

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 1, Introduction, Part 1, Author and Recipient in Context

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This is Dr. Dan Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 1, Introduction, Part One, Author and Recipient in Context.

Welcome to the study of the Gospel of Luke.

This is the Biblical e-learning of the study of Luke's Gospel. As you may already know by now, Biblical e-learning has introduced you to so many things you may know about the Bible and theological studies in general. Here, we focus on two main writings of Luke and select one.

The other one is already available to you, and one of my colleagues has actually done a very good job delivering that series to you. As we focus on Luke's Gospel, imagine four accounts talking about Jesus Christ, his work, his death, and his resurrection. If you like, all he came to do to save our world.

Luke is particularly important in our understanding of the work of Jesus Christ and the Church in general because Luke is the only writer of the Gospel that goes as far as to give us the book of Acts to actually show us a continuity between the work of Jesus Christ and that of the early Church. So let's begin this study by taking a quick look generally at this Gospel and what I will do in this particular session is to try to introduce you to some key things you would like to know about the authorship, the context of this particular letter, how Luke sees the world in which he writes about, and some things that he will be mentioning in the course of the study that you would find useful to understand in order to bridge the gap between the ancient world and our modern context. May I quickly draw your attention to the fact that if you are following these lectures from a non-Western background, you may want to be patient with me in trying to bridge the gap between some Western cultural traditions, customs, and norms that are quite different from the world of Luke that you may find perhaps something that is close to what you are familiar with.

So, let's go on to look at the issue of authorship. Who wrote the Gospel of Luke, and how do we know about the person who wrote that particular Gospel? Well, we don't have any evidence in the text itself telling us about the authorship. In other words, we are told that Luke wrote it from sources outside the Gospel itself.

But how did it come about, and how has it come to be established in Christian tradition that, indeed, Luke wrote this? We look at two main ways of thinking

through this. What I call the internal evidence within the New Testament gives us some glimpse of who this person is, and external evidence on what early Christians have said about this author helps shed light on our understanding of the author of Luke. So, in terms of internal evidence, we don't actually have anything within the Gospel itself that tells us that Luke wrote it, unlike Paul, who likes to say that Paul, Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, writes to the church in Swen.

So, Luke did not do that. Luke tells us about whom he writes to without giving us any information about himself. With the internal evidence and the lack thereof, it is also important to note that the internal features of how this letter and the book of Acts are introduced show that, indeed, one person wrote these two long writings of the New Testament.

In fact, if you put the two together, you get about a third of the New Testament right there. The Gospel of Luke and Acts are also addressed to the same person. Writing style and continuous patterns, some of which I will show in this particular session, will help us to understand that there is enough internal evidence to show that the writer of the Gospel of Luke is also the one who wrote the book of Acts.

This Luke that tradition has come to associate with the Gospel of Luke is the one that we hear about in the New Testament. That does not mean that he himself states anywhere in the New Testament that he is the writer. But it does mean that in some writings, especially the writings of Paul, and some first-person plural references that we find in the book of Acts seem to suggest that this is the person we are dealing with.

So, let's quickly go on to the external evidence, and at some point, I will take you back to some of the observations we make internally. In terms of external evidence, there are five important witnesses that help scholars, church members, and church traditions to understand who wrote the Gospel of Luke and how this particular Gospel came to be associated with Luke. The oldest manuscript that we have on the Gospel is the text type we call P75.

P75, in particular, being Luke's oldest manuscript, actually makes reference to Luke as the author of this particular manuscript. It is one of those introductions that, as the writings are passed on, various church leaders or traditions qualify from whom this comes and to whom it is being sent. So, the oldest manuscript of Luke ascribes authorship to Luke.

The other thing to note is a very important manuscript in the 2nd century called the Moratorium Canon. The Moratorium Canon also ascribes authorship to Luke, one of the church fathers, Irenaeus, whom we hear about a lot as we try to study church traditions. Irenaeus, in his response against heresies, actually qualifies, as I will show

the quote in a minute, that Luke, the companion of Paul, is the one who wrote the Gospel we refer to as the Gospel of Luke.

Another church leader who actually built his whole career behind, on the back of Marcion, a businessman, theologian, who was known to be really, I don't know how to, I'm very careful about the language I use here. He was a very, very dodgy heretic that the church has ever known. Tertullian has actually done very well in his life, building his whole theological fame on the back of Marcion and trying to respond to Marcion for anything ridiculous Marcion writes.

