

Introduction

5 B.C. – 29 A.D.

Prefaces to Synoptic Gospels

Matthew 1:1

Mark 1:1

Luke 1:1-4

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Texts:

Matthew 1:1, The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Mark 1:1, The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Luke 1:1-4

- 1. Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,**
- 2. just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.**
- 3. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,**
- 4. so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.**

Commentary:

I. “Gospel” means “good news.” Mark is, in the book that bears his name, now setting about to tell the good news from the beginning about the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Mark declared that this Jesus Christ (anointed, Messiah) is the Son of God. The apostle John also wrote affirming the deity of Jesus Christ.

A. John 17:3, Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

- B. John 17:6, I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.**

- C. John 17:11, 12, I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.**

- D. John 17:26, I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.**

- E. John 5:18, For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.**

III. The Word of God came to John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

- A. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit giving John the words he should speak came upon him where he lived in the wilderness.
 - 1. Hebrews 1:1-2, In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.**

B. The Holy Spirit came upon John in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

C. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea at that time.

D. Herod Antipas was at that time tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis.

E. Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene at that time.

F. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests at the beginning of John's ministry.

IV. These rulers and the events here associated with them date John's and Jesus' ministry.

A. The ministry of Jesus began in A.D. 26 and John's ministry began shortly before that.

B. Jesus' crucifixion is dated by some as 04-06-30 A.D.

C. Jesus' birth was prior to the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.

D. Jesus attended the first Passover of his public ministry in the 46th year of the temple's re-construction. This Passover was in 26 A.D.

E. Tiberius began reigning in 11 A.D. Adding 15 years to 11 A.D. brings us again to 26 A.D.

F. Pontius Pilate was Roman Governor of Judea 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.

G. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee 4 B.C. to 39 A.D.

H. Herod Philip was tetrarch of Iturea 4 B.C. to 34 B.C.

I. Lysanias' tetrarchy of Abilene can not now be dated.

V. Of the four gospels, Luke is the only one who stated his purpose in an introductory paragraph.

A. Greek/Hellenistic historians used this kind of introduction to assure readers of their capability, thorough research and reliability.

B. Luke described his motivation, credentials, and specific purpose in writing the Gospel of Luke.

VI. Luke was motivated to write an account of the Life of Christ by the **many** others who had undertaken such a task. Luke evidently saw some shortcomings in these other uninspired works.

A. Luke's research produced two books of the New Testament, Luke and Acts, which in length constitute 27% of the New Testament.

B. Luke's research in writing included a consideration of fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, other written accounts of the events being recorded and eyewitness testimony

C. Luke was not personally an eyewitness of Christ's preaching and miracles.

VII. Luke wrote an orderly account which also was in chronological order.

- A. **Luke 8:1, After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.**
- B. **Acts 3:24, Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.**
- C. **Acts 11:4, Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:**
- D. **Acts 18:23, After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.**

VIII. Luke addressed his works to the “most excellent Theophilus.”

- A. “Theophilus” means **friend or lover of God.**
- B. The title “most excellent” often referred to cavalry officers or governors.
 - 1. **Felix. Acts 23:26, Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings.**
 - 2. **Felix. Acts 24:3, Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.**

3. Festus. **Acts 26:25, “I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable.”**

C. Theophilus may have been an individual or the word could have been used here to refer to all who love God.

IX. Luke wrote so that Theophilus could know that the things he had been taught were absolutely true.

- A. **John 20:31, But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

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Questions

1. "Gospel" means "_____."
2. According to Luke, many had undertaken to draw up an _____ of the things that have been _____ among us, just as they were handed down by those who from the first were _____ and _____ of the _____.
3. Another word for "Christ" is _____ which means _____.
4. The _____ of _____ came to _____ the son of _____ in the _____.
5. In the past God spoke to our _____ through the _____ at _____ and in _____, but in these last days he has _____ to _____ by his _____.
6. The _____ came upon _____ the _____ in the _____ year of the _____ of _____.
7. _____ was _____ of _____ at this time.
8. _____ was at that time _____ of _____ and _____.

9. _____ was _____ of _____ at that time.

10. _____ and Caiaphas were _____ at the beginning of John's ministry.

11. The ministry of Jesus began in A.D. _____ and John's ministry began shortly before that. Jesus was crucified on _____, _____ A.D.

12. Jesus was born before the death of _____ the _____ in _____ B.C.

13. Jesus attended the first _____ of his public ministry in the _____th year of the _____ construction. This _____ was in _____ A.D.

14. _____ was Roman _____ of Judea _____ A.D. to _____ A.D.

15. Herod Antipas was _____ of _____ B.C. to _____ A.D.

16. Herod Philip was _____ of _____ B.C. to _____ B.C.

17. Luke wrote _____ books of the _____, _____ and _____, which constitute _____% of the New Testament.

18. Luke's research considered: _____, other _____, _____ and the guidance of the _____.

19. _____ addressed his writings to the “_____” which name means _____ or _____ of _____.

20. John wrote the Gospel According to John so that his readers would _____ that _____ is the _____, the _____ of _____, and that by _____ they may have _____ in his _____.