

Luke 1:1-4. the Preface to Luke.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Luke's preface to his history of Jesus Christ is a letter to Theophilus, a nobleman, and provides certainty of the things he had been instructed in, correcting erroneous accounts of Christ's life.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Luke 1:1-24, John 14:26, Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 2:10, Colossians 4:14, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:21

Topics: "Luke's Gospel", "Holy Scripture"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delves into the preface written by the holy Evangelist Luke before his account of the Lord Jesus Christ, addressing the intended recipient, Theophilus, a nobleman who had been instructed in religion but desired a more perfect understanding of the Lord's history. Luke, known as 'the beloved physician,' was likely a converted heathen who had the honor of writing a part of the holy Word of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Despite not being an eyewitness to the events, Luke's Gospel is recognized as inspired by God and has been cherished by Christians throughout history for its valuable insights into the life of Jesus.

Transcript

The holy Evangelist Luke writes a short preface before his history of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This preface is a kind of letter to Theophilus, for whose use especially he wrote the history. Let us inquire who Luke was, and who Theophilus was. Luke is not mentioned in any of the Gospels; but Paul speaks of him in his epistle to the Colossians, as, "the beloved physician," 4:14. There is reason also to suppose he was not a Jew, but a converted heathen; yet he had the honor of writing a part of the holy Word of God. Theophilus was probably a governor; therefore he was called "most excellent," as dukes are now styled "your grace," and kings "your majesty." Theophilus, though a nobleman, had been instructed in religion by some of God's servants; but Luke wished him to know the history of the Lord still more perfectly. He says in the fourth verse, that he had written this account that "you (Theophilus) might know the certainty of those things wherein you have been instructed."

It appears that other people had written histories of Christ. These people had not been directed by the Holy Spirit, as the Evangelists had; neither had they themselves witnessed the events they had related. They had written from "report," and their accounts contained errors. It is happy for us that these erroneous accounts have not been handed down to us, but only the inspired histories of the four Evangelists.

Luke himself had not been an eye-witness of the events he records; yet we cannot say he wrote from "report," for he was directed by the Spirit of God. He had enjoyed great opportunities of knowing about Jesus--he declares in v. 3, that he had had perfect understanding of all things from the "very first," or from the very earliest part of our Savior's life. Still his history would not have been reckoned a part of the holy Bible, if the Holy Spirit had not directed him what to write. This book has always been read in the assemblies of Christians, and called the word of God.

Let us thank God for this part of his word. How many interesting events and parables are related by Luke, which we would never have known, had he not written! How we ought to value everything that concerns the Lord Jesus! When we love a friend, we desire to know everything about him, and to hear what he did even when he was a child! When we have lost him, we think over his dying words, and lay them up in our hearts! How much more should we delight in knowing all that concerns the best of friends! When we consider who he was--the Lord of Glory, we can compare no earthly friend to him; all which relates to him is wonderful.

It is affecting to hear how the poor heathen, when first converted, value the word of God! Before the missionaries in the South Sea Islands could print the Bible in the language of the people, the poor natives eagerly listened to all that was read aloud on the Sabbath, and many wrote down upon the leaves of trees the texts they had heard, and studied them wherever they went until they knew them by heart. We are without excuse if we remain ignorant of the history of our Lord. Let us not, however, forget for what purpose we read--that we may learn to love Jesus. We are apt to become fond of human creatures whom we know intimately. How much more might it be expected that hearing of Jesus would make us love him; for he is far more excellent than any creature, and far more full of love to us than our dearest friend. Yet our hearts are naturally so much hardened against God, that unless the Holy Spirit soften them, we shall not love him. May that Spirit be with us, while we read day after day the history of our blessed Lord.

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