Tertullian qualifies and states clearly that Luke is the author of the Gospel we have come to refer to as the Gospel of Luke. The early church historian Eusebius, who has given us a compilation of a large volume of church history, also refers to Luke and authorship to this text and even gives us some glimpse about his possible origin. Again, if I were to take you back to the reference I made earlier on the Muratorian Canon, the phrase or the clause actually reads like this.

Luke, also Paul's companion, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. That reference was made in a context that seemed to align with the conversation on the Gospel of Luke. In the fragment, we also find some further descriptions about this guy being the physician.

But perhaps I should pause here to qualify the fallacy that is out there often, that because Luke is described as a physician, we should always examine his miraculous account from the perspective of a physician. It doesn't necessarily have to be so. In the fragment, we read the book.

The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name according to the general belief. Note, according to the general belief, tradition.

In the Tertullian reference I mentioned earlier on, Tertullian, in his own words, writes, For even Luke's form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul, referring to the third Gospel. In Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, he writes, But as for Luke, in the beginning of his Gospel, he states himself the reasons which led him to write it. He states that since many others had more rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of the events of which he had acquired perfect knowledge, he himself, feeling the necessity of freeing us from their uncertain opinions, delivered in his own Gospel an accurate account of those events in regard to which he had learned the full truth, being aided by his intimacy and his stay with Paul and by his acquaintance with the rest of the apostles.

John Fitzmyer, who has produced a very fine volume, in fact, two volume commentary on Luke, I write in his introduction, in which he quotes some of these early church traditions. Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul until his martyrdom. He served the Lord without destruction, without a wife, and without children.

He died at the age of 84 in Boetia, full of the Holy Spirit. Now, if you understand anything about the Gospel of Luke and Luke's writing, just hearing about full of the Spirit should bring a smile to your face. So, generally, where I am going with this is we don't have any internal evidence, or what we would call in the theological jargon self-ascription of Luke saying, I wrote the third gospel.

But we have references to the effect that the Luke that is mentioned in the New Testament is also the one tradition ascribes the authorship of the third gospel to. Those closest to the account and those closest to these very traditions he writes about have pointed that to us. There has not been any contention so far in scholarship, going back and forth debating whether, indeed, we should ascribe this to Luke or not.

So, we approach this particular gospel on the premise that Luke, according to tradition, wrote this gospel, and we stand on that tradition to interpret this writing. In terms of the mention of this Luke in the New Testament, we have three mentions of him. We have mention of him in Colossians.

Colossians 4 verse 14, he is referred to as the beloved physician. Time will not permit me to be able to qualify whether we should ascribe this to the writings of Paul or not. But if you take Colossians from the Pauline tradition, then we find from the Pauline tradition an ascription to a companion of Paul that he was a physician.

We also read in Paul's writing to Philemon, referring to Luke as a fellow worker. We have another reference to Luke in 2 Timothy 4 verse 11, a text that is disputed among Pauline scholars as to whether or not Paul wrote it. But take all these three references in the Pauline tradition, and what we come to find is a person who is associated with Paul from the book of Acts, especially from Acts chapter 16, is also referred to in the Pauline tradition as someone who was a beloved physician, who was a fellow worker and a sole companion of Paul himself.

So, what else do we know about this Luke? We know a few things. We find out from his gospel that he was not an eyewitness to the events he writes about. In fact, as we will see later on in this study, he was careful to indicate to us that he took time to examine his findings and collected them from eyewitnesses, suggesting to us that he himself was not an eyewitness.

From every indication that we have from the gospel itself, and also from his second piece, known to us as the book of Acts, it appears that this man was a second-generation Christ follower, or as some would even suggest, a third-generation Christ follower. One thing that stands out clearly about Luke's background is that he was well educated. Occasionally I like to refer or explain to my Pentecostal charismatic friends that if anyone thinks the Holy Spirit features so frequently in the book of Acts and in Luke, and so he must be someone who is not as educated, that person could not be further away from the truth.

Because he was a very smart person. In fact, the two most intelligent people we have as writers of the New Testament are the ones who seem to be so eager to tell us about the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as we will see. And Luke is clearly one of those.

His Greek shows someone who has good knowledge and command of the language. His grammar and his construction show someone who has a good understanding of the literary artistry of his time. Even in terms of narrative, narrative structures, the way he composes text, the plot, and how he resolves the plot, Luke does show someone who really knows how to write and make his case in the understanding of his time.

