

a synopsis of LUKE

Cancer. Hearing that diagnosis is unnerving to say the least. Six years ago my surgeon restored my sense of peace and hope not only by his own experience but also by his readiness to consult with colleagues from around the country. He wanted to make sure he had the best data on hand and the best way to use it.

Luke was a doctor (Colossians 4:14). Like my surgeon, he took nothing for granted. He gathered all the data, sifted through it, and wrote a careful account of Jesus, the Christ. The Gospel of Luke wrote to the “honorable Theophilus” (Luke 1:3) who had accepted Jesus. He was probably an upper class Roman official (Luke used the same Greek word to describe Governor Felix [Acts 23:26 and 24:3] and Governor Porcius Festus [24:27 and 26:25]) who needed to be grounded in his faith. Being a Roman official and a Christian could be uncomfortable. Luke wanted Theophilus to be “certain of the truth that he had been taught” (Luke 1:4). Hardly anyone would be more qualified than Luke to “carefully investigate all the data and reports” floating around about Jesus and to “write an accurate account” (1:3) that would help his friend grow in his faith and loyalty to Jesus. Warren Wiersbe writes, “[Luke] wrote with the mind of a careful historian and with the heart of a loving physician” (*Be Compassionate*, p. 10). He wanted Theophilus to survive the smash-and-grab world in which he lived.

We don't know a lot about Dr. Luke except what Paul writes in the New Testament. He was a Gentile (Col. 4:11-14)—the only Gentile writer of Scripture. He wrote a huge portion of the NT (his gospel and the book of Acts). He became Paul's traveling companion at the beginning of the European campaign and considered him a co-worker (Philemon 24). At Acts 16:11 Luke begins to use “we” instead of “they” as he tells of Paul's adventures. He remained faithful to Paul to the very end (2 Timothy 4:11). Paul's influence most certainly influenced Luke's interpretation of Christ and Christianity as handed down through his gospel.

John MacArthur points out some themes to look for in Luke: Jesus' compassion for Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners and others often regarded as outcasts in Israel. He shows over and over how Jesus ministered to those who knew they needed help. Other favorite themes for Luke are joy, forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, Jesus' prayers, and Jesus' relentless march toward the cross—the purpose for which He had come to earth. (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*). Jesus highlighted the main theme of Luke's gospel in His own words: “The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost” (19:10).

That's good news—good news indeed.

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