



Luke the Evangelist, painted by James Tissot (c. 1886–94)

*“The historical accuracy of the Luke-Acts two-volume work is frequently challenged. Scholars dispute such issues as the dating of the reign of Quirinius (Luke 1:5; 2:2) and references to Palestinian geography (**Luke 4:44; 17:11**), and raise additional historical questions regarding the numerous speeches in Acts (e.g., Acts 2:14-36), and the harmonious portrayal of the early church (Acts 4:32-35). The most critical historical objection to Acts concerns the details of Paul’s ministry. Although certain passages suggest that Luke was a traveling companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 27:1-28:6), some scholars deem this tradition untenable on the basis of perceived difficulties in harmonizing the life and perspective of Paul as presented in Acts with details about his life found in his letters.*

*Many of these perceived difficulties are lessened when we recall the purpose of Luke’s accounts. In composing his volumes, Luke did not intend to record a comprehensive history, but, rather, to provide an accurate historical account to meet the needs of people to develop faith (Luke 1:4). Luke acknowledged his use of sources (**Luke 1:2**), which he investigated thoroughly in order to compose an orderly account (**Luke 1:3**). Where it is possible to verify Luke’s use of sources, we find that the Gospel writer followed them meticulously. Furthermore, Luke was precise concerning the titles of officials and municipalities in various towns*

*(Acts 13:12; 17:6; 18:12; 19:31,35), details that reveal the writer's commitment to accuracy.*—Based on the New International Version Archaeological Study Bible article “The Historical Value of Luke-Acts”

The blog site “The Christian Researcher” provides the following details:

**The first four verses of Luke, and the first three verses of Acts link the two books together as a set.**

*Both books are addressed to the same reader/audience (Luke 1:3 & Acts 1:1)*

*Both books center around the concept of fulfillment.*

- *Luke 1:1 speaks of things “fulfilled among us”*
- *Acts 1:3 speaks of “things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (the fulfillment of God’s kingdom).*

*Acts 1:1 references the “former account”*

- *This implies a latter account that coincides with the former.*

*Acts 1:1 states that the former account concerned the things Jesus “began to both do and teach”*

*This implies that the latter account (Acts) is a continuation of the things Jesus both did and taught through His disciples.*

**“Therefore, having carefully investigated everything from the beginning”—Luke 1:3a**

*“This phrase indicates a thorough and meticulous approach to gathering information. Luke, the author, is known for his attention to detail and historical accuracy. The phrase suggests that Luke conducted a comprehensive investigation, likely involving interviews with eyewitnesses and examination of existing written accounts. This aligns with the historical context of the time, where oral tradition and eyewitness testimony were crucial for preserving events. The phrase “from the beginning” implies that Luke sought to understand the full scope of Jesus’ life and ministry, starting from the earliest events, possibly including the birth narratives and John the Baptist’s role.”—Bible Hub Study Bible*

**“it seemed good also to me”—Luke 1:3b**

*“This reflects Luke’s personal conviction and sense of responsibility in undertaking the task of writing the Gospel. The phrase suggests a divine prompting or guidance, as seen in other scriptural instances where individuals are moved to act according to God’s will. It indicates that Luke felt compelled to contribute his own account, adding to the existing body of work with his unique perspective and findings.”—Ibid.*

**“to write an orderly account”—Luke 1:3c**

*“Luke’s intention to write an “orderly account” highlights his desire for clarity and coherence.*

*This approach is consistent with his background as a physician, where precision and organization are valued. The orderly nature of the account suggests a chronological or thematic structure, aimed at providing a clear understanding of the events. This is significant in the context of the early church, where accurate teaching about Jesus' life and ministry was essential for doctrinal integrity and the spread of the Gospel.*—Ibid.

Luke's "two-volume work marks him as someone who was highly literate both in the Old Testament traditions according to the Greek versions and in Hellenistic Greek writings" (NAB Introduction to Luke).