

Luke 1:1-4
Introduction

Introduction: As we begin our study of this 3rd Gospel account, we will look at only one sentence today, but it is a long one (covering 4 verses!).

To whom does Luke write?—1:3d

- 1) *most excellent* [κράτιστος] *Theophilus* (“friend of God”),
 - a) Cf. Acts 1:1
 - b) Perhaps he was a patron who financed the research, publishing, and distribution of Luke’s writings.
 - c) This term [κράτιστος] was used for a government official (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25)

Is Luke qualified to write?—1:1-2, 3b

- 1) In relation to MULTIPLE efforts—1:1 ¹ *Inasmuch as many have endeavored to compile a detailed account* [διήγησις] *concerning those things that have been fulfilled* [pf. pass. ptc. πληροφορέω] *among us*,
 - a) The accomplishment of God’s purposes in the life and ministry of Jesus.
 - b) Luke emphasizes what has been fulfilled: 1:20, 57; 2:6, 21-22; 4:21; 9:31; 21:22, 24; 24:44-47)
- 2) In relation to RELIABLE EYEWITNESS traditions—1:2 ² *just as they* (the earlier detailed accounts) *were handed down* [aor. act. ind. παραδέδομι] *to us by those ...*
 - a) Historical observers—*who from the beginning* [ἀρχή] (of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry) *were eyewitnesses* [αὐτόπτης]
 - b) Practical assistants—*and who became servants* [ὑπηρέτης] *of the word* (i.e. the gospel message),
- 3) In relation to DILIGENT effort—1:3b *having investigated* [pf. act. ptc. παρακολουθέω] *everything carefully* [ἀκριβῶς] *from the beginning* [ἄνωθεν],
 - a) Luke had at least 2 years to do this while Paul was in prison in Caesarea (Acts 24:27).

What is the basis for Luke writing?—1:3a

- 1) ³ *it seemed good* [δοκέω] *to me as well*,
 - a) Luke does not condemn the other writings, but, together with the Holy Spirit (2nd Peter 1:21), recognizes that what he has learned needs to be written down in a complementary way.
 - b) He is joining a good tradition but still has something to add. Why?
 - i) Perhaps they were incomplete in nature.
 - ii) Perhaps they were only oral in nature.
 - iii) Perhaps they were in danger of being lost.

The style of Luke’s writing

- 1) Comprehensive
 - a) It is the longest gospel, as well as the longest book of the NT
 - i) Verses: Matthew—1,071; Mark—678; John—869; Luke—1,151
- 2) Universal scope (to all peoples)
 - a) Luke explains Jewish localities (4:31; 8:26; 21:37; 23:51; 24:13)
 - b) Luke’s genealogy goes all the way back to Adam, not Abraham (3:23-38)

- c) Luke uses Roman rulers to designate specific dates (2:1; 3:1)
 - d) Luke uses Gentile terms rather than Jewish terms (“teacher” instead of “rabbi”)
 - e) Luke uses the Septuagint when referring to the OT
 - f) Luke utilizes very little OT prophecy
 - g) Luke refers to the poor, to women, to “sinners”
- 3) Angels are emphasized
 - 4) Emphasis on repentance and forgiveness
 - 5) Songs featuring prayers
 - 6) Emphasis on true spiritual riches in comparison to material riches
 - 7) Emphasis on prayer
 - a) At crucial times, Jesus praying, Prayer in parables, Prayer at other times, Prayer of believers, All-night prayer, Glorifying God

The purpose of Luke’s writing—1:3c-4

- 1) Orderly instruction—1:3c *to write for you a orderly account* [καθεξής],
 - a) Luke’s writing is organized not so much chronologically but theologically.
- 2) Reliable instruction—1:4 ⁴ *so that* [ἵνα] *you may know the certainty of the things concerning which you were instructed.*
 - a) Luke’s goal is to reassure Theophilus about salvation’s fulfillment in Jesus, a salvation that involves even Gentiles like himself.

Take-home truth: Your faith should rest in the work of God who enabled Luke to do the accurate research as well as the ministry of the Holy Spirit that enabled Luke to write God’s inspired Word. God’s Word is trustworthy.