

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Theology of Luke-Acts Session 1, Luke Bibliography, Bock's Overview, and Authorship

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on The Theology of Luke-Acts. This is session 1, Luke Bibliography, and then Darrell Bock's Overview and Authorship.

Welcome to our course on Luke and Theology. That would be The Theology of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, his second book, as it were.

Let us pray before we do anything more. Gracious Father, thank you for your Holy Word. Thank you for using Luke to give us more than half of the New Testament. Give us insight into his thinking and writing and the message that you gave through him, we pray. Work in us according to your good pleasure, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Indeed, we want to think about Luke's theology, both in the Gospel he wrote and in his Book of Acts. Let us start with some bibliography pertaining to the Gospel of Luke. Darrell Bock is the premier evangelical Luke scholar.

Darrell teaches at Dallas Seminary. Perhaps you have seen him on television in these different debates about the Da Vinci Code or whatever. He is a voice of orthodoxy, of reasonableness.

He has a sweet Christian spirit. He does not compromise the truth. He, along with Craig Blasing, is one of the architects of the progressive dispensationalism, which is a long story, but which in this covenant theologian's eyes is an improvement over the classical dispensationalism, which already was a variant evangelical theology.

In any case, Darrell wrote two volumes covering the whole Gospel of Luke in the exegetical commentary on the New Testament issued by Baker, and they are really good, really good. He's a good exegete, he's a good theologian, he writes well. If you had, I would say, sample them in the church library or some kind of, maybe online, sample a little bit, read a little bit to make sure it's at your level, but they're good, really good.

Joel Green taught at Asbury Theological Seminary. He is a very brilliant New Testament scholar in the Arminian tradition. He has developed a real interest not only in exegesis but in exegesis and theology and has moved to Fuller Seminary in California to head up their program, which combines exegesis and theology.

His Gospel of Luke in a new international commentary on the New Testament is outstanding. I suppose I would have more agreement with Bock on some of the details, but Green brings many years of experience, as does Bock, but Green's commentary is written incorporating socio-rhetorical studies, and don't always agree with him, but wow, most of the time I do, and I'm taught and really stimulated to think about Luke. We'll do a little bit with Joel Green's commentary once again, sample it to see if it is your cup of tea.

I. Howard Marshall, the distinguished British, also Methodist, New Testament scholar who taught for many years and is now retired, still living, I understand, wrote a very important volume, *Luke, Historian, and Theologian*, at a time when the Gospel of Luke's writings, especially Acts, were really criticized for being not historically reliable. Marshall took issue with that. He's a world-famous scholar, especially famous for training scores of evangelical New Testament scholars following F.F. Bruce.

Howard Marshall trained many, many from different evangelical traditions, who will continue to teach in our seminaries today, and who train others. His book is really solid and helpful. The next thing is astonishingly brilliant beyond measure, that's with tongue-in-cheek, those are my initials, it's a later on I will regale you with a church in the book of Acts.

But in any case, first of all, we start with Darrell Bock and his volume one of his Luke commentary with an introduction to the Gospel of Luke. Overview.

The Gospel of Luke is unique in at least two ways. First, it is the longest Gospel. In the standard Greek edition, Matthew occupies 87 pages. Mark, through the short ending of Mark 16:8, is 60 pages. John 73, while Luke takes up 96. One more time. These are pages in Nestle-Alan's Greek New Testament. Matthew, 87 pages; Mark, 60; John, 73; and Luke, 96 pages. A comparison of verses reveals a similar count. Matthew has 1,071 verses. Mark, 678. John has 869 verses, while Luke contains 1,151 verses.

Second, it is the only Gospel with a sequel. As such, Luke not only introduces Jesus and his ministry, but also shows how that ministry relates to the early church era in the book of Acts, of course. This linkage enables Luke to discuss how God brought his salvation in Jesus, how the earliest church preached Jesus, and how they carried out their mission to both Jew and Gentile. The two volumes and their message are virtually inseparable.

Despite the canonical division, Luke's Gospel often lays the foundation for many of the issues whose answers come in Acts. This introduces a problem. Luke-Acts are two parts of one work.

So really, should the New Testament be Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, or Matthew, Mark, John, Luke-Acts? It's a good question. We're not going to change it now. But this is, I've learned this from studying, of course, as a Reformed theologian, I know Pauline theology.

