



**CAPITOL[®]
COMMISSION**

Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders



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It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. Luke 1:3-4

Introducing the Gospel According to Luke

As we all gear up for the upcoming legislative session, I am this month initiating the gospel of Luke as a preface to the Bible Studies planned for each week starting February 4th. Reminder that all are invited to meet on Tuesdays at 11:00 am in Room 123 of the State House for **“Luke at Lunchtime!”**

Q. Who was Luke and why do we desire to spend time reading his account?

From history we find he is a highly regarded historian based on his compilation of the events in his gospel and in the other New Testament book he wrote, the Acts of the Apostles. Luke was a physician by trade (see Colossians 4:14) and not an Apostle, and was well educated as deduced from his excellent use of Greek. He is characterized as a careful recorder of the contemporary events of Jesus’ ministry and the happenings of the early church but not an eyewitness as were Apostles Matthew and John. It is debatable whether he was even Jewish, given his Greek name. If he was not Jewish it gives credence to why the focus of this gospel account and volume 2 (the Acts) is on the church spreading out into the Gentile nations from its genesis in Jerusalem.

What is known is Luke accompanied Paul starting in Acts 16 (see the use of “we” which crops up throughout the book) on Paul’s second and third missionary journeys as he is mentioned in the epistles as one of the faithful fellow workers commended by Paul (see Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11). Luke may have been encouraged by Paul to research and record the accounts of both books.

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those working in state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office and available by email and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Romans 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.

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Both Luke's Gospel and the Acts were written to someone named "Theophilus", which means "lover of God" or "loved by God". No other information about Theophilus' identity accompanies but the address "most excellent" was reserved for noble persons culturally; in fact the Greek word used here (*kratistos*) only appears elsewhere in scripture when Paul addressed governors Felix, then Festus (Acts 24-26). I like to read this address as Luke writing to all we who believe and are beloved of God. And, as adopted members of God's royal family we, too, would be addressed as "most excellent"!

As for why we should study his works, first of all because it is in the canon of holy scripture! But additionally, we gain from studying a man described by Merrill Tenney in this way:

"Luke was no mere spectator, viewing Christian truth from outside, but an active preacher and missionary himself. He was the first great church historian and literary apologist for Christianity. Since he was an associate of Paul his work might be expected to reflect the knowledge of Christ that was used in the preaching to the Gentiles." From *New Testament Survey*, Wm B Eerdmans Press, 1985

Luke tells us he undertakes the effort of writing another gospel as both Matthew's and Mark's accounts were by the time of around mid-50s A.D. already in circulation. He admits others were eyewitnesses so he had to "write an orderly account" only after thoroughly investigating all aspects. Likely this meant interviews with followers and family of Jesus. What he produces is the longest book in the New Testament and a great deal of excellent detail which informs us extremely well.

What is even greater is Luke's motivation: that the reader would come away with "certainty concerning the things you have been taught", meaning the doctrines of Christianity and the details of how Christ by grace purchased a people for His own, for blessing and future glorification.

Applications

1. Perhaps you do not see yourself as a "Theophilus", the things of God seem foreign and distant, not something you love. I invite you to dive in with us in this study. As you read and learn about Jesus Christ may He then reveal Himself to you—then when you behold the hidden glory of Jesus your heart and affections will change.
2. No matter how familiar we are with books of the Bible, it is important to read and re-read them; I encourage all to begin reading the book of Luke.

My desire is to highlight Jesus Christ to you. Toward that end, I am available to discuss any biblical topic but especially to ensure all who read the studies understand how Jesus Christ is distinctively important to the entire world and to each of us individually.

NOTE: Plans are set for an in-house Bible Study during session: Tuesdays at 11:00 am in Room 123, starting on February 4, 2025. Bring a beverage, food will be provided.

A key facet empowering our ministry is prayer, especially prayer for our elected leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands Christians to obediently pray for all in authority. A tool for America's churches to help consistently pray for you, our elected leaders, is available to all via:

www.Pray1Tim2.org - You can select Alabama and sign up for daily email reminders, courtesy of Capitol Commission