Another thing about his education that is noteworthy as we come to the Gospel is his knowledge of the Old Testament. I have come across only a few, I should say, I wouldn't even count a handful of scholars who suggest that Luke must be a Jew. But by far, most scholars, and I would definitely support that position to say Luke seemed to be a Gentile Christ follower writing to Theophilus, who is also a Gentile.

But this same Gentile took it upon himself to study the Hebrew Scriptures so well. So in his writings, we have both allusions and direct references to the Old Testament. Writing in a tradition as if to tell us that, look, the Messianic prophecies about the Messiah is being fulfilled.

And let me just show you how this is being fulfilled. His knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures is quite vast, and we will see some of that as we explore this text. The other thing that some of my colleagues and some who may be following this that I have had the privilege to teach will say is that I seem to be very crazy about cosmology and spirit cosmology.

Well, if I do, then guess what? I am a companion to Paul and Luke. Luke's spirit cosmology is one that we need to take our time to unpack in order to follow his writings carefully. Luke's worldview and the worldview of his time was a world in which the material world was not divorced or distant from the spiritual world.

The spiritual dimensions of the world are the same part of this one universe, and because of that, angels can interact with human beings. Spirit beings can work in the lives of human beings. Spiritual agents can come and do things in the realm of humans.

The whole idea is that the spirits are present with us, and they can work in us, they can communicate with us, they can deliver messages in dreams, and they can do that in the world in which Luke lived. He perceived the world as a world where spiritual realities, be it good or evil, were prevalent. So, as we will see in the Gospel of Luke, weird things as a spiritual being impregnating a woman will take place in his account.

And if you are in the Western philosophical framework, you say, how does it make sense? Well, in the world in which Luke lived, in the belief system in which he functioned, and that which is supposed to be fundamental to our Christian faith, room will have to be created for the possibility of God or a spiritual agent to work in the lives of humans to bring into effect so many things. So, Luke, on the other hand, will talk about the activity of God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ. On the other, he will also talk about demonic possession, evil spiritual beings, and how in Christ, God triumphs over these forces of evil as he unfolds the messianic kingdom in this eschatological age.

I like Joel Greene's one line in his introduction of Luke when he writes, and I am always conscious about the fact that when I talk about spirit cosmology, it is easy to say, this strange African guy believes in all kinds of strange African things. And so, I managed to get a line from Joel Greene trying to explain that we should try to understand Luke for Luke and his world. He writes that Luke's world is one in which God intervenes through miraculous conceptions.

Angels regularly mediate between heaven and earth, and diabolic forces are active, for example. That is the world of Luke. Think about these backgrounds, and don't get bored as you begin the text because these are foundational in the way we approach the text.

So far, what I've tried to do is to do this. First, to draw your attention to the fact that the ascription, the gospel of Luke, has been since the beginning of the early Christians up to this time. Two, that the world of Luke is a world in which spirits are able to work in the affairs of human beings.

The last thing I want to move on quickly to draw our attention to, which will also feature in our study of the gospel, is how Judaism will function in Luke's world and in Luke's narrative. By the Second Temple period, the time in which Luke was writing, Jews were still expecting the Messiah to come. They were expecting him to come and defeat their enemies, triumph over evil, and restore the kingdom back to David.

But Judaism had a different look than, say, the time of Solomon. All Jews took the Temple very, very seriously and went to the Temple once or twice a year to offer different festivals and rituals. But another thing that had come since they went to exile and had returned from exile was the synagogue worship, where Jews would gather in buildings, in various forms of sanctuaries, learn about the law, celebrate festivals, do all kinds of all things Jewish culture to be able to connect with their religion, their religious teachings, and formation, especially of young people in their religious beliefs and traditions.

Synagogues are going to be important because Luke is going to remind us that Jesus will be visiting such places as he goes about his ministry. The other thing to note in the world of Luke as we think about Judaism is the sects at the time. Judaism was not monolithic at the time of Luke's writings.

We have various sects, such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and what Josephus reminds us to be the New Philosophy. But only two of these sects, prominent sects, are named in Luke; one is the Pharisees, and the second is the Sadducees. Now, on the path of the Sadducees, we will locate them in Luke, usually when Jesus is in Jerusalem, because the Sadducees were the ones that were responsible mostly for things that were going on in the temple, and they were quite heavily involved in temple leadership.

In fact, a good number of us in New Testament scholarship tend to believe that a Jewish high priest is likely to come from the sect of the Sadducees. But the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. They believed that if you die, your soul perishes with you.

The other sect that we know more about as Christians is the Pharisees. Luke will talk about this particular sect in a way that is very different from what we typically think about them. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead.

