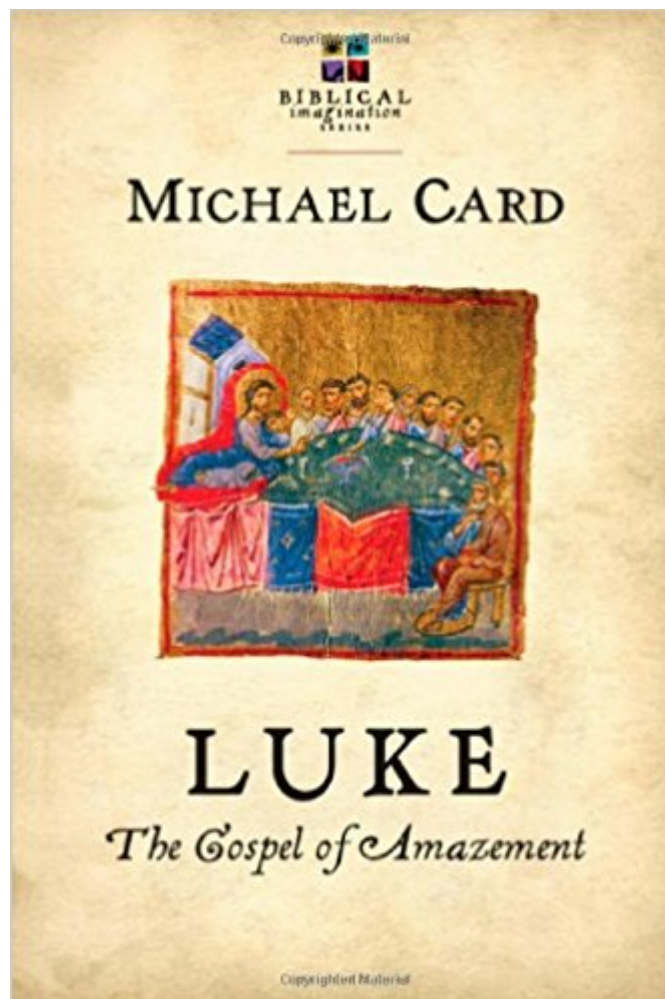




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# Luke: The Gospel Of Amazement (Biblical Imagination)



## Synopsis

"His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Him." Luke 2:33 "Everyone was amazed at all the things He was doing." Luke 9:43 "He went home, amazed at what had happened." Luke 24:12 From start to finish, the book of Luke is filled with amazement. Throughout the life and ministry of Jesus, those who met him were astonished by their encounter, from the shepherds at the nativity to the disciples at the empty tomb. With careful attention to detail, Michael Card embarks on an imaginative journey through the Gospel of Luke. He introduces us to Luke the historian and imagines his life as a Gentile, a doctor and a slave. Card explores Luke's compelling account of this dynamic rabbi who astounded his hearers with parables and paradoxes. What might Luke have experienced as he interviewed eyewitnesses of Jesus? What leads Luke to focus on the marginalized and the unlikely? Why does Luke include certain details that the other Gospel writers omit? Join Michael Card in the work of opening heart and mind to the "Gospel of Amazement."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In its straightforwardness and simplicity of presentation . . . Card's exposition provides an uncomplicated guide to this gospel that well serves the novice reader." (Garwood P. Anderson, *The Living Church*, February 17, 2013)"Though Card taps into the discoveries of scholars, his work is accessible to the lay reader. . . . He lives up to his goal of providing a fresh, rich approach to the

biblical text." (Brian Smith McCallum, Christian Retailing, February 2011)"In honoring his mentor William Lane, Michael Card illumines a forgotten path of biblical imagination by a thorough examination of the book of Luke. I have been using this book as a meditation in my studio to live and create as an artist of the twenty-first century; I found every page to be eye-opening. This book is a feast for truth seekers and creators. Michael Card invites all of us to a magnificent journey of hesed (grace and mercy). This humble offering is a sweet aroma and an invaluable contribution to all those who desire to know the Bible and live creatively." (Makoto Fujimura, artist and writer)"Michael Card has taught hundreds of thousands of us to love Jesus more deeply. Now, with this new book, he teaches us to follow Jesus more closely. Thanks, Michael!" (Max Lucado, pastor and bestselling author)"Many know Michael Card as a celebrated songwriter. I know Michael as an inspiring theologian who loves the Word of God! I am thus so thrilled that he is writing the Biblical Imagination Series starting with the Gospel of Luke. Luke and Michael Card have much in common, not the least of which is that they both love stories and songs. But most significantly, they both love Jesus. We're in for a most wonderful treat!" (Reverend Edmund Chan, senior pastor, Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore)

