

1 Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 it seemed fitting to me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in an orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus; 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. Luke 1:1-4

We are beginning, this week, a study of the Gospel of Luke. Luke the Physician, wrote the gospel bearing his name, and also the Book of Acts. He was a companion of the Apostle Paul, who refers to him as *our dear friend Luke, the doctor*, in Col 4:14. Luke looks at the ministry of Christ and the early church, from the perspective of a historian, gathering the empirical evidence of dates, times, places, and names for his gospel presentation. He was *compiling an account of the things accomplished among us*.

Luke, a Gentile believer and a companion of Paul, came at his presentation of the Gospel account from a Gentile perspective. Matthew (Levi), was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus, was originally a tax collector or publican and was viewed as a betrayer by his own people. He wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was the long-expected and long-anticipated Messiah. Mark or sometimes referred to as John Mark, wrote the Gospel of Mark. Many believe that Peter is the original source of his gospel. The apostle John's purpose in writing seems to be to declare Jesus was both Man and God. His close relationship to Jesus gives his gospel an intimate view of the Savior. He refers to himself as *the disciple Jesus loved* (John 13:23).

Luke begins this book stating, *it seemed fitting to me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in an orderly sequence*. Luke's gospel is written to a converted Gentile high ranking Roman citizen, Theophilus, who is his friend. His name, Theophilus, means friend of God, Theos (God), philos (friend). (Philadelphia is called the city of brotherly love.) * the term "most excellent" was a term normally referred to the Roman equestrian class of wealthy aristocrats/social elites (ie most excellent Festus – Acts 26:25 & most excellent Felix – Acts 26:25) axelsippach.com/theophilus-a-friend-of-god/

Luke wanted Theophilus to know with certainty *the exact truth about the things you have been taught*. He was also an educated man and Luke wanted his faith to be sure. Luke ends up writing not just a Gospel account but also the development of the church after Christ's crucifixion (Acts). Because of Luke's work we have an accurate account of the life of Christ and the development of the early Church.

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 And yet they had no child, because Elizabeth was infertile, and they were both advanced in years. Luke 1:5-7

Luke is the only Gospel that gives an account of the miraculous birth of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was an important figure, he was sent by God *to bear witness of that Light*. The apostle John writes, *6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. John 1:6-8* But he gives no back story and John the Baptist is really the last OT prophet. Matthew declares John the Baptist was who the prophet Isaiah declared would come to *Prepare the way of the Lord*.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Matt 3:1-3 And Luke wrote, 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. Luke 3:4

Mark tells how Jesus declared John the Baptist to be Elijah

12And He said to them, "Elijah does come first and he restores all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written of him." Mark 9:12, 13

So this John the Baptist came as a prophet to *make Christ's paths straight, to prepare the way of the LORD*. But he was still an OT prophet because though Christ was in the world He had not yet died for the sin of man. Jesus said, *I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* Luke 7:28 The power of newness of life had not yet had not yet been released, John was just pointing the way, but he was a great prophet. Luke tells us the background of his birth, *there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God.* Both his parents were Levites, of the priestly class. They were both faithful to the Lord yet *they had no child, because Elizabeth was infertile, and they were both advanced in years.* So with the coming of the Christ there were two miraculous births, one to Mary and one to Elizabeth, her cousin.

8Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11Now an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12Zechariah was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 13But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. 14You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth. 15For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. 16And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF FATHERS BACK TO THEIR CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:8-17

John's father has an angel, in the temple, declare his wife will bear him a son. Zachariah had prayer for this but on seeing an angel he was troubled, *when he saw the angel fear gripped him*. This angel declares this child will be *he will be great in the sight of the Lord*. He will be separated or consecrated. He will live in line with the Nazirite vow, which appears in Numbers 6:1-21. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit and will, *Prepare the way of the LORD*. Remember Jesus declared, *Elijah has indeed come*. The angel declares he will go before the Lord *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. Then he the angel says,

17And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF FATHERS BACK TO THEIR CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the

Lord.” Luke 1:8-17

The angel use an OT prophecy to declare the mission of John the Baptist, *TO TURN THE HEARTS OF FATHERS BACK TO THEIR CHILDREN*. John ‘s message was for the people of Israel to repent preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, for the disobedient to return to the attitude of the righteous, and in this they would be prepared for the Lord. The angel was referring to this prophecy of Malachi in the last book of the OT.

5“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with complete destruction.” Malachi 4:5-6

Malachi ends this passage with God *striking the land with complete destruction*. or as it says in the KJV, *lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*. KJV We must put this in context. In Deuteronomy 30 we have Moses words to the people he had led in the wilderness and he states they have before *the blessing and the curse*.

15“See, I have placed before you today life and happiness, and death and [w]adversity, 16in that I am commanding you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, so that you may live and become numerous, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to take possession of it. 17But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but allow yourself to be led astray and you worship other gods and serve them, 18I declare to you today that you will certainly perish. . . I have placed before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding close to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, so that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Joshua states, *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*. But for the children of Israel he states, *you will not be able to serve the LORD*

Then Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your wrongdoing or your sins. 20If you abandon the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and destroy you after He has done good to you.” Johua 24:24

Blessings and curses but Israel chose the curses. They went into captivity and the last book of the OT states God is sending a last prophet and if they don’t listen, God *smite the earth (Israel) with a curse*. Israel as a nation rejected their God sent deliverer and in 70AD the nation was destroyed. But at the same time He sent a blessing, Savior, Luke 2 states, *“Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*. God knew man’s weakness, in the flesh we always choose the curse but God had a plan the redeem fallen man. The angel told Joseph, *you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matt 1:21*

There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;

And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains: