

A couple of weeks ago, we introduced an example of faith, the prophet Elijah. Last week, we came to that idea and added another character: Hannah. This, of course, incited jealousy among the ranks by my other children. Well, maybe not. However, I like to ride ideas out over the course of a few weeks, so I wanted to 1) look at a New Testament example of Faith and 2) I've got other kids, so let's take a look at Luke today!

He is such an interesting man! As our title suggests: he is gentile faith in action. He wasn't born and raised in Judaism or under the law of Moses. He became a Christian years after the church began, out from a world of gentile ungodliness, and has left a legacy of very practical faith we all can enjoy!

Interestingly, his name, his proper name, only occurs 3 times in the entire New Testament! So a cursory examination of his life in Scripture begins right there. Let's look at those and for the first half of the lesson just learn about the man. In the latter portion we'll look at the usefulness of the information.

Colossians 4:14 – Here's what we know from this text: (*note: v10,11 – not of circumcision*)

1. Luke was an educated man. A doctor. Most commentators suggest he was trained as a young man in Antioch, where he was converted to Christ. While maybe not requiring 10 years of college like today, his intelligence and studiousness would be evident in his profession. *Note – very interesting that a man so committed to study took time away just to preach Jesus!*
2. The Apostle Paul, it is believed, found him in Antioch around 42 A.D. – Luke became a worker, a preacher, a missionary with Paul for a length of at least 20 years (Colossians written in 62 AD).
3. So again, well-educated and smart, with a solid occupation, from the Gentile world, but used a large chunk of his life preaching the Gospel with a Jewish Apostles through much peril.

Philemon 24 – Not much added information here

1. This letter was written about the same time as Colossians, while Paul is in a Roman prison, so the circumstances here are identical to Colossians.
2. He is noted as “a fellow worker” with Paul at the time. We don't know that he was imprisoned with Paul in Rome, but he was there, working, helping, laboring on far from home.
3. Side note – in both passages Mark is listed as well. Mark was a Jew, but not an apostle, like Matthew and John. Some suggest the two were close and maybe wrote their gospels around the same time (late 60's) and perhaps worked together on it. Continuity!

II Timothy 4:6-8,11 – Five years further down the road – 66-68 A.D.

1. Paul is now imprisoned in Rome a second time, and this is the end of his life. This is actually, other than potentially Revelation, the end of all NT narrative in terms of the timeline.
2. And, Luke is there. Luke is with him again. He's been by his side to Rome and back, twice.
3. **II Tim. 1:15-16** – Some will stand with you when its hardest, but many will not.
4. **II Tim. 4:9-11** – Even the great Demas, who was mentioned in both previous passages right along side Luke – gave up and deferred to the draw of the present world!
5. So, Luke was there until the end – faithful unto Paul's death, and presumably his own. What a great friend, a devoted companion in the faith, for over 25 years!

Everything else we can learn about this man will be found in the two letters he authored: Luke and Acts. Note: his name is not mentioned as author or anywhere in these letters. Though it is commonly accepted he is the author. Here is a brief list of early writers who directly attest to his authorship:

1. Justin Martyr (c.100) – quotes Luke's gospel often
2. Ireneaus (115-190) – attributes gospel to Luke
3. Tertullian (c.150) – speaks of Luke as author of gospel
4. Celsus (pagan – 178) – attacks Luke's gospel referring to him as author
5. Eusebius (260-340) – attributes both gospel and Acts to Luke

In addition, chronological and internal evidence lead us to accepting Luke as well.

Let's look at some opening information in the Gospel of Luke and some travel information in the book of Acts and see how that helps us round out our perspective on the faith of Luke.

Luke 1:1-4 – Spiritual study, learning and sharing was an “undertaking” for Luke. He wanted to compile as much information concerning the workings of God. He wanted to get information from eye witnesses, investigating everything fairly and carefully, so that what he presented could orderly, and most importantly, THE EXACT TRUTH. That's an awesome element of conviction and work by Luke!

Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1 - Both letters written to Theophilus, likely a Gentile from Antioch who held some high social position – “most excellent.” Several commentators suggest that he was not a Christian in the late 60’s, when Luke wrote him the letter, so Luke refers to him in his name of social honor. Though in Acts we have no reference to him after these introductions. (But note the effort Luke made to teach him!)