In a career that spans 30 years, Michael Card has recorded over 31 albums, authored or co-authored over 24 books, hosted a radio program, and written for a wide range of magazines. An award-winning musician and performing artist, he has penned such favorites as "El Shaddai," "Immanuel" and many other songs. He has branched his ministry beyond music and written numerous books, including *A Sacred Sorrow*, *A Violent Grace*, *The Parable of Joy and Sleep Sound in Jesus* (a children's book). He has also written the Biblical Imagination Series, with a book and accompanying music CD for each of the four gospels. A graduate of Western Kentucky University with a bachelor's and master's degree in biblical studies, Card also serves as mentor to many younger artists and musicians, teaching courses on the creative process and calling the Christian recording industry into deeper discipleship. Card lives in Tennessee with his wife and four children.

Michael Card's book is what I would classify as a 'devotional commentary'. Its focus is devotional more than academic, but it still brings in clear academic insights. The chapters of Luke are separated into chapters in the Gospel of Amazement and Card gives commentary on small sections. I may feel the devotional style more because I actually used it as a devotional. Card brings real insight into what Luke's additions were to the gospels. Luke was a physician, a gentile, and partner with Paul. Michael Card explores these connection. Some of the musing is just conjecture

(and he is clear about that) but the conjecture is reasonable and useful to looking into why Luke might have been writing as he did. The subtitle of the book is based on Luke's repeated use of 'and they were amazed'. Card does a very good job of showing the themes of Luke. The two most striking to me (and the two Card emphasizes most) are Amazement and Contrasts. Amazement is fairly self explanatory, but without reading in Greek we miss the different Greek words that end up as amazement in English. Card brings some real academic background (he is the most biblically literate song writer I know. But he writes in an approachable way directly for non-professionals without Greek language background. The second major theme he highlights are the contrasts between those that we tend to think of as blessed by God and those that Jesus says are actually blessed. This is not just the Beatitudes, but in many of Jesus' parables and teachings. In Luke, Jesus often pairs a parable about a rich person and a poor person. Sometimes in the same parable Jesus shows the contrast, like the prayers of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Card is showing his background as an artist when he read scripture. He paints with words to show the reader a clear view of scripture. I recommend this as a part of a regular devotional reading.\

Michael Card provides a conversational commentary to Luke: The Gospel of Amazement. The book is not a theological commentary but also does not lack scholarly insight. As the commentary notes, Luke's perspective of the spiritual life is a journey. We journey with Luke as he tells his gospel story gleaned from edited eyewitness accounts. Everywhere people are amazed and astonished and in awe of the events surrounding Jesus. Card calls to our attention many perspectives we may not have seen - such as instances of the Holy Spirit at work, the many times Jesus prayed, and the possible understandings and misunderstandings of the disciples. This book is the first of a gospel series by Card to reflect on "biblical imagination." Not "imaginary" understanding but rather imagination that acts as a vital bridge between the heart and mind. The many parables told by Jesus certainly need a measure of biblical (or holy) imagination to comprehend the depths of meaning. Card's earlier translation and commentary on the Gospel of John (The Parable of Joy, 1995) also does a good job with biblical imagination and should be considered the first of this new biblical imagination series. Both books are recommended as additional friendly and insightful commentaries that can help with better understanding (using some holy imagination) the gospels of Jesus.

