

# CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 15, 2025 • WEEK 1



## LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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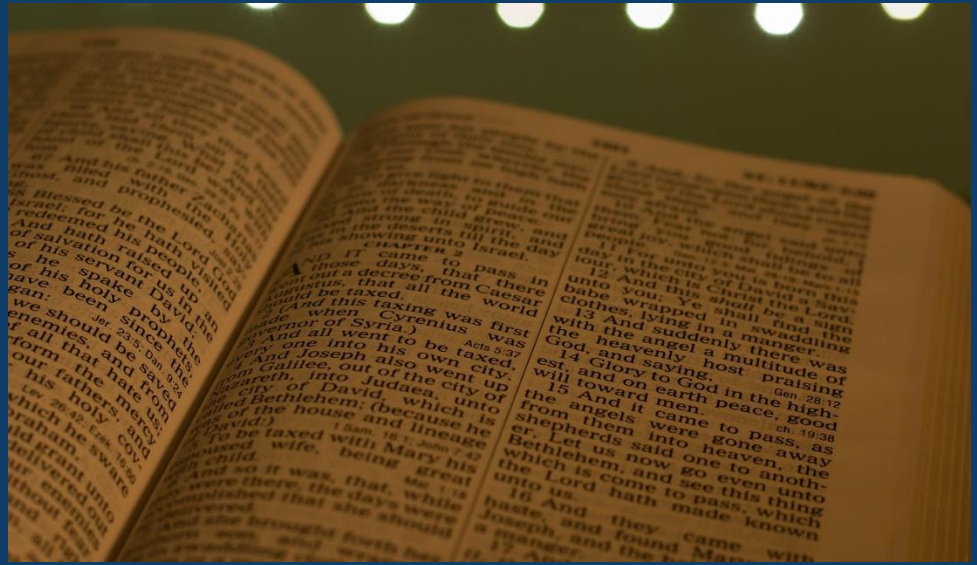
### Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



## Why Luke for Legislators?



WHEN MY PREDECESSOR, PERRY GAUTHIER, came to saving faith in Jesus, he said, “A vital truth had pierced my soul... there is a great remedy for every sickness in my highly successful soul—yes, a great Savior for my life. I was polished, poised, pedigreed, and dressed for success, but I needed more. I needed Christ the Lord to fill up my emptiness.” There is a hole in each of our lives that only Jesus can fill.

Today we begin our “Luke for Legislators” Bible study. Luke, a medical doctor, evangelist, and historian, researched and wrote a detailed account of Jesus’ life, centering on the very reasons Christ came to earth—to save sinners and to help them live lives of victory, joy, and hope. These are Christ’s (and my) desires for you as well—salvation from sin’s penalty, victory over sin’s power, joy in the present, and hope for eternity.

Pastor Arin Hess,  
Chaplain, Capitol Studies



## BACKGROUND

**Author:** The same author wrote Luke and Acts. Both books are written (dedicated) to Theophilus, and Acts 1:1 indicates the author wrote a previous “account” of the life of Jesus. Early church tradition unanimously attributes the third Gospel to Luke. From the use of “we” in many portions of the book of Acts, the author is a close companion of the Apostle Paul. Luke is the only one of Paul’s companions who fits the profile of this author. Luke shares very little about himself personally in his writings. But Eusebius, Jerome, and other early church leaders and historians identify him as being a native of Antioch. This may be the reason much of Acts focuses on Antioch.

Tradition says that Luke was a Gentile, which seems to be confirmed by Paul. In Colossians 4, Luke is with Paul (vs. 14), but Paul does not include him as part of “the circumcision” (vs. 11). This makes Luke the only Gentile to write a book of the Bible. Paul also refers to Luke as a physician (Col. 4:14), which likely explains why Luke spends significant time on Jesus’ healing ministry.

**Date:** Luke and Acts combine to give the history of Christianity from the time of Jesus’ birth up to the imprisonment of Paul (Acts 28:30-31). When Acts ends, Paul is in Rome, so Luke probably wrote both books while with Paul during his incarceration and house arrest: AD 60-62.

**Audience:** The name Theophilus means “lover of God.” This may be the actual name of a person, but it is also possible that it is a pseudonym to hide the true identity. The adjectives preceding Theophilus, “most excellent,” make this address more formal, perhaps indicating that this person was someone of renown, maybe a Roman dignitary or someone who had turned to Christ from “Caesar’s household.”

But God obviously chose Luke to reach a bigger audience than just “Theophilus.” Luke appears to target Gentiles. He prefers Greek terminology (example: “Calvary” instead of “Golgotha,” vs. 23:33). He does not quote the Old Testament much. When he does, he uses the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint, abbr. LXX). Greeks highly esteemed education. Luke’s writings show evidence of scholarly research and attention to accurate detail.

Luke, more than any of the other Gospel writers, also highlights the universal scope of the Gospel invitation. He repeatedly conveys Jesus’ compassion for those the Jewish people would have been considered outcast or unworthy, like foreigners (2:29-32), Samaritans (17:14-16), women (8:1-3), children (18:15-16), tax collectors (3:12), or sinners in general (15:1).<sup>1</sup>

### I. LUKE’S REASON FOR WRITING: EXACT TRUTH

*Luke 1:1-4 (NASB<sup>2</sup>)*

*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the*



*word, <sup>3</sup>it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*

Luke desired to put together an orderly account of the life of Jesus Christ so that believers may “know the exact truth.” His Greek audience valued the perfect human, so Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man who came as the perfect human to save all people. He also portrays Jesus as the Great Physician whose heart of compassion and hands of healing reach to all people regardless of age, background, position, gender, or sin. **“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10).

