

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON V: AN OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPELS / LUKE'S PREFACE

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|---------|------|-------|------|------------------|
| Matthew | Mark | Luke | John | related passages |
| | | 1:1-4 | | Acts 1:1 |

| Period | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Infancy, Youth | 1,2 | | 1,2 | |
| Preparatory Action / Early Galilean Ministry | 3,4 | 1 | 3,4 | 1,2 |
| Early Judean Ministry | | | | 2-4 |
| Greater Galilean Ministry | 4-15 | 1-7 | 4-9 | 4-6 |
| Retirement Ministry | 15-17 | 7-9 | 9 | |
| Later Galilean Ministry | 17,18 | 9 | 9 | 7 |
| Later Judean Ministry | 19 | 10 | 9-12 | 7-10 |
| Perean Ministry | 19, 20 | | 13-19 | 10-12 |
| Arrival in Jerusalem / Passion Week | 21-26 | 11-13 | 19-22 | 12 |
| Betrayal, Arrest, Trials and the Cross | 26-27 | 14, 15 | 22, 23 | 12-19 |
| Resurrection | 28 | 16 | 24 | 20, 21 |

LUKE'S PREFACE

Those familiar with Greek state Luke begins in good, classical Greek style (1:1-4); follows with a strong Hebraic style during the infancy narratives, so much so that some scholars believe those sections were originally translated from an original Hebrew (Aramaic) source (chapters 1, 2), then uses a Hellenistic style of Greek for the rest of the book, written much the same as the LXX was written.

These beginning verses are one sentence in the original, and kept so in the KJV (as well as many other translations).

v1 many have already written concerning the ministry of Jesus. Luke leaves it open whether the things written refers to the another gospel or some other kind of narrative. Many agree Mark was one of the writings Luke was here referencing.

Luke is not saying here “since others have done such a poor job...” but rather “I will also put my hand to writing a narrative concerning these things”. Perhaps Luke’s motive was to provide as complete account, beginning with the annunciations of John the Baptist’s and Jesus’ births (Lk 1,2) to the spreading of the gospel from Rome at it’s center (Acts 28).

v2 some of Luke’s sources were the original eye-witnesses to the life of Jesus; note he excludes himself from that group

ministers of the word: unusual expression, not found elsewhere in NT, having as it’s primary meaning probably “men who preach the Christian gospel”. But an alternate meaning is found when one considers John’s beginning, “in the beginning was *the Word* ...”. Luke does see preaching Jesus the same as preaching the word (Acts 8:4; 9:20; 10:36ff). “He is approaching John’s thought, for these men were servants of the Word as well as of the word.” [Morris, *Luke*] Practical consideration: note they put themselves under the word of God, not above it, using it merely as a self-serving tool; they became it’s servants. “He who rides a hobby is placing himself above God’s Word.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

v3 write unto thee in order: not necessarily confined to being chronological, since throughout Luke it is obvious he does not always follow a chronological order (e.g. it would seem reading Luke’s account that Judas was present at the Last Supper, when the other gospels makes it clear he was not). Luke’s main concern is not a time-table, but providing a narrative which is logically or topically connected.

Theophilus: means “lover of God”; without doubt a real person and not symbolic for believers. Possibly a man of means or importance by Luke’s honoring him as “most excellent”, but this could be merely an expression of courtesy, not uncommon in headings or dedicatory introductions. Note being a Christian does not excuse courtesy or excuse rudeness. A patron which provided the money for the printing and distribution of Luke’s writings? A Roman official, written for him and dedicated to him as a defense brief, to prove (while Paul was in prison, Acts 28) that there were no conflicts with the Christian religion and the interests of Rome? Whatever the reason for Luke’s writing, it must coincide with and be subservient to the reason given in verse 4.

v4 Theophilus had undoubtedly received information on Christian doctrine; however, he is in need of thorough grounding and the facts concerning the Lord and his people. As a believer, Luke has a strong concern for his fellow man and attempts to bring him to the knowledge of the truth.