Subject: Survey-The Gospel of Luke
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A brief look at the context of the Gospel of Luke from an examination of the whole New Testament:
The New Testament as a Whole
Structurally the NT is built together in the form of a literary archway.

An archway leads to something else, to something beyondâ€¦ the archway to saving truth, the archway into the true knowledge of God Himself, the archway into eternal blessedness.

The layout of the NT is anything but accidentalâ€¦
it only makes sense to assume that since God expressed Himself to mankind by supernatural inspiration, then guarded His revelation by providential preservation, that He would also be involved in the integration of the finished product! God never leaves â€œloose endsâ€•!

The Gospels and the Acts
The Gospels and Acts form the first group in the NT. They are the only â€œhistoricalâ€• books of the NT, and as a result they are the foundation to all that follows.

The Christian Church Epistles
There is an abrupt ending to the historical group (Acts) and next comes a series of letters.
 The first nine of these are grouped together naturally by the fact that they were written by Paul. They are letters of teaching and instruction in Christian truth and practice; i.e. they are mainly doctrinal. They are all addressed to Christian assemblies, or â€œchurches,â€• and are rightly called the â€œChristian Church Epistlesâ€•; (Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians.)

The Pastoral Epistles
Paulâ€™s remaining letters are addressed to individuals. 1&2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (a Christian leader at Colosse, who also led a â€œchurchâ€• which met in his own â€œhouse.â€•) These (esp. the first three) make up what we call the Pastoral Epistles.

The Hebrew Christian Epistles
There are nine other writings in the NT: Hebrews, James, 1&2Peter, 1-3 John, Jude, and Revelation. These are not to be merely categorized into a â€œmiscellaneousâ€• category. They each have a special purposeâ€¦ they are rightly called the Hebrew Christian Epistles.
Make no mistake, they are distinctively Christian but the approach and atmosphere are distinctively Hebrew.

Inter-correspondences

The archway formed by the Gospels and Acts opens to the nine â€œChurchâ€• epistles and nine â€œHebrewâ€• epistles. Both groups open with a major doctrinal bookâ€¦ on the one hand Romans, and on the other Hebrews. Romans presents Jesus as the ONLY WAY, Hebrews presents Him as the BETTER WAY.

Introduction to Lukeâ€™s Gospel

Lukeâ€™s place in the gateway to the new covenant seems especially suited for Gentile believers like us.
While each of the Gospels was intended ultimately for all mankind, Matthew seems to have had in immediate view the Jews; Mark, the Romans; and Luke, the Greeks. The special emphasis of Luke is the Humanity of Jesus. Representing Jesus as the Son of God, Luke features His kindness toward the weak, the suffering and the outcast.

Matthew of course takes his position as the presenter of the King of the Jews to the Jews. He carefully gives a detailed genealogy that traces the birth of Jesus back to the father of the Hebrew nationâ€”Abraham. Matthew gives special attention to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of those Old Testament prophecies that predicted the coming King. Jewish civilization had been built around their Scriptures. Therefore Matthew appeals to their Scriptures.

Mark busies himself with presenting Jesus as the servant of the Father. He shows Jesus in action, going about setting the captives free! His gospel doesnâ€™t concern itself too much with formalities like genealogies (whatâ€™s a pedigree to a servant?) or dedications, itâ€™s strictly ACTION PACKED! Roman civilization gloried in the idea of government, power. Therefore Mark calls particular attention to the miracles of Jesus as exhibition His superhuman power.

John does a great job of marrying the lofty Eternal Logos to lowly humanity in his gospel. This Eternal Logos became a man that they were able to touch with their hands! John seemed to want to make it clear and unmistakable that Jesus was GOD in human form.

But Luke is manifestly different in the approach he takes. Sure he presents Jesus as King, servant, mighty God, and man, but he goes out of his way to emphases Jesus, the man for all people; not simply the king of the Jews; not just a parochial savior, but the redeemer of all of mankind! Greek civilization represented culture, philosophy, wisdom, reason, beauty, education. Therefore, to appeal to the thoughtful, cultured, philosophic Greek mind, Luke, in a complete, orderly, and classical way depicts the glorious beauty and perfection of Jesus, the ideal, universal man.

