

Luke Part 1



background: read this stuff before you begin

WELCOME TO ROOTWORKS

This guide is my gift to you to help you study the Bible. This may not seem like an expensive gift, but the treasures you will learn from studying God's Word will be priceless. I'm thrilled that you want to study the Bible! One of my greatest joys is to see students reading and learning from God's Word. Thank you for bringing me joy!

What does RootWorks mean?

I made up the name RootWorks from one of my favorite passages. It's Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) which reads:

*And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to Him. **Let your roots grow down into Him and draw up nourishment from Him**, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done.*

As you can read from the passage, maturity in one's relationship with God requires nourishment. The imagery in this passage suggests that our spiritual roots must grow deep so that we'll continue in our vital relationship with God. This type of growth requires putting our ROOTS to WORK. Get it?

Why do RootWorks? Why not just attend another Bible Study?

The reason I've put this notebook together is because I want you to learn how to study the Bible through reading and asking questions. It would be easy for you to find a weekly Bible study where you become comfortable attending and digging into God's Word. Chances are, you would go to Bible study, sit, and listen to someone else teach. While this is good, it's definitely not best for long-term maturity. You need to learn to study the Bible on your own. I want you to develop the habit of studying God's Word.

How long will RootWorks take to finish?

The answer to this question depends on how much thought you give to answering the questions. The questions are not intended to be "raced through." Your goal shouldn't be speed; it should be comprehension and personal application. As a general rule, each lesson should take thirty to forty-five minutes.

How often should I complete a lesson?

This depends upon you . . . upon how often you decide to sit down and work through this material. The idea would be to keep consistent. You don't want to do too much too fast and get burned out or tired. At the same time, you don't want to answer one question a month—this will break up the continuity and the cohesiveness of the lesson, and you'll be 35 years old by the time you finish.

What do I do when I finish all five lessons?

Celebrate! You will have worked hard to reach this goal. Chances are you'll have some questions. If you're not in a small group I'd love to meet with you for a few minutes to hear those questions as well as what you learned as a result of your study (if you're in a small group, get together with your leader). When you're ready for the next RootWorks notebook let me know.

What if I don't know an answer for a specific question?

Keep going. Don't let it discourage you. I would be surprised if you didn't have some questions that "stump" you. Give it some good thought and then skip it if you don't know the answer.

What Bible translation should I use?

You can use just about any translation Bible and still be able to figure out the questions. When I wrote the questions I was using the NCV translation since that is the translation we hand out when you visit FIRE & WATER for the first time.

If this translation talk is confusing, don't worry about it. Basically, when the Bible was written 2,000 plus years ago, it was written in (mostly) Hebrew. The Bible you own has been translated from its original language into English so you can read and understand it. (If you think economics is tough, you should try Hebrew.) Have you ever noticed that you use some words differently than the ways your parents use those same words? After a time, words simply change their meaning; therefore, we have different translations of the Greek and Hebrew. Imagine the change that would happen over 400 years! That was when the King James Version was written—and that is why some of the language sounds so weird.

Should I also write in my own Bible during this study?

Yes! I hope you will write notes in the margin of your Bible, underline key verses, and watch your Bible become a friend that is waiting to tell you more about God and His desires for your life.

What are the other HABITS I should be developing?

Great question! (Thanks, I wrote it.) One of the many goals in our ministry is to help committed students develop HABITS necessary for continual spiritual growth. We've identified these habits and created some tools (like RootWorks) to assist you in developing these habits:

Hang time with God

Accountability (with another believer)

Bible memorization

Involved with the church body

Tithing commitment

Study the Bible

Many other tools such as Scripture Memorization cards and Hang Time Journals are available in the student lounge for you to take (they're free!)

The Author: Luke

Seeing as the book's full title is "The Gospel According to Luke", it should be pretty obvious who the author is. Luke was a doctor that lived around the time of Jesus. He lived in the Greek city of Antioch, a fair ways away from Israel where Jesus' ministry took place. So when writing this gospel, Luke had to do a little research.

