

Jesus' Life Prior to His Ministry: The Introduction of Christ, Part 1

Looking into the Face of Jesus
The Life of Christ, 1: Pages 35-44

Outline: Lesson Plan 4

Introduction

- A. Texts for this Study: Luke 1:1–4; Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38; John 1:1–18
- B. We come to the “introduction” that the Gospels give to Jesus.

I. Luke's Preface and Dedication (Luke 1:1–4)

- A. At the time of the first century, a basic body of beliefs was available to all the church.
- B. “Eyewitnesses and servants” had handed down their accounts.
- C. Luke had studied what was available to him.
 - 1. Luke wrote to Theophilus, whom he designated as “most excellent.” Perhaps this fact indicates that he was an official of high standing.
 - 2. His name means “lover of God.”
 - 3. He may have supported, as a patron, Luke's research.
- D. Luke said that he had recorded “the exact truth about the things” that Theophilus had been taught.

II. The Genealogies of Matthew and Luke

- A. Matthew's account was written for the Jews. His lineage was focused on proving that he was the Messiah that was promised through Jewish heritage. This Messianic lineage was according to prophesy:
 - 1. He was to be a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 22:18).
 - 2. He was to be a descendant of David (2 Samuel 7:16).
 - 3. There were also several surprises, such as wicked King Manasseh being in the list.
- B. Luke's account had a different purpose than Matthew's.
 - 1. Luke's ends with Adam to show His linkage to all of mankind.
 - 2. The two lists are also very different. They both show Abraham and David, but those names in between are different.
 - 3. The best suggestions as to why the difference is the following:
 - a. Matthew—gives the legal line through Joseph (for the Jews)
 - b. Luke—gives the fleshly line through Mary (some say royal line)
 - c. Mary is not mentioned in Luke, but that is because women typically were not mentioned.

- d. J. W. McGarvey gave a Levirate marriage explanation for the difference in fathers of Joseph.

III. John's Introduction of Jesus

- A. John wanted his readers to know that Jesus's life did not start in Bethlehem. He started the story in eternity.
- B. Some divide this introduction into three divisions:
 1. Jesus, the eternal Word—John 1:1–3
 2. Jesus, the Light who overrules the Darkness of this world
 3. Jesus, the revelation of God to men
- C. John described Jesus in several ways in this reading:
 1. He is the Word—John 1:1
 2. He is God—John 1:1
 3. He is Creator—John 1:3
 4. He is Life—John 1:4
 5. He is Light—John 1:7–9
 6. He is Savior—John 1:12
 7. He is Flesh, that is, Man—John 1:14
 8. He is the Only Begotten of the Father—John 1:14
 9. He is Provider of Grace and Truth—John 1:17
 10. He is God, the Father, Manifested—John 1:18

Conclusion

- A. Think of this introduction.
 1. What a great introduction of Christ that the three Gospels give us!
 2. Where does Mark begin?
- B. In light of these texts, who is Jesus?
 1. Is He a great man?
 2. Is He a great prophet?
 3. Is He the God/Man? Is He God in the flesh?