That's probably my forte. But I've really focused on Johannine theology. And my lectures are available on biblicalelearning.org, a whole series of lectures on Johannine theology, especially the theology of the fourth Gospel.

But I'm newer to Lukan theology, but I'm overwhelmed. It is wonderful. And these names I have introduced have taught me so much.

And it's just that I'm excited about it. It's really exciting. And here's one thing I learned. One is concerning that problem. Since Luke-Acts go together, where do you put them? As it is now, they're separated. It makes sense because the four Gospels should be together.

But here's one important principle. To study the Gospel of Luke in the Book of Acts, we do a number of things. We study Luke on its own and Acts on its own. We also study Luke-Acts. That's exactly the way we should do it. Luke-Acts highlights God's plan.

Everybody agrees. It explains how Jews and Gentiles could end up as equals in a community planted by God, even though that community's roots were originally grounded in a promise to Israel. Four issues were particularly problematic in the church of Luke's time.

First was the question of salvation. How could Gentiles be included as God's people on an equal basis with Jews, extending even to matters like table fellowship and the exclusion of circumcision, which in the Old Testament, going all the way back to Genesis 17, was the sign of the covenant? How did the hope of God open up to include all races to the exclusion of so much that was related to law and Jewish tradition? Luke answers these questions largely in Acts as he explains how God directed this entire process. Second, the seeming paradox exists that while God's plan was at work, the most natural audience for the message of the Jewish tradition nation was responding largely negatively.

Indeed, Jews even persecuted Christians who preached God's hope to them. Why was God's plan meeting so much hostility? Was this new community cursed for being so generous with God's promise, or was it blessed? If blessed, what was the evidence of such a blessing? Had God ceased to reach out to Israel? Had the new community withdrawn itself from the old community of faith? The Lukan answer to this question is that the church did not separate itself from Israel. It continued to preach to the nation and did not withdraw.

Rather, Israel turned the church out, forcing it to form a new community. Luke's gospel lays the groundwork for this reply in detailing how the nation and especially its leadership reacted to Jesus. And the answer is negative.

The third issue concerning Luke-Acts was how the person and teaching of a crucified Jesus fit into God's plan. How could Jesus, despite his physical absence, continue to exercise a presence and represent the hope of God? How could the church exalt such an absent figure and regard him as the center of God's work? How could a slain figure bring the consummation of God's promises? How would and could consummation come through him? Acts applies the major answers to these questions by emphasizing the exaltation of Jesus. From Paul's and John's theology, we believe in the exaltation of Jesus, but Acts combines the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus in a powerful way.

The ascension of Jesus is referred to numerous times, especially in Paul's writings, in Peter's, and in John, but the only actual reports of its occurrence are in Luke 24 and Acts 1, joining the two parts of Luke's book together, his two volumes together, right at their seam, if you will. Acts applies the major answer to these questions by emphasizing the exaltation of Jesus. Indeed, it does, but the Gospel of Luke lays the groundwork by presenting the Christology that underlies the exaltation of Jesus.

Christology, the doctrine of Christ, the teaching about Christ that fortifies, that forms a basis for his subsequent death, resurrection, and return to the Father. Fourth, what does it mean to respond to Jesus? What is required? What can one expect in making such a commitment? And how should one live day, live until the day Jesus returns and the hope is realized? In short, what are believers and the new community to be? This is a major burden of the Gospel of Luke, to define Jesus' mission and that of the disciples who follow him. The bulk of Luke explains how Jesus prepared the disciples for his departure and prepared them to minister in his absence.

This is where the crucial Lukan section of chapters 9 through 19, to use shorthand, the so-called travel narrative, the Jerusalem journey, fits into the Gospel and controls its purpose. Accordingly, one should not separate the teaching of this Gospel too greatly from the period of the church recorded in the book of Acts. In Luke 24:44 through 49, see also Luke 5:31, 32, see also Luke 5:31, 32, Jesus equates his mission with that of the church.

The ethic of the Jerusalem journey section, Luke 9 to 19, and of the Sermon on the Plain comes into view because of the realities of impending rejection.

Luke records that then for Theophilus, to whom he dedicates not only the Gospel of Luke, but the book of Acts, in which dedication he reminds Theophilus of his first volume, referring to the Gospel, of course. Luke records them for Theophilus so that

he can be reassured about what God's plan is, what a disciple is called to be, and how a disciple participates in the community's task to identify and proclaim Jesus, not only through the message that the new community delivers about Jesus, but also by the way that disciples live in a world hostile to that declaration.

