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The Community of Luke: Clues from the Gospel and Acts

The community includes Jews and gentiles:

Large conversions of both Jews and gentiles are depicted in

Acts (2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 11:20–21; 13:43; 14:1; 17:4; 18:8).

The agreement in Acts 15:19–20 is intended to facilitate

community fellowship between Jews and gentiles.

The community is urban:

The word “city” (*polis*) is used eighty-two times (thirty-nine in

Luke); the word “village” (*kōmē*) is used only thirteen times

(twelve in Luke).

The community includes people who are rich and poor:

A principal concern is how the rich should relate to the poor

(Luke 1:53; 12:31–34; 14:12–14; 16:19–31; 19:1–10; 21:1–4;

Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35; 5:1–11; 9:36; 10:2, 4, 31).

The “rich” and the “poor” are mentioned more often than in any

other Gospel (Luke 6:20, 24; 7:22; 12:16–21; 14:21; 18:24–

27; 19:1–19).

The community is well organized:

Offices and position of community leadership can be discerned

(Luke 11:49; Acts 11:27–28; 13:1–3; 14:23; 15:32; 20:17; 21:10–11, 18).

The community faces trouble from without:

The Gospel speaks of persecution from Jews (Luke 6:22–23; 11:49–50; 21:12, 16).

The Gospel speaks of persecution from gentiles (Luke 21:12, 17).

The community faces trouble from within:

The Gospel speaks of people losing their faith and becoming apostate (Luke 8:13; 18:8).

The Gospel seeks to address the question of why the kingdom of God has not yet appeared (Luke 17:20–21; 19:11; cf. Acts 1:6–7).

At one time, most scholars believed that Luke wrote his books for a particular congregation in a specific geographical locale. The information given above was taken as descriptive of that “community” (wherever it was located). Today, most scholars think that Luke assumed that his works would be distributed throughout the Roman Empire. Thus the information given above is taken as more descriptive of a generic “community of readers”—the people whom Luke hopes to address through his Gospel and the book of Acts.