The genealogy Luke gives doesnâ€™t span only Jewish history; his takes the genealogy all the way back to Adam! He shows the common ancestry of both Jews and Gentiles and presents Jesus as the Savior of all that will come to Him. The outcasts, slaves, tax-collectors, and women, are presented as special recipients of the Saviorâ€™s grace!

Luke writes from the vantage point of having traveled with the apostle Paul whose ministry was directed toward the Gentiles. See the â€œweâ€• sections of Acts 16:10-11; 20:5f; 21:1ff.

Luke very likely wrote his Gospel while he was in Caesarea during Paulâ€™s imprisonment there (Acts 27:1), about A.D. 58, and before Acts was penned, about A.D. 63.

Luke was probably a Gentile (or at least a Hellenistic Jew) and may have been converted at Antioch in Syria. He was quite proficient in the Greek language and represents some of the most literary Greek (along with Hebrews) in the New Testament. There are exceptions when Luke appears to follow Semitic oral and written sources, or when he adopts a Semitic style of Greek to sound â€œbiblicalâ€•, (that is Septuagintal.) Both of the books authored by Luke begin with a formal dedication in the Greco-Roman literary styleâ€”the only NT books to do so. Col 4:14 Paul calls Luke â€œthe beloved physician.â€• He frequently uses medical terms in his writings. (See Luke 4:1-6)

His Gentile heritage may explain some of the attention he gives to â€˜foreignersâ€™ in his writings. Luke wants the message to be clear; Jesus came to save all, not just the nation of Israel and certainly not just a subset of only â€˜the religiousâ€™ among the nation of Israel. Jesusâ€™ ministry was to the poor, the outcast, the underclass of society; those seemingly forgotten individuals specked throughout the land.

He attempts a logical portrayal of the historical origins of Christianity to God-fearing Gentile proselytes, and to establish the religious piety, moral purity, and political innocence of Jesus and his followers. (See Lukeâ€™s account of Jesusâ€™ trial before Pilate, where the Roman governor repeatedly absolves Jesus of guilt â€“23:1-25)

Luke shows that the gospel is universal, that Jesus has broken down the barrier between Jews and gentiles and inaugurated a world-wide community in which the old inequalities between slaves and free and between men and women no longer exist. Consider Paulâ€™s meaning in:

Gal 3:28 â€œThere is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.â€•

And again in:

1Co 12:13 â€œFor by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.â€•]

Because of Lukeâ€™s Gentile audience, he does not exhibit a narrowly Jewish interest in fulfilled messianic prophecy, as Matthew does, but a broader interest in Godâ€™s historical plan as revealed by the Old Testament and in the continuity of Christianity with Judaism.

He also modifies peculiarly Jewish expressions and allusions to Jewish customs in order that Gentiles may better understand. (See Lukeâ€™s rendition of â€œthe abomination of desolationâ€• as the encircling of Jerusalem with armies, in Luke 21:20. Compare Mark 13:14 & Mat 24:15)

In keeping with the universality of Lukeâ€™s gospel he gives special emphasis (sometimes absent in the other Gospels) in relating events in Jesusâ€™ ministry to events in secular history:
Luk 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Luk 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luk 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,
Luk 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

He highlights Jesus as being a â€œlight to the Gentilesâ€•:
Luk 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

In 3:6 He quotes Isaiah â€œall flesh shall see the salvation of Godâ€• :
Luk 3:6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Lukeâ€™s genealogy of Jesus goes back, not just to Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, but to Adam, father of the whole human race, and ultimately to God Himself! (Luke 3:23-38)

Compare also Lukeâ€™s interpretation of the commission with the commission given in Matthewâ€™s gospel:

Luk 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The commission in Matthew seems to be one that became universal as they shed their Jewish parochialism, whereas Lukeâ€™s is a Hellenistic universality which never knew Jewish parochialism.

Lukeâ€™s universality includes not only Gentiles, but also social outcasts, such as the immoral woman who anointed Jesusâ€™ feet (7:36-50), Zacchaeus the toll collector (19:1-10), the repentant criminal who died alongside Jesus (23:39-43), the prodigal son (15:11-32), parabolic), the repentant toll collector (18:9-14, parabolic), Samaritans, and poor people, James and John draw rebuke for wanting to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village (9:51-56). The Good Samaritan of a parable appears in favorable light (10:29-37). The one leper out of ten who returns to thank Jesus for healing is a Samaritan, designated â€œthis foreignerâ€• (17:11-19).