The Pharisees believed in legalistic righteousness. The Pharisees believed in living a simple life. In fact, Jesus and Matthew clashed a lot with the Pharisees, not because their teachings were so different, but because their teachings were so similar.

In Luke, unlike Matthew, the Pharisees were not always bad people. In Luke, the Pharisees are just smart people who are just trying to know more about their religion, whose religious convictions overlap a great deal with Jesus, and occasionally have issues with Jesus, but often are very helpful to Jesus and Jesus' followers, and sometimes even try to intervene to help Jesus and his followers. In the second volume of Luke, for example, the Pharisees were actually, we have even Pharisees in the church, in Acts.

Very, very different from the perceptions we have of Pharisees coming from Matthew. And some of it will be revealed here. But bear with me a minute as we lay this foundation, because Luke is going to operate within this framework.

I told you he was a well-educated person, and he had an appreciation for well-educated people in their religious tradition, trying to live up to their religious expectations, having questions and answers, and needing to be attended to appropriately. The other thing we find is Luke's use of the Septuagint. Luke refers to the Hebrew scriptures a great deal, and often, his quotations or his allusions seem to come from that of the Septuagint.

It's no wonder that he was very, very fluent in Greek, and the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures became something that he would be very cognizant of. This is not to say that by the first century, the Septuagint was rather the most popular text that was accessible and available to most Jews in the synagogues. Having said this about Judaism, I don't want to leave you with the impression that Jews were always fighting like Pentecostals and Baptists and Catholics and Presbyterians.

No! Jews had four things, no matter where they were and whatever conviction they held, that they all had in common. These four things united them so strongly that they may have fine theological differences, but they have these collective belief systems that shape their culture and their norms and that is going to drive them together for festivals, regardless of whatever sect one belonged to. And these four are one, the Shema.

All Jews held to the fact that God is one. Unlike their neighbors who may believe in various gods, all Jews who believe in Yahweh, who revealed himself and made a covenant with their great-great-grandfather Abraham, and have formed and developed a nation based on that covenant relationship. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, will be a belief up to today that will be shared by all Jews.

Two, Jewish particularism and circumcision. All Jews, regardless of whatever sect one belongs to, will see him or herself as a chosen person in a covenant relationship with God, and if you are male, the mark of this covenant is circumcision. Why am I bringing this up? Well, I am bringing this up because you are going to see from the very two chapters of Luke.

Luke is going to remind us that Jesus and his parents were Jews. John the Baptist and his parents were Jews. And before they even declare whatever sectarian affinity they have within Judaism, they will follow these norms and traditions of Jews that we need to be aware of.

The third is the Torah. Obedience to the law of God was very important to Jews. Granted, interpretation of the law is part of the reason there might be more conservative, more liberal, different sects in the tradition.

And, of course, I mentioned the temple earlier. The temple will be a place where important festivals and rituals will take place. Jesus' parents would go to the temple to do what they needed to do as Jews.

The temple, as the center of Jewish culture, religion, and customs, is going to be the reason why, in the second volume of Luke, Jews will come from all over the world to Jerusalem and be part of this Passover celebration. Jews, regardless of their belief systems convictions, conservative, liberal, middle of the road, outside the road, will all share in these four core convictions. Luke was aware of this.

Luke wanted to pay attention to this in his gospel to remind us that Jesus, the Savior of the world, came as a Jew. He came to fulfill the prophetic advances regarding the Messiah. And he came to do this within Second Temple Judaism.

He came not necessarily to establish a whole sect or movement outside Judaism, but he came to fulfill God's promises to his people and to the world. Having established this basic framework of Luke himself, let's turn to the recipient of Luke's gospel. Luke names his recipient as Theophilus.

Theophilus is commonly understood to be a Gentile. So here we see Theophilus, a Gentile, receiving a genre that we will later call gospel. By the way, there was no genre called gospel at that time.

This will be a genre that we will actually put together, or Christians will come to establish the four writings about the life work of Jesus Christ, being gospel. So, Luke is writing as a Gentile, and if you like, a Gentile elite to a Gentile elite called Theophilus.

He calls him sir, as we will see in the letters and in the gospel. But think about this. As you read the gospel and as you follow these lectures, think about what Luke has to say about the outcast.

An elite writing to an elite. Observe what he has to say about the poor and the marginalized. Observe his portraits of the Messiah's encounter with those who are hungry, destitute, and helpless.

