March brings us to the book of Luke, the final Synoptic Gospel (along with Matthew and Mark). As with the other Gospels, Luke gets its title from its author. Luke wasn’t one of Jesus’ first followers, but travelled with Paul and spent time learning from people who’d known Jesus during his earthly ministry (Colossians 4:14).

In the prologue to his Gospel Luke says how he has “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” and written “an orderly account” of all that Jesus has fulfilled. Although we can’t be certain, it is most likely that Luke wrote his Gospel during the early 60s A.D.
LUKE'S GOSPEL

The Gospel of Luke is really only the first part of a bigger story. In May we’ll reach the sequel, Acts. Luke wrote both books and he addressed them both to the same Theophilus. To understand them best we should see them as a continuation of the same story, as Luke did. Jesus’ work didn’t finish as his earthly ministry ended; he continues to work through his church.

At the start of his book Luke tells us why he’s writing; he wants Theophilus to “know the certainty of the things [he has] been taught” (Luke 1:4). Luke sets out a robust account of the life and work of Jesus, so that his readers are in no doubt about its truthfulness.

Throughout the Gospel we see God’s great plan for salvation unfolding. This is one of the major themes of the book; the hope of the world, “good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10). But at the same time Luke emphasises Jesus’ care for individuals, particularly those sidelined by his society; women, children, the poor.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

If you want to dig a bit deeper into the books we’re reading this year a Bible commentary can be a really helpful tool. In January I mentioned the New Bible Dictionary by IVP. This hefty tome will guide you through the whole Bible, but sometimes you need a bit more depth than a one-volume commentary can manage. “Right” you say, “I’m gonna buy a commentary on Luke.” But to the uninitiated, choosing a Bible commentary can be a confusing task. You’ll find NICOT, Pillar, BST, NIGTC, Word, BECNT, to name but a few; it’s like another language! Where to begin?

I’ve found the Tyndale series really helpful and accessible. They’re easy to navigate, as they work through the books of the Bible almost verse by verse at times. Each volume starts with plenty of background to help you understand the context of the book. Their offering on Luke is by Leon Morris and I’m sure it would prove to be a helpful guide through the Gospel.

-Miles Tradewell