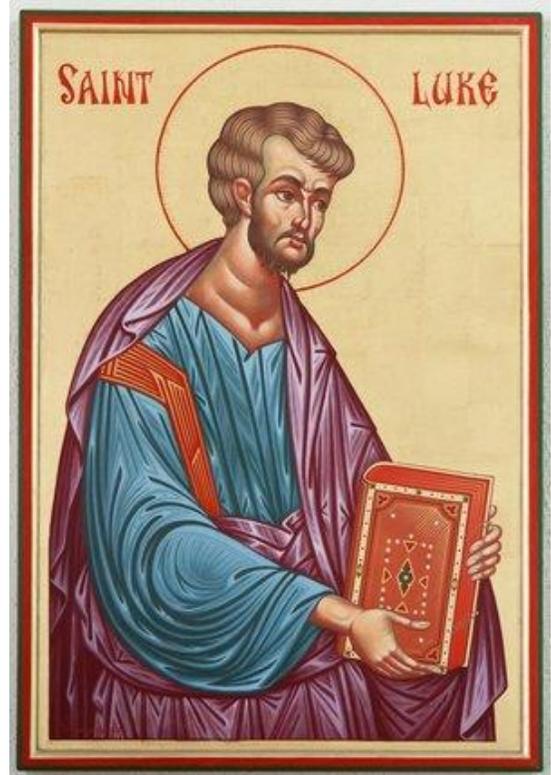


Week Six:

## Saint Luke the Evangelist

When we read through the New Testament, we may not realize that almost one-fourth of the text is the writing of Saint Luke. He is one of the four evangelists, or Gospel writers. He is also one of the seventy apostles who were sent out, in pairs, by Jesus to preach and teach. Saint Luke is not one of the original twelve apostles who accompanied the Lord in His ministry.

Saint Luke was born in Antioch and many scholars believe he was a Gentile, or possibly a Hellenistic Jew (a member of the group of Jews that combined Jewish traditional religion with Greek cultural elements.) In any case, he wrote and spoke in Greek and was clearly well-educated. Having been trained as a physician, he was a friend and companion of Saint Paul and went along on some of Paul's missionary travels.



We know this because some passages in the Book of Acts, the second volume of Luke's writing, are put in the first person plural; Luke writes of things that "we" did or places that "we" went to, meaning that he took part in those events.

Saint Luke's writings are rich and varied. Many of the well-known parables appear only in his Gospel. One story that only Luke offers is the encounter of Jesus with the ten lepers. He gives us the complete account of the Annunciation and of Jesus' birth and early years with Mary and Joseph. Later in the book, Luke describes Jesus standing before Herod Antipas and the friendship that develops between Herod and Pontius Pilate (23:6-12), an episode that doesn't appear in the other three Gospels.

The Book of Acts is a different kind of writing, and gives us thrilling accounts of the travels of Saint Paul and those with him. But in all his work, Luke wants to emphasize that the Good News is for everyone, Jew and Gentile alike.

Saint Luke was not only a writer but an iconographer, and from his hand we have the first icon of the Theotokos and Christ. Like his writing, his icon is an attempt to guide people to Christ, and to faith in Him as the Lord and Savior of the world.

**Read the story of the Ten Lepers in the Gospel of Luke 17: 11-19.** Why do you think the nine lepers didn't return to thank God? *(Answers and opinions may vary. But perhaps the story is about people who ask God for something, and then when they get it they are so relieved or happy that they forget all about thanking Him. Jesus doesn't want us to skip that step of giving thanks to God!)*

**Read Philippians 4: 8.** This verse doesn't mention thanks, but it encourages us to think in ways that will make us thankful to God. In the Encyclical from our Holy Synod of Bishops mentioned above, we read: "...let us remember the Lord's blessings far more than we contemplate tribulations. Even when we encounter very serious challenges, God gives us countless consolations, which we often take for granted!" How can these statements from Scripture and from the Encyclical help us to be thankful, as Jesus called the lepers to be? *(Again, answers and opinions may vary. But it is true that if we try to think about the world in a positive way, and to remember all that God has given to us, we will be able to thank Him sincerely, and will have a more joyful life.)*