Luke's Gospel and his sequel, the book of Acts, cover these questions. So, Luke's task is to reassure Theophilus, Luke 1:4, especially concerning the disputed presence of Gentiles in a new community. I should read Luke 1:1 to 4. It is programmatic for the Gospel of Luke.

In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative, [a story,] of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, [Luke distinguishes himself from those eyewitnesses.] 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.

Lukan scholars debate whether this, well, in general they regard Theophilus as a real person. It was not unusual for first-century Greco-Roman writings to be dedicated to someone, a patron perhaps. But in this case, it is debated: is he somebody thinking about becoming a Christian, or is he already a believer? In either case, it is good to keep an eye on Theophilus as we read the Gospel of Luke and Acts because Theophilus appears right there again in the very opening verses. And Bach helps us do that.

Every now and then, he does exactly as he has done here. So Luke's task is to reassure Theophilus, Luke 1:4, like that. Most important to Luke's Gospel is the role of Jesus in God's plan and promise, while Acts describes the nature of the new community, that would be the church, that emerged from his ministry.

This new community has historical roots in Jewish promise but is under intense pressure from the ancient Jewish community. Additional pressure comes from Jewish Christians who want Gentiles to relate more favorably to some matters of the law. Much of Judaism rejected Christian claims of fulfillment in Jesus.

Does a Gentile really belong in this new community? Can God really be behind a community that faces so much hostility and rejection? What was Jesus really about in his life and teaching? How did Jesus' life, teaching, death, and resurrection really reflect divine "events fulfilled among us" in Luke 1:1? These questions about God's plan, his chosen one, Jesus, and the emerging new community are at the heart of Luke's Gospel. So, Luke's Gospel highlights the activity of a mighty and faithful God through Jesus, the promised one who shows the way. God reveals himself.

He reveals himself, his elect one, his promise, and his plan through the one who is now the risen Messiah and Lord. God reveals himself, his elect one, Jesus, his promise, and his plan through the risen Messiah and Lord. Acts 2:36 and 10:36. Acts 2:36, Acts 10:36. Luke's Gospel introduces the fulfillment figure and the note of hostility while Acts chronicles the initial key chapter of the new community.

Luke-Acts says Jesus is Lord of all, so salvation can go to all. Salvation comes on the cross. Salvation comes, excuse me, on the terms the risen Lord sets.

Of course, the cross is central. A new way, in contrast to official Judaism, had emerged. It was a way promised in the old sacred text of the Old Testament, though the promise form was not originally understood.

Even Jesus' disciples, during his ministry, had to learn how the plan worked. Luke 9:35 and verses 44 to 45. Luke 18:31 to 34 and most especially Luke 24:44 to 47. One more time. Luke 9:35 and 44 and 45; Luke 18:31, 34, and chapter 24, verses 44 through 47.

The new community's separation from Judaism was not the Christian's fault. Jesus and the church always proclaimed hope to the Jews. However, the offer met with intense opposition.

Such hostility slew Jesus, and Christians can continue to expect such resistance until the end. The need is to be faithful. Nonetheless, God was and is behind this new movement.

Jesus' work, teaching, death, and resurrection show this truth, Luke, while the new era shows the Word's expansion through the church from Peter to Jerusalem to Paul in Rome, Acts. Peter to Jerusalem, Paul to Rome. It is too simple.

But a basic outline of the book of Acts. Both Jews and Gentiles are welcome in this new community. Indeed, God has directed the entire affair.

The first point, again, is the plan of God. God has directed the entire affair, even down to how Jews and Gentiles should relate to one another in the new community. Acts 10, chapter 11, and chapter 15.

Three chapters in Acts, especially, 10, 11, and 15. Be assured, Jesus revealed God's will, way, and blessing.

Blessings are available to all who realize they are lost, and so turn to God through Jesus, Luke 5:30 to 32 and Luke 19:10.

Luke 5:30 to 32. And Luke 19:10, which many regard as the most important verse summarizing Luke's message of salvation. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

God has kept and will keep his promise to those who turn to him. He promises whose roots extend into the hope of the ancient scriptures and whose realization has come and will come in Jesus. Acts 2:14 to 41; Acts 3:11 to 26.

