



Luke

The Story of Salvation Fulfilled

JEFF CAVINS and JEFFREY MORROW



Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled has been submitted for ecclesiastical review and *imprimatur* to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

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ABOUT LUKE: THE STORY OF SALVATION FULFILLED

Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled explores the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as told by St. Luke the Evangelist. Beginning with the foretelling of John the Baptist's birth and continuing through Jesus' public ministry, passion, death, Resurrection, and ascension, Luke's narrative shows us how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies and everything that Scripture foretold about the promised Messiah. As you journey through Luke's account, you will encounter Jesus in a new way and discover how his teachings fit into your life today.

MATERIALS

What do I need for this study?

Materials for *Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled* include the following:

- **Workbook:** This contains session summaries, the daily reading plan, questions for reflection and discussion, video outlines, responses to the questions, and supplementary information relevant to Luke and his Gospel account. *You will need one workbook for every participant, study leader, and small group facilitator.*
- **Video Presentations:** These video presentations by Jeff Cavins and Dr. Jeffrey Morrow provide comprehensive teaching and commentary on Luke's Gospel. They are available online or for purchase as a DVD set.

In addition to the workbook and video presentations, every participant and facilitator should have a copy of a Catholic Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For this study, we recommend ***The Great Adventure Catholic Bible***, which incorporates the color-coded *Bible Timeline*® Learning System along with informative side features and helpful contextual information throughout. We also recommend the **Ascension edition of the *Catechism***, which uses the color-coded *Foundations of Faith* approach. Both are available at Ascensionpress.com.

Note: You can access both *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Ascension Edition, without charge through the Ascension App, available at Ascensionpress.com/app.

LENGTH

How long will it take to complete this study, start to finish?

**How much time will I need to spend
on each session at home?**

Number of Sessions

Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled has eight sessions: the Introduction session and seven content sessions. Groups that meet weekly and follow the daily reading plan can finish the entire study in fifty days.

Individual Investment

The assigned reading and questions vary from session to session. We recommend allowing yourself about fifteen minutes a day to complete each day's assigned chapters in Luke and respond to the corresponding questions.

LUKE: THE STORY OF SALVATION FULFILLED DAILY READING PLAN		
Day	Study Reading	Topics
Session One: Introduction		
1	Session One Meeting Day	
Session Two: Luke 1-3		
2	Luke 1:1-38	<i>Dedication to Theophilus The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold The Birth of Jesus Foretold</i>
3	Luke 1:39-80	<i>Mary Visits Elizabeth; and Mary's Song of Praise The Birth of John the Baptist Zechariah's Prophecy</i>
4	Luke 2:1-21	<i>The Birth of Jesus The Shepherds and the Angels Jesus Is Circumcised and Named</i>
5	Luke 2:22-52	<i>Jesus Is Presented in the Temple The Return to Nazareth The Boy Jesus in the Temple</i>
6	Luke 3:1-20	<i>The Preaching of John the Baptist</i>
7	Luke 3:21-38	<i>The Baptism of Jesus The Ancestry of Jesus</i>
8	Session Two Meeting Day	

LUKE DAILY READING PLAN (cont.)

Day Study Reading Topics

Session Three: Luke 4–6

9 Luke 4:1–30

*The Temptation of Jesus
Jesus Begins Preaching and Teaching in Galilee
The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth*

10 Luke 4:31–44

*The Man with an Unclean Spirit
Healings at Simon's House
Jesus Preaches in the Synagogues of Judea*

11 Luke 5:1–16

*Jesus Calls the First Disciples
Jesus Cleanses a Leper*

12 Luke 5:17–39

*Jesus Heals a Paralytic
Jesus Calls Levi
The Question About Fasting*

13 Luke 6:1–26

*A Teaching About the Sabbath
The Man with a Withered Hand
Jesus Chooses the Twelve Disciples
Jesus Teaches and Heals
Blessings and Woes*

14 Luke 6:27–49

*Love for Enemies
Judging Others
A Tree and Its Fruit
Hearers and Doers*

15 Session Three Meeting Day

Session Four: Luke 7–9

16 Luke 7:1–17

*Jesus Heals a Centurion's Slave
Jesus Raises a Widow's Son at Nain*

17 Luke 7:18–50

*Messengers from John the Baptist
A Sinful Woman Forgiven*

18 Luke 8:1–25

*Some Women Accompany Jesus
The Parable of the Sower
The Explanation of the Parable
A Lamp Is Not Hidden
The True Kindred of Jesus
Jesus Calms a Storm on the Sea*