Because he was not from Israel it is thought Luke may be a Gentile (someone who is not Jewish). Either way, we know he eventually got together with some Jewish friends. He also wrote the book of Acts (otherwise known as the Acts of the Apostles) in which he continues the story of Christianity with the story of Jesus' followers. The only difference is he was apart of this story. He joined the apostles at Troas (Acts 16:10) and went with them on some of their missionary journeys. It's for this reason Luke is known as "Luke the Evangelist". He spent the rest of his life serving God where he finally died at the age of 84 (people can still visit his tomb in Greece at Thebes).

The Audience: Theophilus And Others

Luke was hired to write the gospel account of Jesus' life, just like he was hired to write about the acts of the apostles (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-3). It's for this reason that some archaeologists and professors call Luke a "historian of the first rank", meaning he was one of the first and one of the best. So the original reason for Luke writing this book was for the man who paid him.

But as with many books and inventions, this gospel really was meant for so much more. Theophilus may have backed the project with his money, but this book was really meant for us. It was written from the perspective of a thinker and someone who was not born Jewish. In many ways the gospel of Luke was written for those who had merely heard of Jesus and wanted to know more, even if they didn't understand all the little cultural things of where Jesus lived.

It's for this reason this book has survived two thousand years. Other gospels were written about Jesus' life, many were lost, some have been found to be false by the church and others who were actually there in the story. Luke's gospel has stood the test of both of these and continues to help us understand the story of Jesus thousands of years later.

lesson 1: Luke 1:1-38

Questions for Luke 1:1-25

1. Since Luke was a researcher and did his best to get the true story of Jesus recorded, does that make you more or less confident in what he writes? How is knowing that going to help you with this Bible Study?

2. Luke begins this story with an angel visiting the priest Zechariah. What would you do if you saw an angel? What is the importance of angel visits in the Bible?

- What are some other stories in the Bible where angels brought a message from God?

Here are some suggestions of where to look: Genesis 22, Judges 6:11-24, I Kings 19:1-9, Acts 12:1-19

3. Zechariah doubts that God will do what He says (it's a lot like the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18). Because of this the angel tells Zechariah he will not be able to speak until the baby is born.

- Why do you think the angel chose to have Zechariah not speak?

• Do you think this was a punishment for not believing or it was used to help Zechariah, he would not be bothered with lots of questions since he couldn't speak?

4. This child who was to be born to Zechariah and Elizabeth had a purpose. He already had a name, he would be full of God, and he had a job that he would do when he was older.

- How would you feel knowing your life had that kind of purpose?

• Would knowing that kind of background on someone make it harder or easier to follow them?

• Although your parents may not have been visited by an angel, is it possible that God has a purpose for your life too? (Check out Jeremiah 1:4-10 and 29:11)

Maybe God is trying to show you His plan in your life now? Be listening!

Questions for Luke 1:26-38

1. Another angel visit! The same angel this time. The difference is this time the angel doesn't talk to the husband, he talks directly to the woman who will be giving birth to the child. How would that differ from hearing from someone else the angel's message?

2. Both times the angel starts his message with "don't be afraid". Why do you think that is?

3. Before it was difficult to have a baby (they were old), here it's impossible. Yet the angel finishes his message with the idea that God can do the impossible. Knowing that, how does your view of God's story and Christmas change?

4. Mary ends this with one little statement with big meaning. "I am the servant of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" What does it take to be a servant of God with this type of faith? What can you do to increase your own faith like Mary's?

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. Ask God what His plans are for you and for the strength to serve Him in those plans.

lesson 2: Luke 1:39-80

Questions for Luke 1:39-56

1. Mary did as the angel told her and visited her cousin. But when she got there Elizabeth's baby went crazy.

- How did the baby recognize the Son of God was in the room (go back to 1:15)?

- What can we do to recognize Jesus like that?

2. Mary is so excited when Elizabeth says she is the mother of God that she sings a song? Have you ever been so happy over something you broke out into song?

3. Ever since the angel visited Mary, all she's been able to do is say "An angel said this would happen". How do you think she felt to now have someone else physically in her life let her know that she was doing the right thing?

Have you ever had to step out in faith about something that you could not explain to other people? How does that relate?

4. For the first three months of her pregnancy with Jesus, Mary stayed away from home. She lived with a priest who could not talk and an older lady who was going through a similar miracle to hers.

- Do you think it is easier to hear from God or understand God when you are away from your usual surroundings? Why?

- Does it help to be with people who are going through the same situation you are? Why?

