

Luke's Dedicatory Preface

- ◆ Read Luke 1:1-4:

(1) Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; (3) It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

- ◆ Note: Luke's preface is "Generally judged to be the best stylized sentence in the whole NT." (Word Biblical Commentary, vol 35a, pg 4).
- ◆ Note: Theophilus means "friend of God."
- ◆ *What is the backdrop? What other sources was Luke aware of? What is the relation between these existing accounts and the eyewitness report?*
- ◆ *Why does Luke write his gospel despite the fact that he refers to the existence of other accounts?*
- ◆ I think the NRSV translation (or any other modern translation for that matter) helps make the preface a little easier to understand:

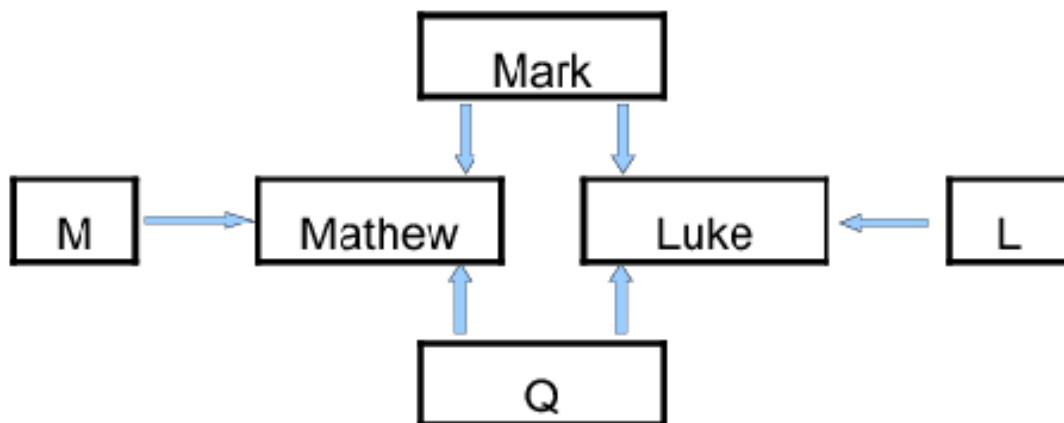
(1) Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, (2) just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, (3) I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, (4) so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

- ◆ **Tentative Conclusions:** I guess I would make the following tentative conclusions from the preface:
 - Luke indicates that other accounts already exist.
 - ◆ *How does Luke feel about the accounts that have preceded him? Does he think their quality is poor?*
 - ◆ I'm not sure about this one. All the translations I've read seem to be a bit ambiguous. Obviously, he thought there was a need for his version.
 - Past gospel writers wrote their accounts based on eyewitness accounts. This seems to imply that the written accounts that he was aware of were not written by eyewitnesses.
 - Luke has been very careful in his investigation. So he considers his account to be of high quality.

- ◆ *Is Luke reliance on written and oral sources a problem? Does it call into question the authority of scripture?*
- ◆ I just don't see how. Luke has no problem with it. Books in the Old Testament refer to their sources (think Chronicles), and Mormon in the Book of Mormon is seems to use his sources in much the same way. To me it underscores the human part of scripture: the dedication and love. The love that Luke has for his faith but also for his future audience. Luke's account isn't perfect and of that I am very grateful.

The Synoptic Problem and Markan Priority

- ◆ Clearly, Luke is dependent on written sources and possibly oral sources. What is known about his sources? Did Matthew use similar sources and tradition?
- ◆ One obvious place to look is at the other gospels. Mathew, Mark, and Luke all contain many similar stories (this is why the are referred to as synoptic gospels (seen together)). It is not just that these gospels share similar stories; they often use the same words (Ehrman, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction, p 84).
- ◆ In general the synoptic problem refers to the problem of explaining both the similarities and differences between Mathew, Mark, and Luke.
- ◆ I think the most generally accepted solution is "Markan Priority and the Four Source Hypothesis" (see Ehrman, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction for a nice introduction to the topic. Raymond Brown's Introduction to the New Testament is a good source as well):



Markan Priority and the Four Source Hypothesis: Adapted from Ehrman, Bart, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction, p 85.

- ◆ First, what is Q? "Q" is a hypothetical source; it is the unknown source(s) that Mathew and Luke share with each other but are not found in Mark (Q = Quelle = Source (In German)).
- ◆ What are "M" and "L?" The sources Matthew and Luke used that are unique to them.

- ◆ Why Markan Priority?
 - “Sometimes Mathew and Mark share the wording of a story when Luke differs, and sometimes Mark and Luke share the wording when Mathew differs. But it is extremely rare to find Matthew and Luke sharing the wording of a storing that is also found in Mark when Mark differs” (Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction*, p 85).
 - Scholars point out that Mark’s Greek writing is somewhat awkward. Awkward phrases used in Mark are often fixed by Luke and Matthew. It seems less likely that Mark copied Matthew and inserted awkward language than Matthew used Mark as a source and smoothed out awkward phrases.
- ◆ Markan priority also seems to imply a “Q” source as well.
- ◆ I have highlighted what I think is the most generally accepted hypothesis but you can easily find scholars that disagree with this hypothesis.
- ◆ *Does it matter whether or not Mark wrote first and Matthew and Luke used Mark as source?*
- ◆ I think it matters in the following sense. It reminds us to look for differences and not always harmonize the accounts. Maybe when Matthew and Mark differ it is because Matthew wants to emphasize something he feels is important.