19 Luke 8:26–56

*Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed*

20 Luke 9:1–27

*The Mission of the Twelve
Herod's Perplexity
Feeding the Five Thousand
Peter's Declaration That Jesus Is the Christ
Taking Up One's Cross*

LUKE DAILY READING PLAN (cont.)		
Day	Study Reading	Topics
Session Four: Luke 7-9 (cont.)		
21	Luke 9:28-62	The Transfiguration Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon Jesus Again Foretells his Death True Greatness Another Exorcist A Samaritan Village Refuses to Receive Jesus Would-Be Followers of Jesus
22	Session Four Meeting Day	
Session Five: Luke 10-12		
23	Luke 10:1-24	The Mission of the Seventy Woes to Unrepentant Cities The Return of the Seventy Jesus Rejoices and Thanks the Father
24	Luke 10:25-42	The Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus Visits Martha and Mary
25	Luke 11:1-26	The Lord's Prayer Perseverance in Prayer Jesus and Be-elzebul The Return of the Unclean Spirit
26	Luke 11:27-54	True Blessedness The Sign of Jonah The Light of the Body Jesus Denounces the Hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Lawyers
27	Luke 12:1-34	A Warning Against Hypocrisy Whom to Fear The Parable of the Rich Fool Do Not Be Anxious
28	Luke 12:35-59	The Necessity of Watchfulness The Faithful and the Unfaithful Servant Jesus the Cause of Division Interpreting the Present Time Settling with Your Accuser
29	Session Five Meeting Day	

LUKE DAILY READING PLAN (cont.)		
Day	Study Reading	Topics
Session Six: Luke 13–17		
30	Luke 13:1–17	Repent or Perish The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman
31	Luke 13:18–35	The Parable of the Mustard Seed The Parable of the Leaven The Narrow Door The Lament over Jerusalem
32	Luke 14:1–35	Jesus Heals the Man with Dropsy on the Sabbath Humility and Hospitality The Parable of the Great Banquet The Cost of Discipleship About Salt
33	Luke 15:1–32	The Parable of the Lost Sheep The Parable of the Lost Coin The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother
34	Luke 16:1–31	The Parable of the Dishonest Steward The Law and the Kingdom of God The Rich Man and Lazarus
35	Luke 17:1–37	Some Sayings of Jesus Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers The Coming of the Kingdom
36	Session Six Meeting Day	
Session Seven: Luke 18–21		
37	Luke 18:1–43	The Parable of the Widow and the Unrighteous Judge The Parable of the Pharisees and the Tax Collector Jesus Blesses the Children The Rich Ruler A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar near Jericho
38	Luke 19:1–27	Jesus and Zacchaeus The Parable of the Ten Pounds
39	Luke 19:28–48	Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem Jesus Cleanses the Temple
40	Luke 20:1–18	The Authority of Jesus Questioned The Parable of the Wicked Tenants
41	Luke 20:19–47	The Question About Paying Taxes The Question About Man's Resurrection A Question About the Messiah Jesus Denounces the Hypocrisy of the Scribes

LUKE DAILY READING PLAN (cont.)		
Day	Study Reading	Topics
Session Seven: Luke 18–21 (cont.)		
42	Luke 21:1–38	<i>The Widow's Offering</i> <i>The Destruction of the Temple Foretold</i> <i>Signs and Persecutions</i> <i>The Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold</i> <i>The Coming of the Son of Man</i> <i>The Lesson of the Fig Tree</i> <i>Exhortation to Watchfulness</i>
43	Session Seven Meeting Day	
Session Eight: Luke 22–24		
44	Luke 22:1–34	<i>The Conspiracy to Kill Jesus</i> <i>The Preparation of the Passover</i> <i>Jesus Institutes the Eucharist</i> <i>The Dispute About Greatness</i> <i>Peter's Denial Foretold</i>
45	Luke 22:35–71	<i>Purse, Bag, and Sword</i> <i>Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives</i> <i>The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus</i> <i>Peter Denies Jesus</i> <i>The Mocking and Beating of Jesus</i> <i>Jesus Before the Council</i>
46	Luke 23:1–25	<i>Jesus Before Pilate</i> <i>Jesus Before Herod</i> <i>Jesus Sentenced to Death</i>
47	Luke 23:26–56	<i>The Crucifixion of Jesus</i> <i>The Death of Jesus</i> <i>The Burial of Jesus</i>
48	Luke 24:1–35	<i>The Resurrection of Jesus</i> <i>The Walk to Emmaus</i>
49	Luke 24:36–53	<i>Jesus Appears to His Disciples</i> <i>The Ascension of Jesus</i>
50	Session Eight Meeting Day	

STRUCTURE

How are the study sessions organized?