Questions for Luke 1:57-80

1. In the Jewish culture the idea of a name was more than a pretty title for a child. It was used to describe who the child was and/or what they wanted the child to be when they grew up. The name John comes from the Hebrew meaning "God is gracious" or "God's grace". What does your name mean?

2. Verses 65-66 say that everyone in the area now heard the story of John and his birth (now that dad could speak and tell the story). What would you have thought if you were living a few doors down and heard that story?

3. Once Zechariah was able to speak, he gave a prophecy about Jesus and his son John's role in the story of Jesus. Write down what you know about them from this prophecy:

Jesus

John

4. After all this happened and John grew up, he went to live in the desert. Many times before someone does something great for God they go to the wilderness (Jesus did it, so did Paul the apostle). Why do you think God has people go to the wilderness? Is it like when He sent Mary to visit Elizabeth?

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit just as He did John and Elizabeth.

lesson 3 - Luke 2:1-40

Questions for Luke 2:1-21

1. How many times have you heard or seen this story? What did you learn from reading it you didn't know before?

2. There they are again, angels! What is the significance of there being so many angels? What did they say, what is important about that? (And again, the angel starts with "don't be afraid." Why is that?)

3. What do you think that was like, to ride into town pregnant and unmarried, everyone a stranger, but at the same time most would know since they could see you're not married (and would have to put that on the census)?

4. Why do you think God chose for His Son to be born where He was, wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a feeding trough?

5. After Jesus was born, God told shepherds. Why shepherds? What is the spiritual significance of shepherds?

Some verses to look up, try these!

Psalm 23, Psalm 100:3, I Peter 5:1-4, Revelation 7:17

6. Verse 18 says everyone was amazed at what the shepherds told them. If this is true, why are there no stories of Jesus being mobbed by tons of people as a baby?

Questions for Luke 2:22-40

1. The two pigeons given at the temple is from Leviticus 12 where there is a law for new mothers to give an offering to cleanse themselves. Why did they need to do this?

Did you notice the offering is really a lamb, doves or pigeons were only given if the mother could not afford a lamb. What does that tell you about what Jesus was born into?

2. What sticks out to you about the story of Simeon?

He heard the Holy Spirit so clearly he knew where to go to see the Messiah?

God would allow him to not die until he saw God on earth?

He knew Jesus' purpose in life?

He prayed for Jesus (the first one we hear to do this)?

He knew Jesus would cause people to turn against each other?

What else?

3. How did Anna know who Jesus was? How well do you think you know God if you never left church but worshipped all the time, praying day and night? How can you move closer to that?

4. What do you think Jesus' childhood was like? We know very little about Him from birth to age twelve, what do you think it would be like?

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. In the story of Jesus birth, what question do you have that you wish most you had the answer to?

lesson 4 - Luke 2:41-3:20

Questions for Luke 2:41-52

1. What do you think it would have been like to be Jesus' parents? To know He's not just smarter than you, He's got the ability to smite you if you try to discipline Him. How do you think Jesus treated His parents?

2. What do you think went through Mary and Joseph's minds when they realize they had lost God as a child?

For a big event like this, it was customary for huge groups to travel together from a town, all friends and neighbors sticking together. It was necessary for safety from robbers on the road.

3. It says Jesus was teaching in the Temple and the people there were amazed at His understanding and answers. Why do you think no one wrote down what Jesus said here?

4. What did Jesus mean when He said He was in His Father's house?

5. What does verse 52 look like to you? What does it mean for Jesus to become wiser? Did He not know everything? What does it mean that Jesus grew physically, was He an awkward teenager? Why did people like Him? How did He please God?

Questions for Luke 3:1-20

1. Verses 4-6 quote a Scripture from Isaiah 40:3-5. How does those verse fit here?

2. What does John mean when he tells the people being Abraham's children is not enough, that they need to change their hearts and lives?

3. Three times John is asked what a group of people should do? What did he tell them and what does it mean?

- The people
- The tax collectors
- The soldiers

4. In verse 16 John starts to describe the person who is coming after him, Jesus! What are some ways that John describes Jesus? What do they mean?

5. Why was it dangerous for John to speak out publicly against Herod?

This is not the same Herod from Jesus' birth, this is his son. He was appointed governor of Judea, meaning he was the Jewish representative to the Roman government.