The Genealogy of Jesus

- ◆ item Read Matthew 1:1-2:
 - (1) The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
 - (2) Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;
- ◆ *John 1:1 starts with “in the beginning” which certainly reminds the reader of Genesis. What about in Matthew? What does it turn the readers mind to?*
- ◆ You certainly get a Genesis vibe here since Matthew is literally describing the Genesis of Jesus. It also reminds me of similar genealogical sequences in the book of Genesis.
- ◆ *What is Matthew’s goal here? After reading the genealogy what should the reader know?*
- ◆ That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of David, and the son of Abraham.
- ◆ *Why these titles? How are the similar? How are they different? Do each one of these titles tell us something different about Jesus and what Matthew will emphasize about Jesus?*
- ◆ *Why is it important that Jesus is the Son of David? Why does Matthew want us the reader to now that from very beginning? How is messiah-ship related to David?*
- ◆ One important consideration is what “son of David” meant in the first century. Consider the following verse from the non-canonical Psalms of Solomons which were probably written sometime in the first century BCE (Brown, p 67):

23 (21) Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, At the time in the which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant 24 (22) And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, 25 And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction. (23) Wisely, righteously 26 he shall thrust out sinners from (the) inheritance, He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel. (24) With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance, 21 He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth;

- ◆ The preceding quote is not scripture but I bring it up because maybe it gives us insight into what “son of David” might have meant to the original audience (besides the obvious obvious ancestral relationship with David). *Based on the quote, what might have “son of David” meant and how was it related to the title of Christ?*
- ◆ *Why is it important that Jesus is the son of Abraham?*
- ◆ It certainly reminds me of the covenant. Jesus is in some sense the ultimate fulfillment of that covenant. *Do you think there are adoption implications here?*

Genealogy: There are Ladies in Genealogy

- ◆ The genealogy comprised the first. One of the odd features is that four woman beside Mary are mentioned¹:
 - Tamar (Thamar)
 - Rahab (Rachab)
 - Ruth
 - Bathsheba the wife of Uriah
- ◆ *Matthew could have written the genealogy without mentioning these woman so their inclusion strikes me as important. Why mention these woman?*
- ◆ *What do they have in common? Is Mary being compared these woman? Is Mary like them over some dimension? Does the inclusion of these woman tell us something important about Jesus?*
- ◆ **Sinners:** Brown (Birth of the Messiah) mentions that this is the first known proposal or explanation for the inclusion and commonality (it goes all the way back to Jerome).
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common? Do any of the woman have this in common?*
 - I actually don't think this one works well. While it is certainly possible to describe each of the woman as sinners, it is never the point or the focus of their narratives in the Old Testament.
 - *Suppose that was Matthew's understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew explicitly mention a group of woman sinners in the genealogy?*

¹Tamar is mentioned in a genealogical list in 1 Chr 2:4)

- It could certainly point to the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is kind of a cool image: Jesus was sent to redeem is very family. Or in other words, the family of Jesus is a family of sinners both in a narrow genealogical sense and in the broader sense of all of us.
- ◆ **Gentile or Foreigner:** Brown (Birth of the Messiah) says this was made popular by Martin Luthor.
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common?*
 - Rahab was a Canaanite and Ruth is Moabite. I think most scholars believe Tamar was a Canaanite. Bathsheba is not a foreigner, but Uriah is at least associated with foreigners by the Hittite label even though his name is a good Israelite name: “The Lord is my Light.” Problems: how does this relate to Mary? She is not a foreigner. Also, all of these woman might be better thought of as converts rather than foreigners.
 - *Suppose that was Matthew’s understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew include a group of woman gentiles in the genealogy? What if they are all converts and that is the commonality?*
 - Pretty cool foreshadowing of Jesus’ universal mission.
- ◆ **Weird Marriages**
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common?*
 - Tamar’s marriage with Judah could easily be described as weird or unusual. Rahab was a prostitute so any union involving her would be unusual. Even if you don’t read it scandalously, Ruth marriage certainly has something irregular about it (Ruth used her initiative, etc, etc). Bathseba, I can definitely see the weird angle.
 - *Suppose that was Matthew’s understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew include such woman?*
- ◆ **The Woman all showed initiative and played an important role in God’s plan:**
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common?*
 - Tamar, lost of initiative. Ruth, ditto, Rahab, ditto. Bathsheba, her initiative ensure that Solomon gets the throne. Their stories are all remarkable.
 - *Suppose that was Matthew’s understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew include such woman?*
- ◆ **Sacrifice:** The woman all had to sacrifice greatly.
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common?*
 - *Suppose that was Matthew’s understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew include such woman?*
- ◆ **They each apply to Jesus or Mary in a uncommon but important way:**
 - *Does this work? Do all the woman have this in common?*
 - *Suppose that was Matthew’s understanding of the commonality. Why would Matthew include such woman?*

- ◆ *Can you think of other reasons?*

Luke's Genealogy of Jesus: Its Different

- ◆ One of obvious difference between Matthew and Luke's genealogy (and there are many) is that Luke traces the ancestry back through Adam who is called the "son of God."
- ◆ *Why? Is this an important difference? Does it emphasize something different than Matthew did?*
- ◆ *Might the differences be explained by different audiences? Suppose Luke's is primarily Gentile convert's and Matthew's is primarily Jewish?*