At Nazareth, Jesus preaches â€œgood news to the poorâ€• (4:16-22) Mary says that God â€œhas exalted the lowly, filled the hungry with good things, and sent away the rich emptyâ€• (1:52b-53). The beatitude on the poor lacks Matthewâ€™s qualification â€œin spiritâ€• (6:20; contrast Mat 5:3), as also the beatitude on the hungry lacks Matthewâ€™s qualification â€œfor righteousnessâ€• (6:21; contrast Mat 5:6). And Luke balances the beatitudes on the poor and hungry with woes against the rich and full (6:24-25).

He is the only evangelist to include Jesusâ€™ words â€œWhen you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighborsâ€¦. But when you give a feast, call poor people, crippled people, lame people, blind peopleâ€• (14:12-13).

It is Luke who calls the Pharisees â€œlovers of moneyâ€• (16:14) and gives us the parables of the rich fool, the dishonest manager who acted charitably (and therefore shrewdly), and the rich man and Lazarus (12:13-21; 16:1-13, 19-31).

Lukeâ€™s universality shows itself also in the special attention paid to women: Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna in the nativity story (chapters 1-2), the widow of Nain (7:11-17), the women who supported Jesus financially (8:1-3), the immoral woman (7:36-50), Mary and Martha (10:38-42), the poor widow (21:1-4), and the women who lamented Jesus (23:27-31), watched the crucifixion (23:49), and intended to embalm him but witnessed the empty tomb instead and reported the Resurrection (23:55-24:11).

Luke thus portrays Jesus as a cosmopolitan Savior with broad sympathies, one who mingles with all sort of people, socializes with both Pharisees and toll collectors (5:27-32, 7:36; 11:37; 14:1; 19:1-10), and concerns himself with victims of personal calamity (7:11-17; 8:40-56; 9:37-43). Where Matthew concentrates on Jesus and the kingdom, Luke concentrates on Jesus and people with resultant character sketches that are quite vivid.

Portrayal of Jesus as a man of prayer is a distinctive feature of Luke:
3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29, 10:21, 11:1, 22:39-46, 23:34, 46.

Only Luke records the two parables of Jesus about prayer: 11:5-13, 18:1-8. He informs us that Jesus had prayed especially for Peter: 22:31-32.

Luke emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit. He tells us that John the Baptist was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his motherâ€™s womb (1:15). The Holy Spirit comes on Mary in order that she may miraculously give birth to the Son of God (1:35). When Mary visits Elizabeth, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit to say, â€œBlessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your wombâ€• (1:41-42). When John the Baptist is born and then named, his father Zacharias (Zechariah) is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesies (1:67). The Holy Spirit rest on Simeon, informs him that before dying he will behold the Christ, and leads him to the temple to see the Christ child (2:25-27).

After receiving the Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is â€œfull of the Holy Spiritâ€• and â€œled by the Spiritâ€• in the wilderness (4:1). Following his temptation, he returns to Galilee â€œin the power of the Spiritâ€• (4:14). When the seventy-two disciples return from their successful mission, he rejoices â€œin the Holy Spiritâ€• (10:21). And before his ascension he promises that the Spirit will clothe the disciples â€œwith power from on highâ€• (24:49).

Consequently, the gospel of Luke (as later the book of Acts) throbs with the thrill of an irresistible movement of Godâ€™s Spirit in human history. Luke writes with supreme confidence in the inevitably successful advance of the gospel inaugurated by â€œJesus the Lordâ€• (a favorite designation of Jesus in Luke) and carried on by his disciples in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

The gospel of Luke is the most comprehensive of the synoptic. Indeed, it is the longest book of the New Testament.

In the first two chapters Luke begins with a prologue and stories concerning Jesusâ€™ birth and boyhood. The baptism, genealogy, and temptation of Jesus follow in 3:1-4:13, the Galilean ministry in 4:14-9:50, the last journey to Jerusalem in 9:51-19:27, and finally Passion Week, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the post-Resurrection ministry, and the Ascension in 19:28-24:53.

The last journey to Jerusalem makes the most distinctive contribution of Luke to our knowledge of Jesusâ€™ career. In that section he presents the ministry of Jesus in Perea, gives many of the most famous parables not elsewhere recorded (the Good Samaritan, the Rich Fool, the Prodigal Son, the rich man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, and others), and emphasizes the significance of Jerusalem as the goal of Jesusâ€™ ministry. (Later, in Acts, Jerusalem will turn into the place from which Christian witnesses go out to evangelize the world.)

