

LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN

Text: Luke 1:1-4

INTRO: The subject of our lesson is a first century physician by the name of Luke. We will examine the passages of Scripture where he is mentioned by the apostle Paul, & then look briefly at Luke's writings, the books of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

I. MOST SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT LUKE IS THE UN-NAMED COMPANION OF TITUS IN 2 COR. 8:18, 57 AD

2 Cor.8:16-19a. But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift...

2 Cor 12:18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him.

A. It is interesting that Luke never mentions himself by name, but a study of the book of Acts shows that he traveled with Paul much of the time, as he sometimes refers to Paul & his company as "they" and sometimes as "we."

B. It is also interesting that Luke never mentions Titus by name

1. Paul in 3 of his letters shows that Titus was a frequent companion, yet Luke never mentions him by name. Luke's only reference to Titus is in Acts 15:2 where he says the church in Antioch determined that Paul, Barnabas, and "certain others" should go to Jerusalem about the matter of circumcision. See Gal. 2:1-3.

2. Because of this, many scholars believe Titus to be the brother of Luke.

II. IN PHILEMON 24, ABOUT 63 A.D., WE LEARN THAT LUKE WAS A FELLOW LABORER WITH PAUL.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus greets you, as do

Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

III. IN COL. 4:10-14, WE LEARN A COUPLE OF MORE FACTS ABOUT LUKE.

A. Here we learn that Luke is a Gentile.

Col 4:10-11 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

B. This passage also is the means by which we know Luke was a physician, vs 14.

IV. AFTER PAUL'S RELEASE FROM THE ROMAN PRISON ABOUT 64 A.D., HE WAS FREE UNTIL ABOUT 68 A.D., WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED AGAIN & EXECUTED SHORTLY AFTERWARD. DURING HIS 2ND IMPRISONMENT, HE WROTE HIS 2ND LETTER TO TIMOTHY, IN WHICH HE MAKES ONE LAST MENTION OF LUKE.

Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world & has departed for Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark & bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. (2 Tim 4:10-11).

V. MORE DETAILS OF LUKE'S LIFE CAN BE GAINED BY EXAMINING SOME OF THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF HIS WRITINGS IN THE BOOKS OF LUKE & ACTS.

A. Both books were addressed to Theophilus,
Luke 1:3; Acts1:1

1. Theophilus was a common name in the 1st century & we do not know who this person was. In LK 1 he is addressed as "most excellent," an expression that seems to have been reserved for those who held authority in the Roman govt.

Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25. Felix, Festus

2. So Theophilus was most likely an important official of the Roman government.
3. Scholars C.P. Thiede & Matthew D'Ancona tell us:
“In those times, dedicating a book to a person obliged him or her to pay for the copying & the distribution of the work... A Roman of Theophilus' stature had easy access to the scriptoriums of the imperial administration, to individual scribes whom he could employ, & most important, to the...efficient postmen of the Empire.”

B. External evidence has always favored Luke as the writer of the book that bears his name & the Acts of the Apostles--but we are more interested in the evidence within the books themselves.

1. The writer was a fellow laborer of Paul. One can tell by a careful reading of Acts when the writer was present & when he was not.
 - a. The writer first joined Paul's company in Troas about 51 A.D., **ACTS 16:8-12**.
 - b. When Paul's company left Philippi, about 51 Luke remained there. **ACTS 16:40-17:1**
 - c. Luke rejoined Paul's company about 6 years later when they came back thru Philippi, & they were together for the remainder of Paul's ministry, a period of about 11 years. **ACTS 20:1-7**.
2. The books of Luke & Acts both bear evidence of Gentile authorship for a Gentile readership
 - a. The writer explained several Jewish matters.

Feast of Unleavened Bread... is called Passover. (LK 22:1).

Capernaum a city of Galilee (Luke 4:31)
Country of the Gadarenes... is opposite Galilee. (LK 8:26).

Arimathea, a city of the Jews. (Luke 23:51).

- b. He recorded many events of special interest to non-Jews.

Joseph & Mary in Bethlehem in obedience to a Roman edict, (Luke 2:1, 4-5).

Jesus' speech in the Nazareth synagogue. LUKE 4:25-29.

John B's instructions to soldiers, Luke 3:14

The good Samaritan, ch. 10
The 10 lepers, 17:16
Zaccheus, 19:5

Tho the book of Acts begins in Jerusalem, it rapidly spreads to tell the story of the conversion of Samaritans & Gentiles.

3. One would expect certain features in a book written by a physician, which indeed are found in the books of Luke & Acts.

- a. Preciseness in detail. LUKE 3:1-2.
- b. Use of medical terms. In describing many sicknesses & cures recorded in these 2

books, the writer shows an understanding of the nature of such illnesses & cures. In the expression re the camel & the eye of the needle, Luke uses the medical word for needle.

CONCLUSION: It is hoped that this background re the life & work of Luke might spur us on to greater interest & appreciation for his 2 greatest accomplishments--the book of Luke & the book which tells what all men must know & do to be saved, the book of Acts. Apparently, the books of Luke & Acts are the only books in all the Bible written by a Gentile especially for a Gentile readership, such as ourselves.

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