What are the main components of each session?

Each session is broken into two parts: **home preparation** and **small group meeting**.

HOME PREPARATION: Overview, Read, Respond

Each session begins with personal study at home that involves reviewing the context of the session, reading the Scripture selections, and responding to questions that will help you think more deeply about what you have read.

Overview

The overview helps you enter Luke's Gospel by introducing the key figures, events, and themes in the session's assigned chapters. It provides context for what you are about to read in Scripture. We recommend reading the overview on the first day of each session of the week.

Read and Respond

The assignments for each session are outlined in the daily reading plan, which conveniently breaks up the Gospel of Luke into reading selections and questions that you can complete between small group meetings. We recommend that you allow yourself *at least fifteen minutes* to complete each day's assigned reading and question.

Helpful Tip: Reading the Gospel and answering the questions may bring further questions to mind. When they do, write down your thoughts and questions so that you can bring them up during your small group discussion. It is also a good idea to take note of the names, locations, and events described in the Scripture reading that stand out for you.

As you write your responses to the questions, *we strongly recommend that you refrain from checking the responses* in the back of the workbook until *after* you meet and discuss the questions with your small group.

Application

The final step of the home preparation for each session involves applying the lessons from Luke's Gospel to your own life by taking a few minutes for

reflection, commitment, and prayer. We recommend doing the application step on the last day of home preparation for each session to prepare for your small group meeting.

SMALL GROUP MEETING: Discuss, Watch, Review

Meeting in a small group to discuss the study questions is a time for fellowship and for sharing questions and insights. As a group, you will begin by *discussing* your responses to the questions, *watching* the video presentation, and *reviewing* what you have learned. Your group may also decide to review the responses in the back of the workbook together, or you can read them later at home.

As you participate in your small group meeting, it is very important that you and your group follow the ten commandments for small group discussion:

Ten Commandments for Small Group Discussion

1. Enjoy yourself!
2. Speak with respect and charity.
3. Do not ridicule or dismiss what others say. Keep comments positive.
4. Come prepared.
5. If you were not able to prepare, let others speak first.
6. Stick to the topic and questions at hand.
7. Start and end on time.
8. Allow silence. Give people a chance to think.
9. Listen to others without interrupting.
10. Keep personal matters within the group.

—Adapted from Thomas Smith's original "10 Commandments of a Small Group"

Each small group is different. Therefore, how you choose to conduct these small group gatherings—from the length of each meeting to how you approach the discussion and video presentation—depends on the needs of each group. For the best experience during your meeting, we recommend completing these steps in the following order:

Discuss

In this conversation, members of your group will have an opportunity to share insights, reflections, and further questions about the readings and discussion questions. The goal of the discussion is for the group to engage in fellowship and share ideas for applying Luke's Gospel to everyday life. Trained facilitators should guide the small group discussion and keep it on track.

Watch

After the discussion, the video presentation provides a deeper reflection on Luke's Gospel, its historical and cultural context, and its larger influence on the Church today, especially in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist. It provides a richer understanding of Luke's Gospel, with a special emphasis on ways to apply what you have learned to your life.

Video Outline: The workbook includes an outline for each video, highlighting the main points of the presentation. As you watch, use the space provided to write down the connections you notice, the questions that arise, and whatever else stands out for you.

Review

Following the video presentation (and depending on time), your group may decide to reflect more deeply on what you have learned in this session by discussing the video or by looking through the responses to the discussion questions in the back of the workbook. However you choose to continue the conversation or conclude your time together, this final reflective stage of the meeting should serve as both a wrap-up for the present session and a launching point for the upcoming home preparation.

A Note About Workbook Responses

The first purpose of the responses provided in the back of the workbook is to help participants review this week's session and establish the context for the next session. Therefore, the best time to read the responses is when you start the home preparation for the next session. The second purpose of the responses is to provide helpful insights for small group facilitators as they lead group discussions. Facilitators should also complete the Scripture reading and answer the questions on their own before reading the responses.

