

From God to Your Mind

Commentary for September 1, 2021 — Reading and Listening to the Word of God

The "[September 2021 Newsletter](#)" introduces this month's article, "Who Wrote What In The Bible." Our Bible is a collection of the Holy Scriptures that are the Word of God; all of it is literally, the Word of God. The good, the bad, the profane, the holy and sublime — all are in the Scriptures. God's Word is about God's and Christ's relationship with you and every other human being.

The Word of God (the Scriptures) was different in the past. What we now call the Old Testament was the sole authoritative Word of God for Jesus, His apostles, disciples, and all believers until the New Testament was given, written, and canonized.

The Word of God will be different after Christ returns. In fact, Christ will give decrees to the surviving people of the world's nations and Israel and those words will be the Word of God.

For us in our day the Bible is how we access, read, and learn the thoughts and words of God and His Son Christ Jesus, what they want us to know about life, given from the past to us now. Do not neglect such a blessing. Recall what Luke, a Gentile, wrote to his friend at the beginning of his Gospel. I cite it from the *Concordant Literal New Testament* so you can contrast it with the King James Version or other translations:

"Since, in fact, even many,¹ take in hand to compose a narrative concerning the matters of which we are fully assured among ourselves, according as those who, from the beginning coming to be [1] EYEWITNESSES and [2] deputies of the WORD, give them over to us, it seems good to me also, having fully followed all accurately from the very first, to write to you consecutively [in order], most mighty Theophilus,² that you may be recognizing the CERTAINTY of the WORDS concerning which you were instructed."

• **Luke 1:1-4**

Examine this passage. **First**, Luke acknowledges that other writings, indeed "many" accounts existed about the life of Jesus at the time Luke wrote his narrative Gospel account to Theophilus. There are only four accounts in the New Testament: the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke (introduced here) and John. He consulted "eyewitnesses" and "deputies of the Word [of God]." Luke seems to say he consulted with teachers of the Gospel ("deputies of the Word") to learn how they know what they are preaching.

Second, Theophilus at some time in the past was verbally "instructed" with "the words"

¹ Luke does not say a few, not others (Matthew, Mark, and John), but many have written about the life of Christ. Any other gospels are not authoritative like the Gospels in our present Bibles.

² Although formal titles as Luke uses were common, I wonder if Luke's superlative "most mighty Theophilus" (the KJV says "most excellent Theophilus") is written as a private joke between them.

about the Gospel of Christ's life, ministry, death, and resurrection as the Son of God and Messiah by words of men. They taught Theophilus but he wants to be certain of the evidence. He did not want hearsay evidence from individuals two or three people removed from witnessing events. Luke says that his Gospel gives accounts of **"eyewitnesses"** of Christ. (Remember, Luke himself, a Gentile, was not an eyewitness to Christ's ministry or His death, resurrection, and appearances to believers.)

Third, Luke is not criticizing other non-biblical accounts, but he says his account will follow the narrative of eyewitnesses **"accurately"** and **"consecutively"** and it will give **"CERTAINTY of the WORDS concerning which you were [previously] instructed."** Luke is fulfilling the reasonable and proper request of Theophilus.

I wonder if Luke presented this project to the apostle Paul, not because Luke's friend was wealthy or powerful, but because it needed to be done. It is possible that only Matthew's eyewitness Gospel had been written when Luke undertook his Gospel writing project. Mark's Gospel has several portions extracted from Matthew's and Luke's Gospels.³ Mark's Gospel is not chronological, and John's Gospel was not yet written. Luke probably interviewed many people when he, Paul, and others were in Jerusalem. To learn how this all works out, read ["Chapter 13: The Need for a New Testament."](#) Jesus said to His disciples in John:

"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he [it], the Spirit of [THE] truth, comes, he [it] shall guide you into ALL [THE] truth."

• *John 16:12-13*, see Greek for the definite articles

Some complain that reading, listening, and learning are hard! They are hard, but God will reward your efforts:

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter."

• *Proverbs 25:2*

We are much more than kings. You are one of God's children (a prince or a princess of the Living God). If you do not **"search out"** the truths of God and Christ, you are missing out on comforting and exciting information for you and (eventually) for everyone you know.

The Holy Scriptures are intended to give proper messages to believers from God in the manner that He thinks best. Remember these words of God from Isaiah:

"So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

• *Isaiah 55:11*

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³ Many scholars feel Mark's Gospel was written first and Matthew and Luke took portions from Mark. Just the opposite is true. Matthew was written first, then Luke after 63 AD. Mark also wrote his Gospel after 63 AD. Mark wrote about Peter's experiences with Christ (among other events from Matthew and Luke). John's Gospel was written last.