

## Who is Jesus? Study 1

### Jesus: His Beginnings

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In this study we will see:

How Luke's Gospel fits into history.

That Jesus is "the Son of God."

What Jesus said He came to do.

### Background to the New Testament

The New Testament is made up of several short books and letters. Our English Bibles are translations of what the early Christians actually wrote. The experts tell us that we can be sure that the text on which these translations are based has very few mistakes in it. How can we be sure?

In the days of the first Christians, there were many writings about the life of Jesus. But some had special quality - they had been written by Jesus' followers or their close friends. These gospels and letters were carefully copied by hand. Over the years, archaeologists have found thousands of manuscripts of bits of the New Testament and even some complete copies. By comparing these, we can get very close to what the New Testament writers originally wrote. Some of these copies are dated less than 100 years after the original gospel or letter was written.

For an idea of how good this evidence is, compare the New Testament with other writings that are about as old as the New Testament. For example, Julius Caesar wrote a book called *The Gallic War* about 50 years before Christ was born. We obviously do not have the original copy. Yet, we do have nine or ten copies, and the earliest of these was made about 900 years after the original. This is a normal gap for ancient writings.

When we examine the historical evidence relating to the Bible, one learns that there are thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament books. Therefore, we have good reason to believe that we know almost exactly what Luke, Paul and the others wrote.

### About the Author

The author of this gospel, Luke, also wrote another book in the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles. He was the only New Testament writer who was not Jewish, and he was a doctor. Independent evidence confirms that he was a very careful and accurate historian.

### A. Luke's Gospel: fact or fiction?

READ: [Luke 1:1-4](#)

1. *Where did Luke get his information? (1:2)*
2. *How did he write it? (1:3)*
3. *Why do you think Luke wrote this introduction?*

### B. Where did Jesus come from?

Luke gives details of the unique origin of Jesus, and the following passage explains how Jesus' birth was foretold.

READ: [Luke 1:26-38](#)

1. *What would the future hold for Mary's child? (1:32,33)*
2. *How would Jesus be conceived? (1:35-37)*

3. *Jesus is said to be the Son of God. What do these verses say about Jesus' "double" origin?*

### **C. Jesus explains His purpose**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the south of Palestine. He grew up in a very ordinary town, named Nazareth, located in Galilee which was in the north of Palestine. Jesus was a carpenter, but at the age of 30, He became a religious teacher, moving from town to town.

In Luke 4:14-22, we read what happened when Jesus began teaching. He went to the synagogue, which was the local place of worship. Although He probably had no more religious education than the average Jewish man, people wanted to hear Him. He was asked to speak at the synagogue in Nazareth.

READ: [Luke 4:14-22](#)

1. *What kinds of people had Jesus come to help? (4:18)  
Who do you think this means?*
2. *What was He going to announce? (4:19)  
What does this mean?*
3. *What do you think the people in the synagogue understood when He said the words in verse 21?*

### **To think about**

Jesus came to help the "poor", the "captive", the "blind", and the "oppressed." Are there ways in which people today are poor, captive, blind or oppressed?