And whose realization has come and will come in Jesus. That's a big sentence. I'll do it again. God has kept and will keep his promise to those who turn to him. Promises whose roots extend into the hope of the ancient scriptures. Luke 1, I didn't give these before. Luke 1:14 to 17, Luke 1:31 to 35; Luke 1:57 to 79; Luke 4:16 to 30. And again, Luke 24:44 to 47.

God will keep his promises to those who turn to him. We see it in Luke. We see it tremendously in the book of Acts.

And those promises to save are grounded in the Old Testament. Luke 1:14 to 17, 31 to 35, 57 to 79; Luke 4:16 to 30; and Luke 24:44 to 47.

And the realization of those promises, the full realization, the realization has come but has not fully come. That is yet future in Acts 2:14 through 41; Acts 3:11 to 26.

Origin and purpose of the gospel of Luke. Authorship, first of all. Authorship and Sources. Neither the gospel of Luke nor the Acts of the Apostles names its author. A combination of external and internal evidence suggests that Luke was the author of both works.

Internal evidence, of course, refers to that which is within the book being studied. In this case, the gospel of Luke or in the book of Acts. External evidence, of course, refers to evidence outside the book being studied, as in the church fathers as in the ancient versions of the Bible.

Internal evidence. The internal features concentrate on two points.

First, as we saw in Luke 1:1 to 4, the author is not an eyewitness to most of the events in the two volumes, especially those tied to the ministry of Jesus. Luke 1:1 and 2. Rather, he has relied on his study of traditions, which came from, again quoting that prologue to Luke's gospel, quote, eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Close quote, Luke 1:2 to 4.

Second, Luke presents himself as a companion of Paul in those parts of Acts known as the we sections. And they are, that is, Luke writes in the third person and then he'll shift and go to the first-person plural. We did this. We did that. Seemingly

including himself in his own narrative. Acts 16:10 through 17. Acts 20:5 through 15; Acts 21:1 through 18, and then in the shipwreck passage, Acts 27:1, all the way through 28:16. These are the we sections.

So, two facts. Luke says, implies he was not an eyewitness to the events he writes about in his gospel. Number two, sometimes he puts himself into his narrative of the book of Acts. Again, the we sections are Acts 16:10 to 17; Acts 20:5 to 15. Acts 21:1 to 18. Acts 27:1 through 28:16.

This feature, though debated with respect to its historical reliability, limits options about the author's identity. Why does Bock mention debates about the reliability historically of the we section? Because he's a good scholar. Does he believe in the reliability? Yes, he does.

But he wouldn't be doing his job in an academic commentary on the gospel of Luke if he didn't mention different viewpoints. And as a matter of fact, sometimes truth comes from funny places. But Darrell Bach believes the Bible, believes the message of Luke and Acts, as is evidenced if you read one page of his work.

A current debate surrounding the we sections is whether they reflect the testimony of an eyewitness or are a literary device that gives the impression of the presence of an eyewitness. People want to pursue this. The first position, Ellis wrote a book in 1974. Hemer, Colin Hemer, 1989. They both wrote matters pertaining to that concerning that it was a fiction. The we thing is a fiction.

The liberal commentator in his famous commentary in 1971, Hanson, and others as well. Wrapped up in this question also is the issue of how well the author of the third gospel knew Paul. Excuse me.

Since the we sections of Acts portray their author as a traveling companion of the apostle Paul, those who reject such a connection attempt to compare Luke's picture of Paul with the self-portrait of the Pauline letters. They argue that the two pictures do not match in detail or in theological emphasis. In addition, Luke fails to use the Pauline letters to describe Paul's work and position.

Vielhauer, another critic who says the we sections are unreliable, Vielhauer, V-I-E-L-H-A-U-E-R, for those so inclined. Vielhauer argues that the portraits are too far apart for the author of the third gospel to be a companion of Paul.

But Fitzmyer, the Roman Catholic commentator on Acts 1989, defends the connection, arguing that a creative literary device cannot explain how the we units appear and disappear in such an arbitrary manner. He also notes that several sailing references, which would be candidates for such literary insertions, lack them.

