

Bible Study 2022-2023

Class #8

11/8/22

Luke

- **Authorship and Canonicity:**

- Again, the phrase “the Gospel according to Luke,” is not a part of the original text
- His being a “Gentile physical and companion of Paul” has come down to us from the early church
- This gospel being attributed to him comes from the earliest list of New Testament books, and many of the Church Fathers to include:
 - Irenaeus (AD 180)
 - Tertullian (AD 200)
 - Clement of Alexander (AD 200)

Luke (Cont)

- **Composition:**

- Many believe it was composed in the early 60s
 - Luke ends the Book of Acts with Paul under house arrest in Rome (AD 62) with no indication of the martyrdom of Paul or Peter who were martyred around (AD 67)
 - There is no discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in (AD 70)
- Luke addresses his books to *Theophilus* (God Lover), most likely a term of endearment for his audience and not an actual person
- Luke's Greek is the most sophisticated of the New Testament authors

Luke (Cont)

- He translated many *Aramaic* and *Hebrew* words into their Greek equivalent, indicating the Gospel was meant to be read by a Greek-speaking audience
- At the same, time he makes copious use of the Old Testament, indicating that his gospel was also for a Jewish audience
- He expected his audience to really know their scriptures
- He emphasized the importance of the conversion of the Gentiles
- The early church tells us that he was a disciple of Paul, thus, it can be understood as the “Pauline Gospel”

Luke (Cont)

- **Structure:**

- If follows a relatively straightforward structure, not unlike Matthew and Mark
- It does not break down into the five sections like Matthew
- We see it as a student of Paul, and therefore it was for Paul's world (Ephesus or Corinth)

Luke (Cont)

- **Structure:**

- Preface (1:1-4)
- Infancy Narrative (1:5-2:52)
- Preparations for Ministry: Baptism, genealogy, & temptation (3:1-4:13)
- Galilean Ministry (4:14-9:50)
- Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
- Passion Week (19:28-23:56)
- Resurrection and Ascension (24:1-53)

Luke 1

- Luke 1:1-4 *“Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative... That they may know the truth concerning these things of which you have been informed*
 - Father said that we do not know exactly what he was talking about in this passage
 - “Something had been written down;” could relate to the works of **Matthew** and **Mark**
 - As mentioned earlier, *Theophilus* was most likely a term of endearment for his audience
 - Father asked that we underline “have been”

Luke 1 (Cont)

- All of the books of the Bible were written to be read in the context of a Christian gathering
- Luke's gospel was written for, and to be read by, a group of people who were already baptized Christians, and part of the early Church
- From this, we can see how important Tradition is, as today we read his gospel in the middle of the liturgy of the Mass just as the folks did in the early church
- It is for this reason that it is a part of our lectionary
- It appears that Luke wanted to be sure that his audience really, really knew these things

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:5-7** *“In the days of Herod,...and both were advanced in years”*
 - Notice how Luke knows, and tells us, the meaning of several names:
 - **Zachariah**, God who remembers, Yahweh remembers
 - **Elizabeth**, God’s oath
 - Father pointed out that what God remembered was the oath he took concerning His covenant with Abraham
 - Also, the fact that *Elizabeth* was barren
 - In the Old Testament, many believed that barrenness was a curse from God for sin

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Deuteronomy 28:18** states that if a woman was sinful there will be barrenness
- Barrenness was also used in Salvation History to highlight the significance of a coming birth
 - **Sarah**, and the birth of *Isaac*
 - **Rebekah** - mother of *Esau* and *Jacob*
 - **Rachael** - mother of *Joseph* and *Benjamin*
 - **Wife of Manoah** - mother of *Sampson*
 - **Hannah** - mother of *Samuel*
 - **Elizabeth** - mother of *John the Baptist*

Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:8-13** *“Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,...and you shall call his name John”*
 - The use of incense in the Mass comes from its use in the Old Testament and the early church
 - But, in this instance, his listeners were thinking about its use in the temple
 - Incense was burned on the altar of incense right in from of the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies

Luke 1 (Cont)

- This was the second holiest place in the temple where a priest could stand (on the Holy of Holies was greater, and only the High Priest could enter there)
- This is very important because the priest *Zachariah*, most likely, would have had an opportunity to offer incense at this position only once in his lifetime
- There were hundreds of priests in his division, which only served in the temple for one two week period per year
- All the assigned duties were selected by casting lots
- At this point, Zachariah most likely was offering his prayer for a son (in order to pass on the priesthood to him) as he did every day of his priesthood

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Thus, *Zachariah* goes into the holy place to offer incense and then get out
- At the moment, his prayer was heard
- Father reminded us of **Daniel** who met the **Angel Gabriel** at the hour when he (Daniel) was offering incense (**Daniel 9:21**)
- **Psalm 141:2** also said that Daniel's prayer, concerning the end of the exile, was heard at the hour of incense
- Even though this prophesy was not fulfilled for 490 years, it was a very important prophesy for the Jews

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Father reminded us that when the first priests in the line of *Aaron* offered incense for the first time, they were killed on the spot (they did not do it correctly)
- Most likely, *Zachariah* was a bit nervous when performing this task
- Remember that only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year and that a rope was tied to him in case something happened so they could pull him out
- At this point in the story, an angel appears to Zachariah
- Historically, Angels were depicted as very strong men with swords and armor, as soldiers of God

Luke 1 (Cont)

- It was only during the pagan Renaissance that they were depicted as fat little cherubs
- Most people in the Old Testament were very fearful of angels
- *Zachariah*, most likely, was very frightened when the angel appeared
- In fact, Gabriel says to him, “do not be afraid for your prayer has been answered” (This was at the hour of incense)
- So, the angel tells him that his prayer for a son had been heard, and he will name him “John” (Johanna – God is gracious)

Luke 1 (Cont)

- Father reminded us that God's grace gives us His covenants
- All Jewish names pointed to something
- God promises that His covenants were going to be fulfilled in this story
- God was acting in accordance with what He had promised, and that of course was the coming of Jesus