 1. The appearance to the disciples walking to Emmaus 24:13-35
 - 2. The appearances to the disciples in Jerusalem 24:36-49
 - J. The ascension of Jesus 24:50-53

people of Nazareth had wanted Jesus to leave, but the people of Capernaum begged Him to stay. Jesus wanted to reach as many people as possible with His message. "Judea" (v. 44) evidently refers to the whole Roman province that included Galilee, not just to southern Palestine. The words "must," "kingdom of God," and "sent" are all unique to Luke's narrative here. Luke's concept of the kingdom of God is the same as that of the other Gospel writers, namely, the rule of God on earth through David's descendant, Messiah.

"Along with 'preach,' these words constitute a programmatic statement of Jesus' mission and also of Luke's understanding of it."²⁰⁰

This section (4:31-44) contains representative incidents from Jesus' Galilean ministry that illustrate what He did and the reactions of people to Him (cf. Acts 10:38). Note that Jesus' teaching ministry was primary and His healings were secondary. His miracles served to authenticate His message. This was true of the apostles' preaching and miracles in Acts too.

4. The call of Peter, James, and John 5:1-11 (cf. Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20)

Luke's account of this incident is the longest of the three. Luke stressed Peter and omitted any reference to Andrew, his brother (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16). He characteristically focused on single individuals that Jesus' touched wherever possible to draw attention to Jesus. He also stressed the sovereignty and holiness of Jesus as well as these disciples' total abandonment of their possessions to follow Jesus. Jesus repeated the lesson of this incident after His resurrection (John 21:1-14).

Luke placed this account in his Gospel after the Capernaum incidents rather than before them as Mark did (Mark 1:14-28). He probably arranged his material this way to stress Jesus' sovereignty over people having established the general program of Jesus' ministry.²⁰¹ The emphasis on Jesus' sovereignty continues through chapter 5. This was not the first time Jesus had talked with Peter and the other disciples mentioned. Andrew had told his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah (cf. John 1:41). However these disciples' thought of the Messiah as their contemporaries did. They expected a political deliverer who was less than God. Jesus had to teach them that He was God as well as Messiah. This lesson and its implications took all of Jesus' ministry to communicate.

5:1-3 These verses give the setting for the incident. Again Luke pointed out that the crowd was listening to the word of God (v. 1; cf. 4:32, 36). The people were so interested that they pressed upon Jesus. Jesus put some distance between them and Himself by teaching from a boat not far off shore.

Luke described the Sea of Galilee as a lake, as most of His readers would have thought of it. Gennesaret was the town and plain on its northwest coast from which it received its name.

²⁰⁰Leifeld, p. 874.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 876.

Luke's characteristic attention to detail is obvious in that he referred to two boats, setting the stage for verse 7. Evidently the fishermen had used large dragnets (Gr. *diktau*) when they had fished all night, which Zebedee, James, and John were now washing and mending (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:2). Peter and Andrew were using a smaller round casting net (Gr. *amphibleston*), throwing it into the water from close to shore (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16).

"It was a busy scene; for, among the many industries by the Lake of Galilee, that of fishing was not only the most generally pursued, but perhaps the most lucrative."²⁰²

- 5:4-5 Luke alone specified that Simon and his companions were "fishermen" (Gr. *halieus*, v. 2). Consequently, Jesus' command to launch out into the deep water for another try at fishing contrasts Jesus' authority with the natural ability of these men. Peter's compliance shows his great respect for Jesus that led to obedience and ultimately to a large catch of fish. "Master" (Gr. *epistata*) is Luke's equivalent for "teacher" or "rabbi." Luke never used the term "rabbi," probably because it would have had little significance for most Greek readers. "Master" is a term that disciples or near disciples used of Jesus (8:24, 45; 9:33, 49), and it indicates submission to authority. Luke is the only Gospel evangelist who used this term, and wherever it appears it refers to Jesus.
- 5:6-7 Luke first stressed the gathering of very many fish (cf. John 21:6). The details give the narrative the ring of truth. "Partners" (Gr. *metochos*) probably refers to partners in business (cf. v. 10; Heb. 1:9; 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8).
- 5:8-10a Luke's other emphasis was Peter's response to this miracle. The catch so amazed (Gr. *thambos*) Peter that he prostrated himself before Jesus, evidently in the boat. Peter now addressed Jesus as "Lord" (Gr. *kyrios*) instead of "Master." "Lord" expressed more respect than "Master." In view of later developments in Peter's life, it is difficult to say that Peter viewed Jesus as God when he called Him "Lord" here. He may have done so and then relapsed into thinking of Him as only a mortal later. Nevertheless Peter expressed conviction of sin in Jesus' presence indicating that he realized that Jesus was a holy man, very different from himself (cf. Isa. 6:5). "Depart from me," or, "Go away from me," expresses Peter's feeling of uncleanness in Jesus' presence. Jesus' superior ability caused Peter to sense that he was a sinner, one who fell short. "Sinner" (Gr. *hamartolos*) is one of Luke's characteristic words. Of the 22 occurrences of this word in the Synoptics, 15 are in Luke.