Joseph Fitzmyer suggests that Luke may be only a junior companion in contrast to Irenaeus's famous claim that Luke was inseparable from Paul. Irenaeus said that in his *Against Heresies* 3.14.1. In addition, Golder, another liberal, 1989, suggests Luke may have known and alluded to Paul's first letter to Corinth and, to a lesser extent, to his first letter to Thessalonica. Others defend the compatibility of the two portraits of Paul, F.F. Bruce, in his writing *Paul and Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 1975 and 76.

So, internal evidence in Luke-Acts tells us that the writer knew Paul and was at least a second-generation Christian.

External evidence: we're dealing with the authorship of the gospel of Luke and Acts, and we worked with information within Luke-Acts, and now we're more broadly considering sitting external information, information outside, especially in the Church Fathers. External evidence: the Pauline letters name some of the potential candidates who traveled with Paul.

By the way, external evidence from Luke does include the rest of the Bible or parts that are germane to Luke Acts. Paul's letters name some of the potential candidates who traveled with Paul, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14. To this list, one could add figures such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphras, and Barnabas.

Yet despite the wide selection of potential candidates available as companions of Paul and possible authors is the sense of Acts, the tradition of the Church gives attention to only one name as the author of these two volumes, Luke. This tradition was firmly fixed in the early church by AD 200 and remains so without any hint of contrary opinion. You say 200, isn't that late? It is not late.

When you consider transportation and communication in the first-century world, uh, today an event happened somewhere in the world, and moments later, it's everywhere on the news; it is incredible. Surely, that was not the case, and just considering the matter of canon because there were many uh apocryphal gospels, books of Acts, letters attributed to the apostles, and even apocalypses, books of revelation. So, for example, there's a gospel of Peter, he didn't write it, but there's an Acts of Peter, there's a third letter of Peter, he didn't write that either, and there's An Apocalypse of Peter that is attributed to Peter, and that that was the name of these, that was the names of these things.

We're thankful the church took its time sifting through all these writings. The gospel of Thomas was not accepted by the church because a gospel, by its definition, includes the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, a mere sayings document like Thomas does not belong; it's not a biblical gospel.

I'm not saying it's worthless for information about Jesus and the first-century Judaism and such, but it's not a biblical gospel. So, communication was much slower and we're thankful the church took its time and got the canon right, and for Luke-Acts to be firmly ensconced as Luke's writings by the year 200 is really is really great. The absence of any dispute about this detail is a strong reason to take the tradition seriously.

Allusions to the gospel of Luke appear as early as 1st Clement 13.2 and 48.4. 1st Clement, one of the apostolic fathers, 13.2 and 48.4 written at the very end of the first century around AD 95-96. 2nd Clement 13.4, around the year 100, also alludes to the gospel of Luke. In addition, the use of Jesus' teaching is reflected in Luke 10:7, which appears in 1 Timothy 5:18. The laborer deserves his wages and is picked up by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18. Verse 17 let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor especially those who labor in preaching and teaching for the scripture says and he combines two things here he combines a quotation from the old testament from Deuteronomy 25:4 you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain and the verse from Luke that we just saw Luke 10.7 that we just referred to and the laborer deserves his wages interestingly that's referred to as scripture hereby in Paul's writings already numerous texts connect comment on authorship.

Justin Martyr, around 160 in dialogue with Trypho 103.19, speaks of Luke writing a memoir of Jesus and notes how the author is a follower of Paul. The Moratorium Canon around 170 to 180 AD attributes to the gospel to Luke, a doctor, who is Paul's companion. Irenaeus around 175 to 195 in Against Heresies 3.1.1 and 3.14.1 and 3.1.1. 3.14.1 attributes the gospel to Luke, a follower of Paul, and notes how the we sections suggest the connection, so the church fathers noted the we sections in the so-called anti-Marcionite prologue to Luke around 175, describes Luke as a native of Antioch in Syria, compare Acts 11:19-30 Acts 13:1-3, Acts 15:30-35. It says he lived to be 84, was a doctor, was unmarried, wrote in Achaia, and died in Boeotia.

Tertullian early third century in Against Marcion 4.2.2 and 4.5.3, 4.2.2, and 4.5.3. Tertullian calls the gospel a digest of Paul's gospel. The Against Marcion prologue which is either third or fourth century gives Luke's age at death at 74.