## II. LUKE’S RESOURCES: JESUS’ LIFE WAS HEAVILY DOCUMENTED

*Luke 1:1 (PGT<sup>3</sup>)*

*Since truly indeed many men have put their hands to the task to arrange in order a declarative report about the things that are in the state of having come to full accomplishment among us,*

The Biblical Greek words for “arrange” and “declarative report” are medical terms that Dr. Luke likely used in his practice. Arrange (*tasso*) is the base of our word *taxidermist* (one who arranges skin). Declarative reports were given by those who wrote authoritative, well-witnessed medical treatises in the ancient world. Hippocrates (the father of modern medicine and author of the Hippocratic Oath) used this word 73 times<sup>4</sup> in his writings. Jesus’ life and teaching were not written in a corner as the non-historical fabled invention of some obscure sect. Biblical writers before Luke documented the life of Christ so fully that it definitively ended any ancient opposition. Even the enemies of Christianity did not dare deny the widely broadcast written accounts of Jesus’ life.

## III. LUKE’S RESEARCH: ORIGINAL EYEWITNESSES

*Luke 1:2 (PGT)*

*Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,*

Luke got his “information” about the life and teachings of the risen Lord Jesus Christ from original eyewitnesses—the apostles and many other character witnesses. It would be logical that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, was interviewed by Luke and gave detailed accounts of the birth and boyhood of her Son. The Apostle Paul reported hundreds of historically credible witnesses of the bodily resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:3-8). As a companion of Paul, Luke would have known many of these. Luke’s research was orchestrated by divine Providence, and in his writing, Luke is moved by the Spirit of God. “The process of inspiration never bypasses or overrides the personalities, vocabularies, and styles of the human authors of Scripture. The unique traits of the human authors are always indelibly stamped on all the books of Scripture.”<sup>5</sup>





#### IV. LUKE'S RECIPIENT: A LEADER

*Luke 1:3 (PGT)*

*It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus.*

Luke expanded on the work of his predecessors through extremely detailed research. His two-volume work (Luke and Acts) comprises over one fourth of the New Testament. Like a skilled historian, Luke wrote for the sake of one who was likely a wealthy, powerful leader. The title, “Most Excellent Theophilus,” would be like saying, “The Most Honorable Theophilus” or perhaps “Governor Theophilus” today. Most people like this do not struggle with a lack of money but with a lack of humility and a lack of active Biblical faith. Their wrong priorities are hurting themselves and others. Their spiritual growth is nonexistent or stunted, at best. Theophilus was in a position of leadership of some sort, and perhaps due to the pressures, duties, debates, and conflicting worldviews within the realm of Roman governmental work, his faith was wavering. Do pressures, duties, and conflicting worldviews ever cause you to question or doubt what God is doing? Luke labored so as to help Theophilus in his faith journey. With the gentlemanly respect of a personal physician, Dr. Luke prescribes health and healing for Theophilus.

#### V. LUKE'S REMEDY: A PRESCRIPTION FOR SPIRITUAL INSTABILITY

*Luke 1:4 (PGT)*

*So that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*

In all probability, Theophilus had been orally instructed in the Christian faith in its formative years between AD 33 and AD 60. He was not an eyewitness, and the original eyewitnesses were dying. The word “exact” is a compound noun meaning “not wobbling,” “not tripping,” or “not faltering.” Perhaps Theophilus was wavering, easily tempted, and/or subject to doubts in his faith. That is the best that can happen if leaders, as disciples of Christ, do not discipline themselves to study the Bible, the perfect and inspired Word of God. Theophilus needed to move from the shaky ground of what he thought he knew and what he thought he heard to higher ground—the sure bedrock of the historically verified, Holy Spirit-inspired, written Word of God. Luke’s desire was to give this political leader a rock-solid foundation for his faith.

**CHRISTIAN FAITH RESTS ON THE IMPREGNABLE, HISTORIC,  
& FACTUAL FOUNDATION OF GOD’S WORD.**

Even so, Nebraska leaders must be anchored in their faith if they are to move this great state forward. Moral anchors stabilize the best governments. As President John Adams insisted on October 11, 1798—“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”<sup>6</sup>



Luke wants this government leader, for whom he was willing to work so hard, to intensely study this most wonderful Gospel we now call Luke. The Holy Spirit was using Luke to provide for people even today a historically accurate record of the life of Christ. We can rely on that same true, unshakeable foundation. It is right for Christians to study the Word of God for the answers to all matters of life and doctrine. As the Christians in Berea, we should receive “the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). Who better knows how our life is best designed to work than the One who made that life?

Is the Word of God a priority in your daily life? We must prioritize if it is to happen. Even the Speaker of the House, Congressman Johnson, instructs his schedulers to block out time for Bible study and prayer-fellowship every single week. Prioritize. Put God first, and everything else will fall into place.

## CONCLUSION: JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

The Lord has a special place in His heart for political leaders. After all, according to Revelation 19:16, He is the “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Sicknesses of the soul plague leaders, just like everyone else, but the Lord God alone, as the Great Physician of souls, brings healing and health. Regular Bible study is just what the doctor ordered. What Dr. Luke and I both know is that the Lord Jesus is truly our greatest need.

In the Capitol for the Lord and for Nebraska’s Leaders,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Arin Hess". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chaplain Arin Hess

## FOOTNOTES

1. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, WORD Publishing, 1997, pg. 1504-1505.
2. This Scripture quotation is taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995.
3. The Scripture quotations labeled “PGT” were translated by Perry Gauthier.
4. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 1, Macdonald Publishing Company, pg. 133.
5. *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1505.
6. John Adams, “Letter to the Officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts,” October 11, 1798, in *Revolutionary Services and Civil Life of General William Hull*, 1848, pg. 266.

Some of this material was adapted from a previous study by Perry Gauthier in 2016.



