

Content

Luke 1:1-4 is the prologue to the Gospel according to Luke, wherein Luke directs our attention to the central figure of his gospel: Jesus Christ. But Luke doesn't throw together a haphazard, historically questionable picture of Jesus. The prologue sets before us Luke's meticulous method. In the intervening years between Jesus' resurrection and when Luke writes (40-50 years) others have filled the gap through their own accounts (written and oral). Luke draws from these accounts together with the testimony of eyewitnesses (including the 12) in order to fashion a narrative that presents a historically accurate picture of Jesus Christ. But his agenda is to do more than merely compile events, sayings, and well-known facts from Jesus' life. Luke wants to show his readers what these events mean for the people of God ("the things that have been *accomplished* among us"). Thus, by appropriating OT quotations throughout the gospel (and Acts) specifically, and building upon OT precedent broadly, Luke shows how the promises of God have been *accomplished* in the ministry of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 1:20; Luke 24:27). But Luke's aim is even more ambitious than this! He wants his readers to "have certainty" (Gr. "In order that you might know the certainty (firmness)") concerning the gospel (the things they have been taught). His readers are Christians who know and believe the gospel, but who need encouragement again and again (just as we do) in what the gospel is (and isn't) and they need someone to help them apply the gospel to their unique situation.

Gospel Connections

Throughout the sermon the need to look away from ourselves and look to Jesus – the whole Jesus - was repeatedly emphasized. After all, this is what the gospels are about; they are *biographies* of Jesus, albeit cast in the ancient biographical mold, not modern. Although each gospel gives us unique emphases into Jesus' life and ministry, they are complementary accounts that move our eyes away from ourselves and fix our eyes on Jesus. When we set our eyes on Jesus we are reminded what God is up to. When we set our eyes on Jesus we are affirmed in our worth. When we set our eyes on Jesus our expectations are properly realigned. Simply put, the gospels force our eyes onto someone beautiful. Jonathan Pennington writes, "The Gospels are written so that we might experience firsthand the risen Christ, even as the original followers experienced him, through the abiding ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14). Thus we should read the Gospels with this goal in mind, seeking not simply to reduce the Gospel stories to their 'point' but to enter into the narrative world of the Gospels experientially."

Application and Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically
 - a. What insights did you learn?
 - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don't understand?
 - c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?
2. What does it look like to fashion Jesus in our own image?
3. In the sermon it was mentioned that the Christian community is testimony to what Christ has accomplished. If Christ has broken down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile, then why do we often create barriers? What are some of the (unintentional) 'barriers' we create?