FORMAT

What's the general sequence for small group meetings?

Starting Off: Session One

Session One is essentially your kickoff meeting for this study. Your goals for the first session are to ensure that everyone feels welcome, has the study materials, and knows how the study works.

Session One does not require any home preparation or advance reading; for that reason, it is shorter than the other sessions in the study. This gives the people in your group time to get to know one another. Consider offering refreshments and other community-building activities. Also, we highly encourage your group to go over the “Ten Commandments for Small Group Discussion” (p. xii) so that everyone understands how best to engage and respect one another in discussion.

Session One may look something like this:

1. Welcome and group introductions (about 15 min)
2. Overview of the study (10 min)
3. Discussion (10 min)
4. Introduction video (30 min)
5. Reflections and fellowship time (15 min)

Gaining Momentum: Sessions Two through Eight

The remaining sessions of *Luke: The Story of Salvation Fulfilled* will lead you on a journey through Luke's Gospel and the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises. Here is an example of what the remaining small group meetings could look like:

1. Welcome and intro (about 10 min)
2. Small group discussion (40 min)
3. Video presentation (30 min)
4. Closing review and prayer (about 10 min)

For more information about how to plan and promote a Bible study and how to facilitate a small group discussion, visit Ascensionpress.com or call 1-800-376-0520.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS STUDY

Here are some ways to make sure the time, effort, and energy you put into this study are worthwhile and will have a long-lasting impact.

Bring It to Prayer

Whenever you open your Bible to read, *start with prayer* and place yourself in God's presence. As you read, adopt an attitude of listening. Try to treat Scripture not as a text but as a personal message from God. What is he saying? What does it mean? What does it mean for your life? If you come to the Word focused on having an encounter with the Lord, he will speak to your heart, and you will be transformed.

Take the Time

God's Word is worthy of our time. Give yourself sufficient time to read and respond each day between your small group meetings. Build a habit of dwelling with God in his Word and discovering his personal message to you, delivered through the Scripture.

It may be tempting to save time by skipping personal reflection and simply looking at the responses provided in the workbook. However, these responses do not exhaust the meaning that can be found in the reading of Scripture. Reading a response written by someone else may satisfy your mind for a moment—but it will not result in the kind of growth you will experience if you attempt to answer the question on your own first. Likewise, a group of participants who have spent time pondering the Scripture passages will have more varied insights to discuss, which will lead to a more meaningful discussion.

Focus on Good Discussion

The success of a small group depends on a good discussion. A Bible study is not about simply watching a video presentation or reading commentary. The people in your group will have unique insights; the questions you ask and connections you make together will deepen your understanding and appreciation of Scripture in a way a simple lecture or self-study cannot.

Some individuals in your group may be naturally eager to speak up, while others are more inclined to wait and listen. It is in everyone's interest to help make sure each person in the group has a fair chance to share their thoughts. Follow the "Ten Commandments for Small Group Discussion" (p. xii) and be mindful of how you are contributing to the conversation. If you realize you have been speaking frequently while others have yet to express their own insights, consider pausing and inviting others to speak before you.

When you come to Scripture and your small group with the right mindset, you will have the opportunity to explore and receive the Word of God in ways you have yet to encounter. Follow these steps over time, and you will be more than fed: you will learn to feed yourself.



SESSION ONE

Introduction

OVERVIEW

Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

The Gospel according to Luke is one of the four accounts of the life of Jesus Christ contained in the New Testament. In fact, Luke the Evangelist authored *two* books in the New Testament: his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. They are essentially two parts of one longer narrative. Part one, Luke's Gospel, recounts the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus and his fulfillment of Old Testament promises; part two, Acts, recounts the life of the early Church. In this study, Luke invites us to enter the story of Jesus Christ and make it our own.

Historical studies of the Gospels have shown that they were modeled on ancient Greek and Roman biographies—which means, among other things, that the Gospel authors were interested in getting the history right. The Gospels, however, are more than histories or biographies; they present an invitation to follow Jesus and have an intimate relationship with God. The earliest testimonies of Christian communal worship from the second century AD record that the Gospels were read each time Christians gathered to celebrate the Eucharist.¹ The Gospels prepared the baptized to receive the Eucharist, and there is evidence that the Gospel authors intended their accounts of Jesus' life to be read at Mass to help the baptized grow in the Faith.

