

Introduction to KYB Study: Luke (Part 3) - Robyn Hair

Hello from tropical North Queensland, where today it is 32 degrees with 88% humidity. I am so honoured to be sharing with you this introduction to the next exciting study on the book of Luke. My name is Robyn Hair, and I have loved every minute of my over 30 years engaging with, and enjoying the fruit, of many CWCI ministries—particularly the KYB study of God’s Word.

I have recently celebrated 37 years of marriage to an exceptional man and dear heart friend, Murray. Together we have raised three young men who consistently bring us joy, even now in their thirties. We are also learning very quickly the immensely important role of grandparents. Our four-year-old grandson and eighteen-month-old granddaughter call us Lolli and Pop, (I’ll leave that with you to work out!) and they bring us great joy and enormous delight. After a recent two-week holiday with Odin and Eliana, I now fully understand the value of staying fit and healthy just to keep up with them. Although our family is spread out across our nation between Townsville, Bundaberg, and Perth, we frequently rejoice in the gift of family, and I never thought I would appreciate FaceTime as much as I do now that I am in my sixties.

It is so lovely and honest an honour to be with you as together we begin this journey through the final chapters of the Gospel of Luke. Whether this is your very first time opening Luke, whether you have completed Parts 1 and 2 of the Luke KYB study, or whether you have read the Gospel of Luke many times before, my hope is that this introduction will bring you fresh understanding, eager hearts, and growing confidence in who Jesus is.

Let us begin with prayer. *Lord God, we thank you, we thank you for today and we thank you for your Word. We are grateful for your grace and mercy. Today we ask that your Holy Spirit will create within us a deep desire to seek truth from your Word, as we study the Gospel of Luke. May my words today be yours, Lord. Give us understanding and hearts that say “yes” to you every day. Amen.*

So let me begin with a question. Have you ever found yourself wondering how you can know that the message found in the Gospels is really true—not just meaningful or comforting, but true? This question is not new. It was being asked right from the earliest days of the Christian faith, and it is exactly why Luke wrote this gospel. Luke tells us this himself in Luke 1:1–4, where he explains that he carefully investigated everything from the beginning and wrote an orderly account so that we may know the certainty of the things we have been taught. He says – *many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first, were eye witnesses and servants of the Word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

This introduction is not about telling the whole story of Luke. That is what the weeks ahead are for. Instead, I have four aims to set the scene: (1) to understand who Luke was, (2) why he wrote such a message, (3) how his message works, and (4) why it matters so deeply—not just then, but now. My hope is, that by the end you’ll be thinking I can’t wait to begin.

Just for a quick refresher or for those who are joining us for Part 3, some context of the entire book is important.

The KYB study of Luke has been designed as a three-part journey allowing us to walk carefully and deeply through this gospel rather than rushing past its riches. If you are joining Luke for the first time, you are so very welcome; and if you’ve travelled through Parts 1 & 2 already, this third study will feel like a powerful culmination of what you’ve been exploring.

Let me briefly sketch the journey so far.

Luke Part 1 focused on Jesus' miraculous birth and the early stages of his ministry and teaching. We journeyed with a small group of men, Jesus' disciples, who are gradually coming to understand who Jesus really is: the promised Messiah, the one God had chosen to rescue his people. We hear this clearly when Peter declares in Luke 9:20, "You are God's Messiah". God Himself repeatedly confirmed this truth in miraculous ways, through angelic announcements, to fulfilled prophecy, and divine affirmation. Luke shows us that Jesus' arrival was no accident. God was acting in history. Our challenge was to listen to him.

Part 2 followed Jesus as he travelled through Galilee and Judea. Along the way, Jesus taught extensively about God's kingdom—what it is like, who belongs to it, and what life looks like for those who are part of it. This study also carried a growing sense of direction. Jesus moved steadily toward Jerusalem and toward the cross. As he goes, he repeatedly warns his disciples about what lies ahead - suffering, rejection, death and resurrection. In Luke 9:22, Jesus says that *the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected, killed and on the third day, be raised*. We were encouraged to learn from the Teacher.

