

# Luke the Evangelist

## The Physician

Many scholars believe that Luke was born of a Gentile family in the Greek city of Antioch (in Turkey), a major Greek city and provincial capital. He became a physician who lived and practiced medicine in this town. Greek was his native language.

## The Convert

Luke is the only writer of the New Testament who can clearly be identified as not being Jewish, but a convert to Christianity.

## His Writings

His writings attest to the fact that, before or after his conversion, he became quite familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Psalms and prophetic books, since he frequently and accurately quoted them in his writings. As author of both the Lucan gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, his writings make up more than 27% of the entire New Testament.

## His Audience

Details in Luke's account of Jesus's life and the early church were selected and shaped to suit his apologetic interests, not in defiance of but in conformity to ancient standards of historical writing.

## The Historian

Based on his accurate description of towns, cities and islands, as well as correctly naming various official titles, one archaeologist wrote, "Luke is a historian of the first rank."

## His Community

Though many scholars believe that the author of Luke-Acts points to a gentile Christian writing for a gentile audience, others say it is more plausible that Luke's writings were directed to a community made up of both Jewish and gentile Christians, since even in his ministry to the gentiles, his

gospel stresses its Hebrew scriptural roots by frequently quoting the prophets and the psalms. Some suggest that Theophilus was a high-ranking or influential Gentile for whom Luke wanted to provide a detailed, historical account of Christ and the spread of the gospel.

## His Education

From the quality and fluency of Luke's use of the Greek language, it is clear that he was perhaps the most highly educated of the New Testament authors. He consciously and intentionally alludes and references quotations of ancient Classical and Hellenistic Greek authors, such as Homer, Aesop, Epimenides, Euripides, and Plato, indicating that he was familiar with Greek literary texts. This familiarity most likely derived from being taught the very rich Hellenistic educational curriculum used for centuries throughout the Mediterranean. The composition of the writings, as well as the range of vocabulary used, indicate that Luke was well-educated.

## His Ministry

Certain details of Luke's personal life as a Christian can be reasonably assumed. Although he excluded himself from among the eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, he repeatedly used the word "we" in implying his personal presence during certain Pauline missions in Acts.

## With St. Paul

Paul attested to Luke's presence in Rome with him near the end of his life, saying, "Only Luke is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11).

## Author of Acts of the Apostles

During the time of Paul's house imprisonment in Rome, Luke recorded Paul's account of his earlier missionary years, the early chapters of Acts. Luke also affirms his presence in Rome at a later date, "And when we came to Rome..." (Acts 28:16). Luke may have also contributed to the Epistle to the Hebrews.