"Luke does not use the term pejoratively but compassionately, as a common term applied to those who were isolated from Jewish religious circles because of their

²⁰²Edersheim, 1:473.

open sin, their unacceptable occupation or lifestyle, or their paganism. Luke shows that these sinners are the objects of God's grace through the ministry of Jesus."²⁰³

"What Peter does not realize is that admitting one's inability and sin is the best prerequisite for service, since then one can depend on God. Peter's confession becomes his résumé for service. Humility is the elevator to spiritual greatness."²⁰⁴

5:10b-11 Jesus does not depart from nor reject sinners who feel conviction because of their sin. He draws them to Himself and sends them out to serve Him. Jesus used the fish to represent people that Peter would draw into the kingdom of God and before that into the church (cf. Acts. 2; 10:9-48). This seems to be a reference to catching in the sense of saving rather than in the sense of judging and destroying.

"Fishermen caught live fish to kill them, but the disciples would be catching people who were dead to give them life."²⁰⁵

Peter and his three companions immediately abandoned their life as fishermen to become Jesus' disciples full-time (cf. 14:33; 18:22). Only Luke recorded that Jesus had contact with Peter before He called Peter to follow Him (cf. 4:38). These fishermen left the greatest catch of their career, undoubtedly, because of what it showed them of Jesus.²⁰⁶ It is unlikely that they were able to finance their life as Jesus' disciples with this catch of fish, as one commentator suggested.²⁰⁷

"Luke did not lay particular stress on the thought of giving up all to follow Jesus (Mk. 1:18, 20): the accent is on v. 10 with its call to mission."²⁰⁸

The general emphasis in this incident is on the authority of Jesus. His words had powerful effects. The only proper response to them was submission. Blessing would follow in the form of participation in Jesus' mission.

"The major application in the miracle of the catch of fish centers around Jesus' instructions and Peter's responses. In the midst of teaching many, Jesus calls a few people to more focused service. Peter is one example of such a call. Everyone has a ministry, and all are equal before God, but some are called to serve him directly. Peter has the three necessary

²⁰³Leifeld, p. 877.

²⁰⁴Bock, *Luke*, p. 155.

²⁰⁵Bailey, p. 112.

²⁰⁶Morris, p. 114.

²⁰⁷Geldenhuis, p. 182.

²⁰⁸Marshall, *The Gospel . . .*, p. 206.

qualities Jesus is looking for. He is willing to go where Jesus leads, he is humble, and he is fully committed."²⁰⁹

This whole first section describing Jesus' teaching mission (4:14—5:11) focuses on Jesus' authority and the proper response to it.

B. THE BEGINNING OF CONTROVERSY WITH THE PHARISEES 5:12—6:11

One of Luke's purposes in his Gospel and in Acts appears to have been to show why God stopped working particularly with Israel and began working with Jews and Gentiles equally in the church.²¹⁰ The Jewish leaders' rejection of Jesus was a major reason for this change. The conflict between them is an important feature of this Gospel.

This section of the Gospel includes six incidents. In the first one Jesus served notice to the religious leaders in Jerusalem that the Messiah had arrived. In the remaining five pericopes, the Pharisees found fault with Jesus or His disciples. Mark stressed the conflict that was mounting, but Luke emphasized the positive aspects of Jesus' ministry that led to the opposition.²¹¹

1. Jesus' cleansing of a leprous Jew 5:12-16 (cf. Matt. 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45)

This miracle was to be a "testimony" to others about Jesus' person (v. 14). It authenticated His person and His teaching. It also shows the blessings that Jesus brought to people, specifically the spiritual cleansing of those whom sin has polluted (cf. 4:18).

"Like sin, leprosy ["a defiling skin disease" TNIV] is deeper than the skin (Lev. 13:3) and cannot be helped by mere 'surface' measures (see Jer. 6:14). Like sin, leprosy spreads (Lev. 13:7-8); and as it spreads, it defiles (Lev. 13:44-45). Because of his defilement, a leprous person had to be isolated outside the camp (Lev. 13:46), and lost sinners one day will be isolated in hell. People with leprosy were looked on as 'dead' (Num. 12:12), and garments infected with leprosy were fit only for the fire (Lev. 13:52)."²¹²

5:12 One of the cities of Galilee is what Luke meant in view of the context. He revealed his particular interest in medical matters again by noting that leprosy covered this man completely. There could be no doubt that he was a leper. As Peter had done, this man fell on His face before Jesus (cf. v. 8). As Peter, he also appealed to Jesus as "Lord" (v. 8). This address was respectful and appropriate for addressing someone with special power from God.²¹³ The leper was very bold in coming to Jesus since his leprosy separated him from normal social contacts. His conditional request cast

²⁰⁹Bock, *Luke*, p. 163.

²¹⁰Liefeld, p. 879.

²¹¹Marshall, *The Gospel . . .*, p. 206.

²¹²Wiersbe, 1:186.

²¹³G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, pp. 122-23.