Each of the four Gospels views the life and ministry of Jesus from a unique vantage point. Among them, the Gospel of Luke is unique in many respects. Tradition tells us that Luke was St. Paul's physician and traveling companion; this is supported indirectly by the internal evidence of the Gospel itself. There are many descriptions of healings and physical miracles that employ Greek terms that a physician might use; there are also similarities between Luke's Gospel and Paul's letters, like 1 Corinthians.

Although some scholars date the Gospel of Luke to as late as the eighties AD, Luke probably wrote his Gospel sometime before AD 62 since the sequel, Acts, makes no mention of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (which occurred in AD 70), the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul (in the middle of the sixties AD), or the martyrdom of James, the early Church leader in Jerusalem, who was killed in AD 62. These omissions would be inexplicable if Acts, written after Luke's Gospel, was written after these events, since the destruction of the Temple was such an

important example of Jesus’ prophetic fulfillment, and Peter, Paul, and James were such central figures in Acts.

Luke addressed his Gospel to one named “Theophilus.” It is not clear who Theophilus is—perhaps a prominent early Christian, perhaps a Jewish high priest (a Theophilus served as high priest during the time of the apostle Paul), or perhaps a stand-in name for any given Christian (*Theophilus* means “lover of God”). The explicit reason Luke wrote his Gospel was to compile for Theophilus “a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us” (Luke 1:1), providing an orderly account of the life of Jesus. It seems likely that what he was actually trying to do was to present the biography of Jesus in such a way that it fulfilled at least three purposes: (1) to provide a historical account in light of the other eyewitness testimony to Jesus’ life that Luke investigated; (2) to highlight how Jesus’ life brought the Old Testament to fulfillment as Jesus relived the history of Israel as a faithful Son of God; and (3) to be used in the liturgy to help the faithful understand and prepare for the fruitful reception of the sacraments.

One way into Luke’s narrative is to picture yourself as one of the characters hidden in the crowds observing the events firsthand. In this way, you will come to know the life of Jesus more personally, and you will start to recognize your own life in the narratives of Scripture.



Illustration of St. Luke Writing His Gospel

SMALL GROUP MEETING - Day 1

Note: There is no home preparation for Session One.

DISCUSS

Before you begin reading Luke's Gospel, use the following discussion questions to share your thoughts and expectations with your group.

- *When we read the Gospels, we hope to learn more about Jesus, the one whom we should love above all others. In what ways has Jesus touched your life?*
- *What do you already know about the Gospel of Luke? What do you hope to learn from your study of Luke's Gospel?*

WATCH

 Session One: Introduction

Write down your notes and reflections on the video in the space provided.

I. Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

- A. Author of Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles
- B. Emmaus road narrative
 - 1. Jesus reveals himself in two ways
 - a. The Word of God (Liturgy of the Word)
 - b. The Breaking of the Bread (Liturgy of the Eucharist)
 - 2. "The greatest Bible study in the history of the world"

II. The Purpose of Luke's Gospel

- A. Beginning of the Gospel
 - 1. Two disciples: Theophilus and the author (Luke)

2. Opening lines: narrative of the things that had to be fulfilled (Luke 1:1–4)

B. End of the Gospel

1. Two disciples: Cleopas and an unknown disciple (possibly Luke)
2. The Emmaus road narrative: Jesus begins with Moses and the prophets and shares all the things concerning himself (see Luke 24:27)

C. Proper response to the Gospel: obedience of faith

1. Intellectual assent
2. Personal entrusting of yourself to what you believe

III. How This Study Works

- A. Bible reading and study
- B. The small group experience

IV. The Jewish Context of the Gospel of Luke

- A. Passover context with Jesus' teaching on the Eucharist
- B. Luke's historical account: interviewed eyewitnesses

V. St. Luke the Evangelist

- A. Who is the author? Luke, saint, Paul's traveling companion, physician
- B. Theophilus ("lover of God"): high priest during St. Paul's lifetime (Josephus)

- C. Greco-Roman biography: genre of ancient literature (including Gospels)
- D. Mystagogy: how external signs signify spiritual realities
- E. Senses of Scripture
 1. Literal: “the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture” (CCC 116)
 2. Spiritual: the text of Scripture and how the realities and events within can be signs (CCC 117)
 - a. Typological (allegorical): how Jesus prefigures the Church and the sacraments
 - b. Topological (moral): how Scripture applies to the moral life
 - c. Anagogical: how Scripture relates to eternal realities

