

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke was born in Antioch. He was not of the Hebrew or Jewish race. His parents were probably Greek even though they lived in Antioch.

In this morning's epistle we heard Paul list some of the men who were with him and stated that they were of the circumcision, which means they were Jewish. He said these are the only ones that were with him who were Jewish. Then he refers to Luke as a beloved physician.

In his youth, he excelled in his studies of Greek philosophy, medicine and art.

There is a debate as to whether Luke knew Jesus while he was alive.

One custom has him going to Jerusalem to see Jesus after hearing about the miracles he was performing. It states that he immediately became a follower of Christ.

This tradition tells us that after coming to belief that Jesus was the Christ, St. Luke was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, and was sent out to preach. Which is why today's gospel is about the Seventy Apostles returning from their missionary journey proclaiming the good news, healing the sick, casting out demons and performing other miracles.

After the resurrection, Cleopas and another disciple saw the resurrected Lord on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). It is commonly believed that the other disciple was Luke.

Then after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Luke returned to Antioch and there became a fellow worker with the Apostle Paul and traveled to Rome with him, converting Jews and pagans to the Christian Faith.

It is also held by others that Luke was converted by St. Paul and began to work with him after his conversion.

During St. Paul's second missionary journey St. Paul left Luke in the Macedonian city of Philippi. He was to establish and organize the church there.

If you remember, St. Paul had instructed the Christians to take up collections to support the Christians in Jerusalem. St. Luke went to Corinth to collect the money

that had been collected and bring it back to St. Paul. They then went to Jerusalem to give it to those in need.

When Paul had been arrested and was being sent to Rome, St. Luke went with him. While in Rome, Luke, along with others, proclaimed Christ to those in the capital city.

It was here, at the request of the Christians, that he wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts in about the year 60.

Following the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul, St. Luke preached the Gospel throughout Italy, Dalmatia, Macedonia as well as other regions.

Tradition tells us, that St. Luke was also a painter.

He painted three icons of the Most-holy Theotokos. He also painted icons of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Therefore, St. Luke is considered to be the founder of Christian iconography.

In old age, he visited Libya and Upper Egypt. Then he returned to Greece, where he continued to preach and convert many with great zeal despite his old age.

Luke was eighty-four years old when the wicked idolaters decided to attack him. They tortured him and crucified him on an olive tree in the town of Thebes, in Boethia.

The miracle-working relics of this St. Luke were taken to Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Constantius, who was the son of Constantine and remained there until the sacking of Constantinople by the Venetians of the fourth Crusade. They were then taken to Rome.

The Gospel of Luke and the “Book of Acts” form two volumes of single work. Tradition and internal evidence leave no doubt that Luke is the author of this highly historical and polished account. The book of Acts also contains many “we” passages in which indicates Luke’s presence in the events being reported.

Based on the fact that Acts ends somewhat abruptly and without any information concerning the death of James of Jerusalem or the outcome of Paul’s trial, we may conclude that both Luke and Acts were composed between 60 and 66 A.D.

This morning's Epistle begins "Brethren, conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone."

In the verses previous to this one, Paul had written "be devoted to prayer, being alert in Thanksgiving." We **must** be people of prayer. Praying for one another, for our Bishops, for the clergy and for those who are ill.

We must be examples as to what it means to be Christians. If we don't, what hope is there for us. We are to conduct ourselves wisely towards others. Our speech must be gracious and pure. Others must be able to see that we are different than non-Christians.

I strongly encourage all of you to have a personal prayer rule. A personal prayer rule is a freely imposed discipline of prayers. In it we commit to saying specific prayers at set times.

We need to pray at a bare minimum both in the morning and in the evening. In the morning, get up, get dressed and stand in your prayer corner saying your morning prayers. In the evening, prior to getting into bed, say the evening prayers.

We must also pray to God throughout the day.

In our bookstore there are several copies of "The Ancient Faith Prayer Book". It has the traditional prayers of the church to be prayed, not only in the morning and evening, but also throughout the day. There are also many other prayer books put out by various Orthodox publishing houses.

We must be people of prayer. We must pray not only on Sundays, but also throughout the week.

How can we begin to live as Christians if we do not pray? Prayer is not just rattling off a list of needs to God as if He was Santa Claus. It is praying the words that have been handed down to us from our Lord, the Apostles and the Church.

Establishing a routine for prayer is good. Remember that when the apostles asked the Lord how to pray, He did not say, "Pray what is on your heart at the moment." He gave them the liturgical Prayer which we call the "Our Father."

And in the Book of Acts we read that the early Church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Many translators just say "in prayers" in Greek it is "in **the** prayers". That is the prayers taught to them by the Apostles.

We must do our best to attend church on Sundays and the Holy Days. I know that it is difficult to attend church these days with the CoVid-19 virus spreading everywhere. We should try to find it being broadcast on YouTube by one of the many Orthodox Churches including our own. We shouldn't just sit and watch it though; we must participate as best as possible.

As our Lord said to the Apostles; rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Through the prayers of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us.