

Luke

Memory Verse: *There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men* (1 Cor. 12:6 NIV).

Background Helps:

Luke, “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), is the focus of our study this week. He is mentioned by name only three times in the New Testament, twice in connection with Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24) and once in connection with Paul’s second Roman imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:11). But it is the unanimous tradition of the early church that Luke is the author of the two-volume history of the Christian movement found in the New Testament: Luke-Acts. His anonymous presence can be detected in several sections of the book of Acts, the so-called “we” sections, where he modestly alerts the reader to his association with the apostle Paul (16:10-18; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16). A careful reading of Colossians 4:10-14 also makes it clear that Luke was a Gentile, indeed the only Gentile author of the New Testament.

Tracing Luke’s travels with Paul in the book of Acts shows us that he joined the apostolic team on the second missionary journey in Troas (16:10); shared in the ministry at Philippi (16:11-18), probably remaining there after Paul’s departure (16:40); rejoined the team at the end of the third journey in Philippi (20:5-6); journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem (21:17); probably continued in Palestine during Paul’s two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (24:27), gathering eye-witness information for his writing of Luke-Acts (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1); accompanied Paul on his perilous voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1; 28:16); and was in Rome during Paul’s first and second imprisonments there (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11).

The church is forever indebted to Luke for his authorship of the most complete of the four gospels (narrating the story from Christ’s birth to his ascension) and the only inspired record of the early church (Acts.) Luke’s writing style marks him as a competent scholar and a thorough historian.

Lesson Helps:

A possible lesson aim: My aim is to teach my students about Luke’s loyalty to the apostle Paul, so that they will be loyal to their friends. After a brief introduction to Luke (a Gentile Christian who was a doctor), trace the travels of Luke with the apostle Paul as outlined above. (You might turn your classroom floor into an enormous map.) Stop at various points along the way to narrate several key incidents in which Luke was involved. Several times ask the question: What kind of man was Luke? End your journey in Rome with a look at Colossians 4:14 and 2 Tim. 4:11. Notice how Paul refers to Luke as “the beloved physician.” Apparently, Luke acted as Paul’s personal physician during the last 15 years of his life and ministry. Notice also that, during Paul’s second Roman imprisonment when many were deserting him, Luke remained loyal to the apostle (2 Tim. 4:9-11). Consider these questions: From Luke’s example, what lessons can we learn about being a loyal friend? How can we be a loyal friend to our Christian brothers and

sisters (or to a Christian worker like Paul)? You might want to include Proverbs 17:17 and 18:24 as part of your lesson.

(Note: Although Paul had the gift of healing, he did not despise or reject the services of a competent physician such as Luke. This circumstance provides a strong argument in favor of Christians making use of doctors, so long as our ultimate faith is in the Lord, not in the doctor [see 2 Chron. 16:12].)

Assignment:

 Read about Titus (personalities around Paul).

 Memorize Titus 2:7.