Because for Luke, the kingdom of God and what needs to be conveyed to this recipient is something that transcends the status of how elite, how powerful, how amazing one is in society. So Theophilus will be referred to as sir and will leave us with so many conjectures as to how we think about this Theophilus. But think about

a letter written to a very important figure outlining key things about the gospel that if I dare preach seriously on the gospel of Luke in some of the elite communities in our world people may be upset with me, thinking I am getting on their nerves.

But you see, Luke understands something. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is for the salvation of the world. And friends, the world includes people in my village.

The world includes friends of mine who live in poverty and very, very difficult conditions. The world includes children who are dying out of malnutrition, whether you are as elite as Theophilus or as Luke. Luke would like us to know the message of the kingdom of God, the coming of the Messiah into our world, is to make a real difference, to touch the lives of all.

But who is this Theophilus? We are in the field of conjecture as to his identity. So, there are six speculations as to how we should look at him. Some have suggested that we look at him as a potential patron of Luke, who wrote two long pieces and needed someone to sponsor the writing.

Others have suggested that we look at him or conceive him as perhaps the Roman officer overseeing Paul's imprisonment in Rome. Now, those who speculate along these lines will say that, for example, in the book of Acts, Acts ends with Paul in jail. It is possible that Luke then is writing to this man who was overseeing that imprisonment, trying to defend the Christian faith, and making sure that he himself becomes an instrument through which this powerful gospel for which Paul was under arrest will be carried out.

Again, it is just a thought. A third view suggests that Theophilus was an unbeliever, a Gentile who was interested in Christianity, and Luke was writing to explain what the Christian tenets are. Others have suggested that we look at him as a new believer whom Luke knows about and is writing to give him more instruction after initial contact about the message of the gospel, giving him more instructions about the faith and what Christians do believe.

The one that I grew up hearing a lot is the one that works and plays around the name Theophilus and says, oh, the name actually means the friend of God, a lover of God, and they try to work on this rendering and say, oh. Actually, that actually means this is not a particular person per se, but someone who loves the Lord is someone Luke is writing to so that the message of the gospel will be carried out. A sixth view suggests that the name is a synonym, and it actually is there to say this is a gospel written to all Gentiles. Which one of these six is correct? I have a very profound answer for you.

I don't know. We are guessing. We are trying to make sense.

But you see, it doesn't matter whether you know the fullest identity of Theophilus or not. What is important to know is that Luke wrote the gospel, the third gospel, to another person, and in that gospel is contained germs, values, and a powerful message of the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ that if you and I would embrace, would experience the power of God at the personal and transformative level, even in our homes and beyond. If we come to a general grasp of who Luke is and who Theophilus is, it is also important to try to understand when the gospel was written.

Well, as far as dating is concerned, there are two main theories around dating. One view of the dating is that you should think about the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, which was written just before Acts ended. So, if you hold to that theory, then actually Acts was written at the very end when Paul was in jail.

If you hold to that theory, then you are going to date it earlier to say Luke's gospel and Acts were written for the most part during the lifetime of Paul or not more than a month after the death of Paul. Another theory says, no, it happens later. The one that says it happened later is the one that is by far the most acceptable theory, as I would explain.

Those who hold as I hold that the gospel of Luke was written between 70 and 90 and narrowly, for me, somewhere around the 80s, argue that Luke could not be writing his gospel if he had depended on Mark's gospel as Matthew did. Then Mark would have to have been written before Luke is written. And if we date Mark in the 70s, then definitely, we couldn't date Luke earlier than that.

The other thing that goes with that kind of argumentation is this. If you think about Luke and the way he structures his gospel, nothing is supposed to tell us that he was writing a diary, that he was writing events as they were happening, so that by the time the last thing happened, he says, full stop, boom, now let me mail it to your floss. No, that is not how writers write.

You know that even for your own journal. That is not how you write your journal. You don't write your journal as you go about your day.

You write your journal at the end of the day. Somebody writes history after the events take time to communicate. So, I tend to lean towards the majority view that Luke's gospel was written in the 80s.

If you don't accept the 80s view, then work in the range of 70s and 90s. That is the general comfort area, but I want to be more definite than that because some of the things we will be looking at in the gospel will help shed light on some of this. What is the purpose of Luke? You say, oh, there are too many things I need to know in order to read this gospel.

Yes. Do you notice that most people don't read the gospel of Luke? Because it's too long. I mean, you start the first chapter.

You take a nap or two naps before you finish. The only thing we like about the gospel of Luke is the parables. So let me try to lay the foundation for you so that you can have fun with me.