So what can we expect in this third study? Part 3 brings us to Jesus' final earthly teaching. Opposition from Jewish leaders intensifies, and their attempts to trap Jesus become more frequent and more aggressive. Most importantly we reach the climax of Jesus' earthly life, his death and resurrection. Everything Luke has been building toward comes into sharp focus. Jesus had foretold these events in Luke 18:31–33, where we read - *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again*. Jesus is who he claimed to be.

If Parts 1 and 2 asked us to listen to Jesus and learn from Jesus, Part 3 presses us to consider a deeper question: Will we trust him? This is not simply a study of what happened on the go. This study is an invitation to place our confidence, hope, and future in the crucified and risen Christ.

To understand why Luke tells this story the way he does, we need to begin with the historical context of his gospel. A message we can trust. Luke begins his gospel in a way that is quite different from the others. He doesn't open with poetry like John, or genealogy like Matthew. Instead he sounds almost like a modern historian. He tells us that many accounts about Jesus were already circulating, people were talking, stories were being told, memories were being shared; but Luke wanted believers to have confidence, certainty about what they had been told. So, he did the work. He investigated carefully, spoke to eyewitnesses, organised the material deliberately, and he wrote an orderly account so people would know the truth about Jesus. Again this echoes Luke's own words in Luke 1:3-4 – *since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you*.

This matters, it matters deeply because Luke is not writing legend or folklore. He is recording history. Luke himself was a doctor, someone trained to observe carefully, to listen closely and pay attention to detail. He also travelled with the apostle Paul, sharing the work of spreading the good news and strengthening the early church. Luke knew the Greco Roman world well. He was fluent in Greek language and culture and also knew the Hebrew Scriptures deeply. That combination made him uniquely placed to write a message that spoke clearly to both Jews and Gentiles. Bible scholars debate whether Luke himself was Jewish or Gentile. What is clear is that he writes for a wide audience, people from many backgrounds, cultures, and many levels of understanding. Remarkably, those same scholars have determined that a large part, almost one-third of Luke's gospel, contains

material found nowhere else in Scripture. These are detailed stories and encounters preserved because Luke, guided by the Holy Spirit, believed they mattered.

Luke was writing into a world where Israel was under Roman occupation and God's people were waiting, longing for rescue. Many were hoping for a political Messiah, someone who would overthrow Rome and restore national power. Religious leaders were deeply invested in preserving their authority and influence. Into that world, Luke presents Jesus. Not a myth, not an idea but a real person in real places at a real time in history. Luke wants his readers, and that includes us, to understand that faith in Jesus is not blind faith. It is trust grounded in truth. Understanding how Luke writes, helps us read his Gospel well.

As an English teacher, I value a gripping and well written story, one that is written with clarity, challenges my heart and mind and can be transformational. Luke is writing a narrative, a carefully structured account of Jesus' life, his teaching, his death and resurrection. But he is not simply reporting events, he is shaping the story so that we see who Jesus truly is. Luke begins with promise and anticipation, angels announcing births, ancient prophecies being fulfilled, ordinary people caught up in God's extraordinary plan. From there, Luke takes us through Jesus' ministry; his teaching, his miracles, his compassion and the growing tension between Jesus and the religious leaders. A significant portion of Luke's gospel focuses on Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem. Luke wants us to feel the weight of that journey, the inevitability of the cross drawing closer. Then, at the end, Luke slows the story down, he gives us detailed eyewitness accounts of Jesus' suffering, his death, resurrection, and the ascension. He wants us to sit with these moments, to understand that everything has been moving toward this point.

Luke is intentional about what he includes and what he leaves out. He highlights four key concepts – (1) Jesus' interactions with women, (2) his care for the poor and outcast, (3) his welcome of Gentiles, and (4) his concern for those on the margins. We see this in stories like Mary & Martha in Luke 10: 38-42. We see it in the healing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19 and also in the repentant criminal welcomed by Jesus in Luke 23:39-43. As we read Luke, we are invited to pay attention to not only what Jesus does, but how people respond to Him—sometimes with faith, sometimes with fear, confusion, or opposition, all of it is there. Luke is not rushing us, he wants us to watch, listen, and reflect.