Finally, Eusebius early fourth century in ecclesiastical history 3.4.2 mentions Luke as a companion to Paul native of Antioch and author of these volumes Joseph Fitzmyer, the Roman Catholic exegete mentioned earlier, in 1981 his book, page 40 divides the external evidence handily into two categories what can be deduced from the New Testament and what can be not cannot be deduced from it that Luke was a physician was tied to Paul was not an eyewitness and wrote his gospel with concerns for Gentiles are facts the New Testament makes clear that Luke was from Syria proclaimed Paul's gospel was unmarried was childless and died at old age are ideas that do not appear in the New Testament though the differences about Luke's age at death tell us that not everything in these traditions is indisputably true.

Their unity about authorship makes almost certain the identification of Luke as the gospel's author. The tradition's testimony also makes Luke's connection to Paul very likely Luke was a Gentile, and a doctor.

Two other questions about Luke require discussion. Was he a Gentile? Was he a doctor? Most see Luke as a Gentile, though they debate whether he was a pure Gentile or a non-Jewish Semite. An exception is Ellis 1974, who argues that Luke was a Hellenistic Jewish Christian because one, Luke's knowledge of the Old Testament was great. Two, Colossians 4:10 and 11 with its reference to those of the circumcision does not suggest that Luke was not Jewish but merely he was a Hellenist.

And three, the use of Palestinian language shows Luke's Jewish roots, but Ellis's reading of Colossians 4:10 and 11 is not a natural one since all Jews receive circumcision. And Luke 4:14 is not listed among the circumcised.

More recently Salmon 1988 defends this view noting that the author one distinguishes Jewish groups to discuss discusses Torah observances in detail.

Three he is interested in Gentile mission as a Jewish problem and four calls Christianity a sect of Judaism to this can be added the author's thorough knowledge of the Old Testament. One cannot rule out this ethnic possibility for Luke but other factors noted below along with Colossians 4:14 make it less likely. Fitzmyer again 1981 suggest Luke is a non-Jewish Semite because of one, Colossians 4:10 and 11 and 14 text. The shortened form of Luke's name a Greek form of a Latin name. And three, the details of the church tradition which placed Luke in Antioch of Syria. This view is quite possible. Bock explains, in fact, when one puts Fitzmyer's points together with Salmon's, the possibility is that Luke was a former God-fearer or Jewish proselyte.

I surely need to read from Colossians 4 as this is part of that internal information about Luke. Colossians 4:10 and 11 and 14: Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you in Colossae and Mark the cousin of Barnabas concerning whom you've received instructions. If he comes to you welcome him and Jesus who is called Justus these are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. Skipping down too verse 14, Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

Most commentators identify Luke as a Gentile without any further detail they point to the verses I just read in Colossians 4 they note Acts 1 verse 19 which mentions a field with a Semitic name and then speaks of "their language" suggesting it is not

Luke's language. Acts 1:19 mentions a field with a Semitic name and then speaks of "their language" distinguishing it from the author. That is, Luke 3 points out the attention to Hellenistic locales and the concern for Gentiles. This last argument is not strong since a Jew like Paul could fit into such geographical locales and concerns.

In some ,it seems very likely that Luke was a Gentile though it is unclear whether his cultural background was Semitic, in any case, he probably had religious contact with Judaism before coming to Christ.

Colossians 4:14 refers to Luke as a doctor. In 1882 Hobart tried to bolster this connection by indicating all the technical verbal evidence for Luke's vocation. Despite the wealth of references Hobart gathered, the case was rendered ambiguous by the work of Cadbury in 1926 who showed that almost all of the alleged technical medical vocabulary appeared in everyday Greek documents such as the Septuagint, Josephus, Lucian, and Plutarch. This meant that the language could have come from a literate person with any vocation. Cadbury's work does not, however, deny that Luke could have been a doctor but only that the vocabulary of these books does not guarantee he was one.

Ultimately, the issue concerns how one views Colossians and the tradition about Luke that grew up in the early church. Since such a detail was not necessary to note and serve no apologetic concern it can be seen to reflect reality.

So, Luke is Paul's sometime companion. He is likely to be a medical doctor and possibly from Antioch of Syria. He is not Jewish, though whether he is Syrian or Greco-Roman is not clear. The tradition also indicates that he lived a long life.

In our next lecture, we will think about the sources of Luke-Acts.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Theology of Luke-Acts. This is session 1, Luke Bibliography, and then Darrell Bock's Overview and Authorship.