

Luke's Purpose for Writing a Gospel

Luke 1:1-4.

1A Translation: 1 Since many undertook to arrange an account concerning the matters which have been fulfilled among us, 2 even as those who became eyewitnesses and assistants of the word handed over to us from the beginning, 3 it seemed to me, having followed carefully from the beginning all things, to write you in orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you might know fully the certainty of the account which you were informed.

2A Outline:

1B The report of other efforts to write the history of Christ's life, vv.1-2:

1C The report of many efforts, 1: Since many undertook to arrange an account concerning the matters which have been fulfilled among us,

2C The collection of accounts to Luke and fellow workers, 2: even as those who became eyewitnesses and assistants of the word handed over to us from the beginning,

2B Luke's conclusion, a Gospel in orderly sequence, 3: it seemed to me, having followed carefully from the beginning all things, to write you in orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus,

3B The purpose of the Gospel, 4: that you might know fully the certainty of the account which you were informed.

3A Exposition.

1B Introduction:

1C Know from the beginning that this is the factual account of the Son of God.

2C Know from the beginning that this is the most documented life and times in ancient history.

3C Know from the beginning that this factual account changes lives. It has changed mine, and it will change yours if you will listen and believe.

4C Know from the beginning that God's timing is always right, and that He sent His Son at just the right moment in human history.

5C Know from the beginning that the life of the Son of God was predicted for many hundreds of years, and know that He had a destiny of sorrow and a destiny of glory.

2B The report of other efforts to write the history of Christ's life, vv.1-2:

1C The report of many efforts, 1:

1D Since many undertook to arrange an account concerning the matters which have been fulfilled among us,

2D Ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων,

3D Epeideper polloi epecheiresan anataxasthai diegesin peri ton peplerophoremenon en hemin pragmaton

4D Luke builds on a fact that is already known to himself and to the reader, the most excellent Theophilus.

5D The fact is that many undertook to arrange an account.

1E This is an endeavor that Luke is taking to hand, *epecheiresan*, a real endeavor in

the days before typewriters and word processors.

- 2E Writing materials were very expensive, and the process of relating the lengthy account of Christ's life would be laborious indeed.
- 3E *Anatachasthai* means to arrange, to bring a military formation to order, so that all are dressed covered properly, when formerly it was in chaos. In writing it meant to arrange anew.
- 4E This indicates that there were already Gospel accounts out there that were generally known.
- 5E *Diegesis* is a formal account or even a legal deposition, something meant to serve as formal evidence and even sway the opinion of a judge.
- 6D The deposition which Luke has prepared for Theophilus is concerned with matters that have been fulfilled among us - *peri ton peplerophoremenon en hemin pragmaton*
 - 1E Luke focuses on the final nature of this fulfillment, and how they have come about in their presence.
 - 2E The verb is the perfect tense of *plerophoreo*, which indicates not only a fulfillment, but also full assurance.
 - 3E The fullness of time had indeed come, and many prophecies had been fulfilled concerning the Christ: Galatians 4:4-5: 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - 4E They had seen those things with their very own eyes, and were compelled to write, 1 John 1:1-4: 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
 - 5E As a result of the fulfillment, they had been fully assured.
- 2C **The collection of accounts to Luke and fellow workers, 2:**
 - 1D even as those who became eyewitnesses and assistants of the word handed over to us from the beginning,
 - 2D *καθὼς παρέδωσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου,*
 - 3D *kathos paredosan hemin hoi ap' arches autoptai kai hueretai genomenoi tou logou*
 - 4D He now zeroes in on the particular accounts that he has now arranged into a deposition.
 - 5D An *autoptai* is a self-seer, an eyewitness.
 - 6D The Mosaic Law insisted on multiple witnesses in all cases of capital crime, Numbers

35:30: Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty.

7D They also became helpers, *huperetai*, assistants, like a physician's assistant. Here, because it is grouped with eyewitnesses is probably referring to corroborating testimony from the non-eyewitness category.

8D And they came into these states not initially out of their own will, but simply because they were there.

9D These accounts were handed over from the beginning. This is a very important piece of information for us concerning the reliability of the accounts.

10D It wasn't like the interviews with the eyewitnesses happened 30 years after when Luke wrote his gospel. Instead, he took the eyewitnesses accounts that were handed over to him, and assembled his work. Therefore, all the accounts were quite fresh when they were given, and not memory-tainted by the mists of decades of time.

3B Luke's conclusion, a Gospel in orderly sequence, 3:

1C it seemed to me, having followed carefully from the beginning all things, to write you in orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus,

2C ἔδοξεν κάμοί, παρεκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς, καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε

3C edoxen kamoi, parekolouthe koti anothen pasin akribos, kathexes soi grapsai, kratiste Theophile

4C Luke himself followed the life of Christ from the beginning. He is not a decades-later interloper either.

5C After following right alongside – *parakoloutheo* means to follow closely all by itself – Luke forms the opinion that he should write in orderly sequence.

6C But Luke also adds *akribos*, which means exactly or carefully. He has followed the life of Christ exactly and carefully right from the beginning, and therefore he is the perfect historian to give the account.

7C He has access to the early eyewitness accounts, and he himself has also followed closely in the matter.

8C And so he is going to write to most excellent Theophilus in orderly sequence, *kathexes*, one event right after the other.

9C Theophilus is only mentioned here and in Acts 1:1, where Luke refers to his “former account.”

10C His name means “God-friend.” There is precious little information about this man.

11C Luke addresses him as *kratiste*, “most excellent,” a title reserved for men of high rank.

12C Outside the Bible there is mentioned a certain Theophilus who was the son of Annas the brother in law of Caiaphas. This Theophilus served as high priest four years after the death of Christ, 37-41 A.D., years corresponding exactly to those of the Roman emperor Caligula. This same man was the one who gave Paul the authority to persecuted Christians. However, whether this is Luke's Theophilus is highly speculative, considering

that he wrote about 30 years later.

4B The purpose of the Gospel, 4:

1C that you might know fully the certainty of the account which you were informed.

2C ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

3C Hina epignos peri hon katechethes logon ten asphaleian

4C Someone had given Theophilus a word of mouth report of the Gospel, *katechethes*.

5C But Luke's intent is that he might have full knowledge of the certainty of the account.

6C *Asphaleia* means certainty in the sense of safeguarding from error.

7C Since Luke wants to carefully set forth a chronological account of the life of Christ from the eyewitnesses, collected early, to fully inform and safeguard from error, we can infer a thing or two about Theophilus' spiritual state.

8C He is a person who has heard about Christ from verbal accounts. But, he is not certain of the truth of the account.

9C Therefore he is more likely to be an unbeliever than a believer. For before anyone can believe, they have to be sure of the veracity of the information they receive.

10C Faith is above all certainty or assurance. Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

11C 2 Peter 1:15-16 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.