Who doesn't cherish the memories of gathering around together as a family either on Christmas Eve or on Christmas morning to read the story of Jesus' birth found

in the Gospel of Luke. Furthermore, many have fond memories of participating in a church or school Christmas play for which the account of the birth of Jesus found in Luke's Gospel formed the basis for the script. In the first installment of the outstanding Biblical Imagination Series by musician and author Michael Card rightly called *Luke: The Gospel of Amazement*, the reader is taken on a journey through the pages of the Gospel of Luke that takes the reader into the world of those who first encountered this carpenter from Nazareth, the Messiah sent to earth who changed the world and saved us from sin. I have long been a fan of Michael Card's musical career and have been aware of his ability to put pen to paper to fashion truly amazing lyrics that have addressed in a lyrical narrative manner through the years matters of great biblical importance. It has only been recently that I have discovered the concomitant book writing skills of Card, in particular his Biblical Imagination Series. Card's treatment of the Gospel of Luke is scholarly yet accessible, in-depth without being overdone, and most importantly his effort engages the reader into the life and ministry of Jesus in a way that is often missing from many commentaries these days. Card begins this book by examining what is known and what can be ascertained about Luke, the author of the Gospel being examined. It was interesting to read about the possibility of Luke being a slave, something I personally was not aware was an idea with some validity behind it. Card also notes the likelihood that Luke was a Gentile which bears some level of importance especially when considering the audience to which this particular Gospel was addressed. Additionally, something that a musician such as Card would pick up on, Luke seemed to enjoy songs given he relayed several singing events in the early chapters of his gospel by people such as Mary, Zechariah, the angels, and Simeon. These are all interesting background elements that help the reader understand who Luke the author was and why he included elements of the life of Christ in his Gospel that are not found in the other gospel accounts. Before engaging the text of Luke, Card also analyzes the major themes of this gospel, rooting his discussion on the overarching aspect of the word amazement. He notes "There are five Greek words that can be translated 'amazed', and only Luke uses every one of them. Sometimes he uses two different words in the same sentence." Card mentions that fact not as a throw away piece of information or something that can be used for Bible trivia. Conversely, he notes the reality that we must ask the question "Why am I not amazed?" followed by the need as we read through the Gospel of Luke to "rediscover a sense of wonder and amazement at this remarkable, mysterious, amazing person called Jesus. With Luke, we might just begin to ask the world, 'Is he not amazing?' There is much to enjoy in Card's treatment of Luke so I will endeavor to not a few highlights

that stuck out to me as I worked through this book the first being the way in which Card expertly weaves in historical information about the passage in question as he examines what Luke is trying to get across. For example, in discussing the events of Luke 11:37-54, a passage where the Pharisees yet again try to trap Jesus with some finer point of the law, Card aptly outlines for the reader the two schools of Pharisaic thought during Jesus' day, noting in particular "The Pharisees with whom Jesus continually locked horns, like the host of this meal, were the house of Shammai. That type of information, while seemingly unimportant, is in reality quite valuable to know given the opposing school of Pharisaic thought, the school of Hillel, was often the one Jesus sided with the most thus creating a point of tension that must be noted in this particular pericope. Another valuable aspect of Card's effort is quite simply the manner in which he writes. He has the ability to take complex theological topics and to break them down in a way that truly drives right to the heart of what the biblical author is saying that most importantly does not lose the reader in translation. Card certainly shares a number of matters of Jewish history and thought as well as investigating word meanings such as shoshabin, the friend of the bridegroom who traditionally would escort the bride to the bridal chamber. Notably, while he shares that important background information, it is always with the intent of focusing the reader on the greater message being provided by Luke. Card does not waste words by going down rabbit trails with his thoughts or by sharing personal stories that little if anything to do with the text. His analysis is continuously purposeful while at the same time drawing the reader into the world of the first century to the point where you truly feel like you are right there listening to the words of Jesus. Anyone desiring to understand the message found in the Gospel of Luke should read this book. Michael Card truly is a gifted writer and he wonderfully drives home the reality that the Gospel of Luke is one that outlines our amazing Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I highly recommend this book and the other two books currently available in this series as they are valuable for personal Bible study, personal devotions, small group Bible study or any other endeavor that has as its purpose the careful and purposeful examination of the Gospel of Luke.

It's always refreshing to read the thoughts and views of others who study the life of Jesus. Michael Card has done a wonderful job of opening the eyes of his readers.

Thoughtful and easy to read perspective on Luke. Michael's intelligence and imagination ring true as always. I've been a fan for thirty years.

Accessible and insightful. I used this book alongside my daily Bible reading. Made parts of Luke come alive. I enjoyed Card's fresh perspectives.

Michael Card is as always insightful and very knowledgeable.

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