So, the purpose of Luke. Why is Luke writing his gospel? Luke presents the history of the life events and the ministry of Jesus Christ as the means to give a theological interpretation of God's unfolding plan of salvation and fulfillment of prophecy. For Luke, history gives him the resources he needs to communicate the beginning, the rise, the development, and the expansion of Christianity around the world.

In the words of Mark Strauss, Luke defers and legitimizes the claims of the church as the authentic people of God in the present age. For Luke, it is all about how you understand the ministry of Jesus and how that ministry is ongoing even today to the ends of the earth. Luke Timothy Johnson, in trying to spell out in the most concise form the purpose of Luke, writes The aim of Luke is to make outside Hellenistic readers the Christian movement is presented as a philosophically enlightened, politically harmless, socially benevolent, and philanthropic fellowship.

But its more immediate purpose is to interpret the gospel for insiders within the context of a pluralistic environment composed of both Jews and Gentiles. I like how Craddock tried to state Luke's purpose. He writes three stories; Judaism, Jesus, and the church need to be related in some way that is both historical and theological.

No writer in the New Testament does this except Luke. And perhaps Luke does so not simply because some person or persons referred to as Theophilus need to know. More likely, it is because of two realities that impress themselves on Luke.

First, the event of Jesus is recorded further and further into the past. His life and work are matters of history. Second, the church is now a movement, an institution in the world.

And Luke assumes that much more time will pass before Christ returns. After all, one does not research and write an orderly account if one is convinced that the day of the Lord is at hand. Luke believes that, by telling about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the church and its ongoing expansion, people will come to know more about the work of the Messiah.

Noland, whose commentary has become quite popular in the Lucan studies, writes, For the purpose of Luke, the usual and indeed the long-standing traditional assumption is that Luke was a Gentile Christian who wrote his gospel for the Gentile

church of the late first century, that it was a pastoral document concerned with issues within the church, and that the time of Christian outreach to the Jews was long past, even if some Jewish Christians continued to play an important role in the ongoing life of the church. How do I summarize this? I summarize this in very, very simple terms as follows. Luke writes his gospel to tell Theophilus about Jesus Christ.

If you hold to the apologetic view, then you say that part of the instruction is to help defend the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. But beyond that, he tells this so that this ministry and messianic mission will be ongoing, not trapped in history, but will be a living organism, going forward, a movement that is moving forward and expanding to the rest of the world. Let me recap a few things for the first part of this introduction.

What I've tried to do so far in this study is to give you a general overview of the third gospel, which we call Luke. This third gospel was written by someone who does not introduce himself in the writing. Tradition reminds us, or tells us, that his name is Luke.

We have five witnesses supporting the idea that Luke, the physician, the beloved companion, is the one who wrote the gospel of Luke, writing it to Theophilus. I also drew your attention to the fact that the two people involved in this correspondence are all from the elite class. But the gospel is the gospel that is the most down-to-earth, perhaps, of all New Testament gospels.

I am talking about the poor, the outcast, the marginalized, and how Jesus comes to reach them. And I've also tried to spell out the purpose of this gospel. In the next lecture, I will take you further to begin to look at some key things about the composition of the letter.

How it is composed, what are the things that come into play, what are the themes that Luke is trying to develop, how does it relate to the second volume of Luke, namely the book of Acts, and how do those things help us, give us a good framework as we approach the text itself, namely the gospel of Luke. I hope that the beginning gives you some general insight into what this gospel is about. It is my hope that as we go on with this learning experience, you will not only pay attention to what is being discussed in this lecture, but you will also complement it or supplement it with some of the material you find in Biblica e-learning, cross-checking some of the background information that is being referred to, trying to dig deeper on some of the things that are not so advanced in this particular conversation, and try to follow through along with me.

I will even encourage you to take time as you come to follow the rest of the lecture to read the gospel, to read a chapter or two before you begin to listen to the next lecture. In that way, you are able to follow closely and be able to benefit more from

what is being carried out in this particular study. Thank you very much for joining us in Biblica e-learning.

It is my hope and prayer that you allow God not only to give you wisdom but to invite you into his space where you will find salvation in Christ Jesus, where you will grow as a Christian, and where you will find that Jesus came for all of us, the elite, the rich, the poor, the tall, the short, the one with glorious hair, and the ones who are so blessed to have a natural haircut from God himself. They call them bald people like me. We are all part of God's saving grace.

And I hope that we will learn together and grow to love each other more. Thank you. Amen.