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. Out of all the people John was talking to, which group do you think best represents you?

lesson 5 - Luke 3:21-4:13

Questions for Luke 3:21-38

1. Why do you think Jesus thought it was necessary to be baptized before starting His ministry? What example does this give for us?

2. Have you ever read the genealogy of Jesus here? Take a second, do you recognize any of the names?

There are a few big names here. There are prophets, kings, Ruth's husband is here, all the way back to Adam (and ultimately God).

3. This list of ancestors is different than the one in Matthew. Luke decides to trace Jesus' family through his father, Joseph. Why do you think Luke chose to do that (especially since Joseph isn't really Jesus' father)?

Questions for Luke 4:1-13

1. Verse one starts with the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness. Why would the Holy Spirit do that? Would the Holy Spirit do that in your life, lead you into a place of separation and desert?

2. Why did Jesus not eat for forty days? Is there something important to that? Why forty days, is the number forty important?

3. it very much seems like the Holy Spirit is leading Jesus to be tempted. Does God do that to us, does He intentionally lead us to temptation or does He simply allow it to happen? (I Cor. 10:13 should provide some comfort here).

4. Take a look at the three things Jesus was tempted with:

- Bread

Why did satan tempt Jesus with something that is already His own power? How tempting would that have been after no food for forty days (and if Jesus could do that at any time, why not eat for forty days)?

- Power

Again, it seems like satan is tempting Jesus with something He already has (or could enforce at any time). This is the only one with a trade (power for worship). Why did satan try a bargain this time?

- Worship

If people had seen this done, they would have immediately worshipped Jesus and followed Him, why would Jesus not do it? It also seems like this time satan tempts Jesus with something they both recognize is Jesus'. Why?

5. In all three times Jesus is tempted. He does the exact same thing, do you see it? Why does Jesus always answer satan with Scripture? What kind of a model does that give us for our lives?

6. This story ends with a curious point, satan left Jesus until another time, a more opportune one. Yet we have no other record of satan tempting Jesus. When else in Jesus' ministry could you see Him being tempted?

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. After reading about Jesus' temptation, how do you feel about your spiritual life and when you are tempted to sin?

lesson 6 - Luke 4:14-5:11

Questions for Luke 4:14-30

1. After the wilderness temptation, it says Jesus is full of the Holy Spirit and He is now publicly teaching. Why do you think God uses the wilderness to prepare people for ministry?

If you want some others to look at, try Moses and Paul!

2. Take a look at Jesus' teaching. He is basically saying He is not here for the religious but those who need Him. How would you react to hearing that, would you see yourself as needing Jesus or the already saved, the religious? Why?

3. Already, literally days into His ministry, the religious leaders want to kill Him. Why? And how did Jesus just walk away?

Questions for Luke 4:31-37

1. Why is it the demon is the one who immediately recognizes who Jesus is and not the religious leaders? And what did the demon mean asking Jesus to stop interfering? And what is meant by "us"?

2. Why were people amazed at this miracle? Why had demons been allowed to live in people who followed God all this time?

3. Do you think there are still demons at work in the world today? Do they still possess people? Why do we hear so little about it or see so little of them being "cast out"?

Questions for Luke 4:38-44

1. In the midst of Jesus' healings, it says He told the demons *not* to tell people He was the Messiah. Why? Isn't that what Jesus was trying to tell people?

2. Verse 42 says Jesus went to an isolated place to pray. Why did Jesus do that? How can we follow the same model?

3. How do you think Jesus dealt with the idea that He needed to stay and help people, but at the same time He needed to go tell others about Him? Do we still face this dilemma as those who follow Christ? What should we do about it? How are we doing at it?

Questions for Luke 5:1-11

1. Can you imagine, the crowds to hear Jesus' teaching just a short time after He started were so large they would fill an entire beach! Are there still crowds following Jesus like that today? Why or why not?

2. What does it mean to be a "fisher of men"? How do you catch fish? How does that apply to helping show people who Jesus is and bring them into His family?

Wrapping It Up

1. What verse did you find most meaningful in this lesson? Why?

2. List some questions you have from this lesson:

3. How is Jesus changing religion already so soon into His ministry? Does your "religion" need to change to mirror His?