VI. Conclusion

REVIEW

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul calls Luke “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14). Luke was a physician by trade, but he was also worthy of the title “beloved,” which must refer to the way he lived Christian charity in his work. This “beloved physician,” with his eye for detail, left us one of the four inspired biographies of Jesus. As you read through the Gospel of Luke at home, pay careful attention to the details that Luke provides.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, thank you for giving your Church
four inspired accounts of the life of Jesus Christ.
Help us to grow in our relationship with you
through this study so that we can emulate Jesus
in our daily lives. Amen.*

FOR FURTHER STUDY

St. Luke the Author

St. Luke the Evangelist is best known as the author of the Gospel of Luke and its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles. Although he was not one of the twelve apostles, he was well positioned to write the Gospel of Luke and Acts because he was one of St. Paul's traveling companions; tradition also tells us that he served as St. Paul's physician. We can see from the narrative of Acts that there are many "we" passages in which Luke writes of Paul's travels in the first-person plural, "we" indicating that he was present there with Paul.

The Greek of Luke's Gospel and of Acts is among the highest-quality writings of the New Testament, indicating that the author was very well educated. His Gospel includes many accounts of physical healings and the sort of details one might expect from a physician. A tradition also holds that Luke was an artist and painted the earliest depiction of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In light of these traditions, St. Luke is the patron saint of both artists and physicians.



Kykkos Monastery, Cyprus. Mosaic.
St. Luke, patron saint of icon painters.

See page 140 to view the icons attributed to St. Luke.



Jewish Luke?

Modern scholars commonly assume Luke was a Gentile, perhaps the only Gentile author of the New Testament. This is in part because, in Colossians, when Paul mentions “the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers” (Colossians 4:11), Luke is not among them but appears only later (Colossians 4:14) as a fellow worker. In addition, the Greek of Luke’s Gospel is very advanced compared with that of most of the other books of the New Testament.

There are subtle clues, however, that Luke might actually be Jewish, and possibly even a Jewish priest. How can this be, and how does it fit the tradition that Luke was a physician?

Regarding Paul’s comments in Colossians, it is possible that “of the circumcision” may not be a reference to those who are Jewish but instead to a group of Jewish Christians who were mostly in conflict with Paul; it is also possible that among them, those who were named were the only members of that group who were his fellow workers. Moreover, “Luke” (*Loukas* in Greek) is a diminutive form of “Lucius” (*Loukios* in Greek). Thus, Luke may be the Lucius of Romans 16:21, whom Paul explicitly mentions as among his “fellow workers,” which is Origen’s view.² This may be the same Lucius of Cyrene (see Acts 13:1) in Antioch, which is where many early Christians believed Luke was from.

There are other indications of Luke’s Jewish, possibly priestly, identity. Luke shows a very detailed knowledge of the Old Testament, often making subtle allusions. He focuses on the Temple and priesthood more than the other Gospels. If he were a Hellenistic Jew (many of the Jewish priests and Sadducees were Hellenized), it could explain his high level of Greek in comparison with that of the other New Testament writers. Moreover, Theophilus, to whom Luke addresses his narrative, may have been a high priest, indicated by the fact he is addressed as “most excellent” (Luke 1:3). In addition, there was a Theophilus, the son of Annas, who served as high priest from AD 37 to 41. In Acts, Luke mentions that Jewish priests have begun to follow Jesus (Acts 6:7).



St. Jerome on Luke

At the end of the fourth century AD, St. Jerome wrote a short work titled *On Illustrious Men*, in which he described some of the earliest Christian saints. He included a brief description of Luke:

Luke a physician of Antioch, as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and companion of all his journeying, he wrote a Gospel, concerning which the same Paul says, “We send with him a brother whose praise in the gospel is among all the churches,” and to the Colossians, “Luke the beloved physician salutes you,” and to Timothy, “Luke only is with me.” He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title *Acts of the Apostles*, a history which extends to the second year of Paul’s sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city. ... Some suppose that whenever Paul in his epistle says “according to my gospel,” he means the book of Luke and that Luke not only was taught the gospel history by the apostle Paul who was not with the Lord in the flesh, but also by other apostles. This he too at the beginning of his work declares, saying “Even as they delivered unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.” So he wrote the gospel as he had heard it, but composed the Acts of the Apostles as he himself had seen.³

Statue of Saint Luke the Evangelist, 
Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome

