



# Bible Readers Club

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Week

29

## Luke 1-24

Dear Friends,

One word that we could use to describe the Gospel of Luke is *comprehensive*.

First of all, it is the longest book in the New Testament and is only volume one of a two-volume work by the same author which includes the Book of Acts. Luke tells the story of Jesus, and Acts is its sequel telling the story of the outgoing proclamation of His Good News and the establishment of God's Church. Evidence from within the Books themselves and from early Church history tells us that the author is Luke, a 1<sup>st</sup>-century physician who was a frequent travelling companion of the Apostle Paul.

Luke's Gospel begins with the angels' announcements of Jesus' and His cousin John the Baptist's births, includes the fullest infancy narratives, and ends with Jesus ascension. In between these remarkable events, Luke tells the story of Jesus in a way that brings out some unique themes. Luke seems especially concerned to make a universal appeal, commending Jesus to all peoples and bringing out His compassion for the poor, social outcasts, women and children. A certain joyfulness also characterizes this Gospel which also emphasizes prayer, the Holy Spirit and rejections of Jesus. This last characteristic seems to serve a literary function as major sections of Luke's Gospel begin with rejections of Jesus... 4:14 – Jesus is rejected by His own people in Nazareth. 9:53 – He is rejected by the Samaritans. 19:28 – He is acclaimed triumphantly as He enters Jerusalem, but this will turn into a cry for His crucifixion when He doesn't conform to the people's idea of what their Messiah should be and do. 22:4 – He is rejected and betrayed by Judas. And 24:3 – He is rejected by the grave!

The purpose of Luke-Acts is clearly stated at the beginning of the Gospel:

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most*

*excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.* – Luke 1:1-4

Luke is operating as a responsible and thorough historian so that the faith of people like Theophilus will be encouraged and solidified. The name Theophilus means “Lover of God,” and many believe this man was Luke’s benefactor as he traveled, investigated and wrote the story of Jesus and His church.

May we, like Theophilus of old, be encouraged as followers of Jesus Christ, and may our faith and trust in Him become stronger, as we read His story from Dr. Luke this week.

Your fellow “Lover of God,”

- Pastor Jay