Every book in the Bible plays a role in God's unfolding story. Luke is no exception. So why Luke? At the heart of Luke's gospel is one central question: Who is Jesus? Luke answers that question from beginning to end in five clear, logical ways.

First, Luke emphasises the historical reality of the Man. He opens the Gospel with eyewitness testimony of Jesus' birth and closes it with eyewitness testimony about Jesus' resurrection. Luke wants believers to be sure, sure that Jesus lived, sure that he died, and sure that he rose again. Christianity stands or falls on these events and Luke treats them with profound seriousness.

Second Luke is deeply concerned with God's promises being fulfilled. Throughout the Gospel, Luke shows how God keeps his word; promises made centuries earlier find their fulfilment in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. God is faithful, he does what he says he will do.

Third Luke reveals Jesus' identity as the Son of the Most High, words spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:32. He's identified as the promised Messiah, and he's identified as the rightful King. Luke records miracles, healings and supernatural events – not simply to amaze us but to show us who Jesus really is. At the end of the Gospel, angels are once again involved, this time announcing that Jesus has risen. The story that began with divine announcement ends with divine confirmation. At the resurrection, the angels declare *He is not here, He has risen* in Luke 24:6.

Fourth Luke proclaims good news for all people, again and again Luke shows us Jesus reaching out to others overlooked. Reaching out to women, Gentiles, children, the poor, the sick, the spiritually lost. Luke makes it clear God's Kingdom is open to all who will receive it. This echoes the angels' words at Jesus' birth in Luke 2:10 *I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.*

Finally, Luke teaches us about God's kingdom. Jesus speaks often about the kingdom, who enters it, what it costs and how different it is from human kingdoms. In Luke we see a King who rides into Jerusalem humbly, as recorded in Luke 19:35-38. We see a King who is mocked as King and we see a King who dies a criminal's death. Yet the resurrection confirms the truth, God's kingdom will come fully and finally when Jesus returns in glory and power. Luke shows us that Jesus is the King, just not the kind of King people expected.

This Gospel of Luke plays a vital role in the bigger story of the Bible. Luke does not stand alone – it builds on the promises of the Old Testament and leads directly into the book of Acts, also written by Luke, where we see the message of Jesus spreading to the ends of the earth. Luke shows us a crucial moment in salvation history - God entering the world in human form, God fulfilling his promises, and God securing salvation through the cross and resurrection. Luke reminds us that God's plan has always been bigger than one nation, one culture, or one generation and that includes us.

So why does this part of the bigger story matter for me, for you? Luke wrote so that believers could be certain—certain that Jesus is who he claimed to be, certain that God keeps his promises, and certain that faith in Christ is well founded. As you work through this study, Luke will challenge you. He will ask you to consider how you respond when Jesus confronts your values, what does it mean to trust a King who rules through sacrifice, and am I willing to receive God's kingdom like a child.

Jesus' own words in Luke 18: 16,17 give us clear direction. He said *let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, will never enter it.* Confronting words.

Luke will also comfort you. He reminds us that God is faithful, Jesus knows suffering and that resurrection hope is real. This gospel invites us not just to learn about Jesus but to trust him. This gospel is about certainty: certain truth, certain hope, and certain salvation. Luke wants us to know that the story about Jesus is not just wishful thinking, but God's action in history for real people in the real world. As you begin this study, I encourage you to read attentively, think deeply, and come expectant. Expect Jesus to surprise you, expect him to challenge you, and expect him to meet you.

Let's begin this journey together, confident that the God who acted then is still at work now. As we begin this journey, I want to pray for you and trust that you will enter a time of expected hearts to hear what Jesus has to teach you.

Faithful God, thank you that you keep your promises. As we open the Gospel of Luke, give us open hearts, clear understanding, and deeper trust in Jesus. Amen.

Thank you, have a wonderful time exploring what Luke has to teach you. God bless you all.