In the book of Acts, he uses personal pronouns on three occasions during Paul’s journeys. Let’s look at two:

Acts 16:9-18 – By association with Paul, here are a couple of things about Luke (2nd Journey)

1. **(v9-10)** – He believed Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit and was willing to follow him, without reservation, wherever the Spirit directed them all to go. *If Luke, a smart, well studied, Gentile, would follow the will and instructions of Paul, as guided by God, shouldn’t we?*
2. **(v13)** – Luke, along with Paul, in any city, with any audience, was willing to share the story of Jesus. In this case an entire household was saved because they spoke to Lydia. Inspirational.

Acts 27:1-28:16 – After Paul’s journeys he is being sent to Rome to stand trial.

1. **(27:1-3)** – Paul is under arrest. Luke likely is not. But he is by his side. Triumph or Trial.
2. **(28:31)** – Two years there, Paul writes Colossians and Philemon. Full circle. Luke is there.
3. Several thousand miles Paul traveled in the 2nd, 3rd and Roman journey. Guess who was there?

We’ve looked at about a half dozen passages, from Luke’s gospel to Acts to Paul’s letters. In this study, there are about a half dozen practical and very useful applications for each of us as we study Luke.

I’ve ordered them in sets of 3. The first three are about how to build the strongest possible relationship with God! Luke’s faith was so, so strong. And this was not by accident.

1. Occupation never overshadowed Obligation

- a. He was trained and learned and skilled. He could have stayed in Antioch with his practice.
- b. He was noted as a “beloved physician” late in his life, so he likely still worked his secular job.
- c. **James 4:13-18** – Be great engineers, educators, students, builders, thinkers. Be successful. Earn a good living. But know this – time is short and the works of God **MUST** get done above all else.
- d. **Matthew 6:33** – Seeking His will first, even at the expense of great occupational or financial goals. He was the beloved physician, but he still **IS** the beloved servant of God.

2. Luke was identified as a “Fellow Servant”

- a. **Ephesians 4:11-16** – We are not just “church goers” or “fellow Christians.” We are a team. We work together. We are fellow servants, fellow workers. And each of us should be known as such, described as such. Hey, “you ever met” “Oh yes, he is a fellow servant in kingdom work.”
- b. Internalize the description in this Ephesians passage – am I like Luke, a CONTRIBUTOR to these?

3. Diligent and Relentless Study Abounded

- a. No doubt Luke was educated in society and medicine. He was studious. But those skills, sharpened in the secular world, found their true purpose in his Spiritual work!
- b. **Luke 1:1-4** – When is the last time we took our reasoning skills, our ability to accumulate data, and pressed it into action with regard to understanding God, the Bible, the will of the Lord?
- c. **II Timothy 2:15,22** – One thing allows the other. In business success and in spiritual success.

4. Evangelism drove him to produce Great Fruit

- a. **Find your Theophilus.** Or the women Luke met in Philippi. Find the souls around you that need the Truth, that are missing it. And, teach them. Do the work. Understand the issue. Build the argument. Luke wrote a letter to save a lost man. Then another to encourage that brother.
- b. **II Tim. 2:2** – Learn, grow, understand... why? To Teach. To produce fruit in spreading the Gospel.

5. Service continued and increased over Decades

- a. It was 63 A.D., after he’d been a Christian for 25 years, and was likely in the later stages of his life, that he did his best work: authored Luke and Acts. Never stop learning and producing!!!
- b. We overlook the older generation and look to the younger to do the research, organization, presentation, evangelism, hospitality and the like. WHY? Be faithful unto death.
- c. **II Timothy 4:6-8** – These are the words of the dying, not the retiring!

6. Brotherhood was strongest in Heaviest Trials

- a. Paul was on his way to jail. Luke was there. Paul was 2 years far away in prison. Luke was there.
- b. **Phil. 2:1-4** – When Paul wrote this, in his quarters in Rome, Luke may have been in the room!
- c. **Be in the room.** When brethren are hurting, going through things, in times of trouble – be in the room. But a help. Know them, go with them, support them. We are a family. A family of God.