The nativity story in Luke contains much information not found in Matthew, including several hymns and an account of John the Baptistâ€™s birth as well as Jesusâ€™ birth.

Finally, Luke gives material concerning Jesusâ€™ resurrection quite different from that in the other gospels and becomes the only evangelist to describe the ascension of Jesus.

Incidents and events exclusive to Luke
1. Zachariasâ€™ vision and Elisabethâ€™s conception, 1:5-25
2. Maryâ€™s salutation, 1:26-38
3. Maryâ€™s visit to Elisabeth, 1:39-56
4. John the Baptistâ€™s birth and Zachariasâ€™ hymn of praise, 1:57-80
5. The enrollment decree of Caesar Augustus, 2:1-3
6. Christâ€™s nativity in Bethlehem, 2:4-7
7. Details of the birth, 2:8-20
8. The circumcision of the Child Jesus, 2:21
9. The presentation of Christ in the temple, 2:22-24
10. The story of Simeon and Anna, 2:25-38
11. The silent years at Nazareth, 2:39-40
12. Jesus at the Passover and among the rabbis, 2:41-52
13. Dating of the beginning of Johnâ€™s public ministry, 3:1-2
14. Johnâ€™s success, 3:10-15
15. Human genealogy of Christ from Mary, 3:23â€”38
16. Christâ€™s rejection at Nazareth, 4:15-30
17. Details of the call of Peter, James and John, 5:1-10
18. Discourse of Christ on the plain, 6:17-49
19. Raising to life of the widowâ€™s son at Nain, 7:11-17
20. The woman who anointed Jesus in Simonâ€™s house 7:36-50
21. The women who ministered to Christ, 8:1-3
22. Episode of James and John, 9:51-56
23. The seventy sent out, 101-12
24. Their return and report, 10:17-24
25. Parable of the Good Samaritan, 10:25-37
26. Christ at the house of Mary and Martha, 10:38-42
27. Parable of the friend at midnight, 11:58
28. Christ entertained by a Pharisee, 11:37-54
29. Discourse to a great crowd, 12:1-53
30. Pilateâ€™s murder of the Galileans, 13:1-5
31. Parable of the barren fig tree 13:6-9
32. The woman afflicted 18 years, 13:10-17
33. Problem of the number to be saved, 13:22-30
34. Reply to the Pharisees concerning Herod Antipas, 13:31-33
35. The man with dropsy, 14:1-6

36. Parable of the ambitious guest, 14:7-14
37. Parable of the great banquet, 14:15-24
38. Difficulties of discipleship, 14:25-35
39. Parable of the lost sheep, 15:3-7
40. Parable of the lost coin, 15:8-10
41. Parable of the prodigal son, 15:11-32
42. Parable of the dishonest manager, 16:1-18
43. The rich man and the beggar Lazarus, 16:19-31
44. Instructions to the disciples, 171-10
45. Healing of the ten lepers, 17:12-19
46. Questions concerning Godâ€™s kingdom, 17:20-37
47. Parable of the importunate widow, 18:1-8
48. Parable of the Pharisee and publican, 18:9-14
49. Zacchaeusâ€™ conversion and call, 19:2-10
50. Parable of the pounds, 19:11-27
51. Christâ€™s weeping over Jerusalem, 19:41-44
52. Warning to Peter, 22:31-32
53. Warning to buy a sword, 22:35-38
54. Appearance of an angel in Gethsemane, 22:43
55. The bloody sweat, 22:44
56. Pilateâ€™s sending Christ to Herod, 23:6-12
57. Christâ€™s message to the women of Jerusalem, 23:27-31
58. The penitent thief, 23:39-43
59. The risen Christâ€™s appearance to the Emmaus disciples, 24:13-35
60. Details of His appearance to the eleven, 24:37-49
61. Christâ€™s ascension while blessing His disciples, 24:50-53

Notes from various sources including:
1). Explore the Book J. Sidlow Baxter
2). A Survey of the New Testament Chapter 9 pages 205f: Luke: A Promotion of Christianity in the Greco-Roman World at Large
3). Ungerâ€™s Bible Handbook pp 511
4). Me