

Introduction for August 22, 2010

Dr. Luke's grasp and understanding of the Scriptures was remarkable. He was a student of the Word of God and clearly used the text in a wonderful manner in presenting the gospel to Theophilus. It appears from the study of chapters 1 and 2 that he incorporated Genesis 11-21 in his writing of the infancy narrative. Also, his understanding of the division and order of the Levitical priesthood engages the reader to discover the providence of God throughout the history of Israel and the church as the Lord so mightily and sovereignly sustained the worship and service of the Temple in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. "Having followed closely all things" reveals to us the depth of Luke's understanding of the text and his use of it in affirming Theophilus' faith.

As we work through verses 5-17 today, let me encourage you to think on these themes. First, note the providence of God in all situations and His sovereignty over all things. God's sovereignty shines through the infancy narrative in brilliant display. Second, think about the seasons of life that are set before us in the persons of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph and the people of Israel. This is quite intriguing as we think about our own lives and their seasons. In every season of life there are unexpected blessings and, of course, many changes and adjustments that must be made. Zechariah and Elizabeth discovered that by having a miracle baby in their advanced years. Mary is troubled to learn that she will be the mother of the Son of God without having a husband. These seasons in their lives called for extraordinary adjustments and yet produced great blessings. In all of this we must be reminded of the mercy, sustaining grace, abounding love and unparalleled strength granted in each season of life. Unexpected pregnancies, the blessing of adoption, empty nests, physical limitations, the struggle of living in tumultuous times, growing through adolescence, the joy of new and dear relationships, whether in marriage or in the fellowship of the church, and the sorrow and grief of saying goodbye to a spouse, child, parent or friend in death are all seasons of life that require God's grace and mercy to sustain and encourage us. I would encourage you in whichever season you find yourself to look for untold blessings and grand opportunities to see God at work. Third, consider the vital importance of character and holiness in every arena of life, especially in ministry. Fourth, look at the absolute certainty and promise of God in verses 14-17 highlighted by the word "will". God's promises are always His performances. Fifth, look at the way Luke writes so as to place God at the center of all things. He has a high Christology and therefore, summoned Theophilus and all who would read him to be stunned at the Person and work of Christ Jesus. Finally, please take a good look at the pattern of worship Luke sets before us in the confrontation between Gabriel and Zechariah. In the days of serving our great God we must continue to realize that all of life is worship. Especially in the corporate times of worship we must be as troubled as Zechariah and as startled and at times disturbed at the presence of God; having fear fall upon us so that we will not be casual in our approach to God; at the same time experiencing the comfort of the Lord as He reminds us not be afraid for all of this is by design; to pray fervently and to know that God will fill our hearts and minds with joy and gladness at the announcement of the gospel.

Think on these things. Ask the Lord, even today, to stun you with His awesome majesty and glory through the text of Luke 1:5-17.