

Lk 1.1-2.52

As we begin our journey through Luke's gospel we look at the opening chapters. The first part of these notes focus on Lk 1.1-4. These verses introduce us to Luke's plan in writing the gospel (Lk 1.1-4). The story of Jesus' birth and the first theological statements of Jesus' identity follow and the focus of subsequent podcasts. These first two chapters of Luke introduce us to themes that will recur through the rest of the gospel



Hieronymus Bosch, *The Adoration of the Magi*, 1510.
Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.

Engaging Lk 1.1-4

These opening verses of Luke's gospel tell us so much about the evangelist's project:

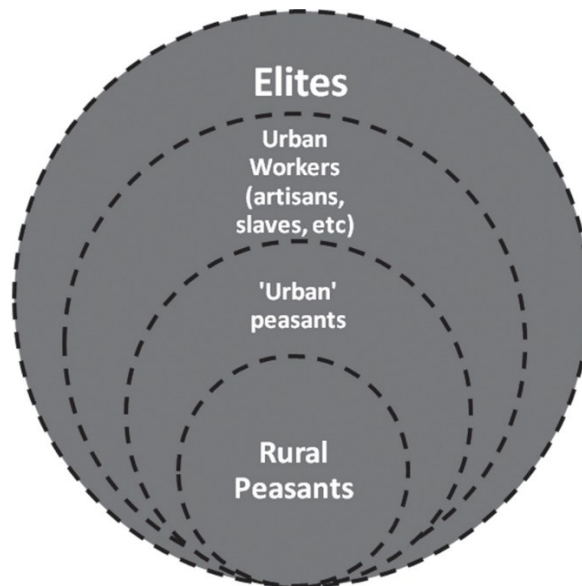
- The context of writing
- The heritage which Luke has received
- The method of writing
- The sources of Luke's gospel (personal and written)
- The purpose for writing

The Podcast examine each of these in detail, as we look at a literal translation from the Greek text:

NRSV	My Literal Translation
<p>Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,</p> <p>⁴ so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.</p>	<p>1:1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative concerning the things which have been accomplished among us, 1:2 just as they were delivered to us (<i>παρέδοσαν</i>) by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and became ministers of the word, 1:3 it seemed opportune to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly (<i>καθεξῆς</i>) account for you, most excellent Theoph'ilus, 1:4 that you may know about the words with which you have been catechised (<i>κατηχήθης</i>] with certainty (<i>ἀσφάλειαν</i>).</p>

The prologue provides the auditor with the context of Luke's writing (vs 1a), the subject matter (vs 1b), the sources that were used for the composition of Luke-Acts (vs 1, 2), the method Luke employed (vs 3), and finally the purpose in writing (vs 4).

In the four verses that compose this preface, the first two are causal directed to the main statement about method contained in vs 3. This leads into the last verse which is the statement of purpose. What is said about the method in writing is linked then with the first two verses reflecting on the written and oral sources which Luke had received and carefully investigated in compiling the "narrative" of the events which "have come to their fruition."



Luke addresses 'Theophilus'. Who is he? What is the explicit audience of the gospel? What is the implicit audience. The above diagram reflects the social composition of Luke's world.

The last verse of the prologue (v. 4) throws most light on revealing Luke's explicit faith educational focus.

Lk 1.5-2.52

For Reflection

What images does Christmas conjure up for you? What images stay with you?

-How do people generally experience Christmas? What issues undergird this experience?



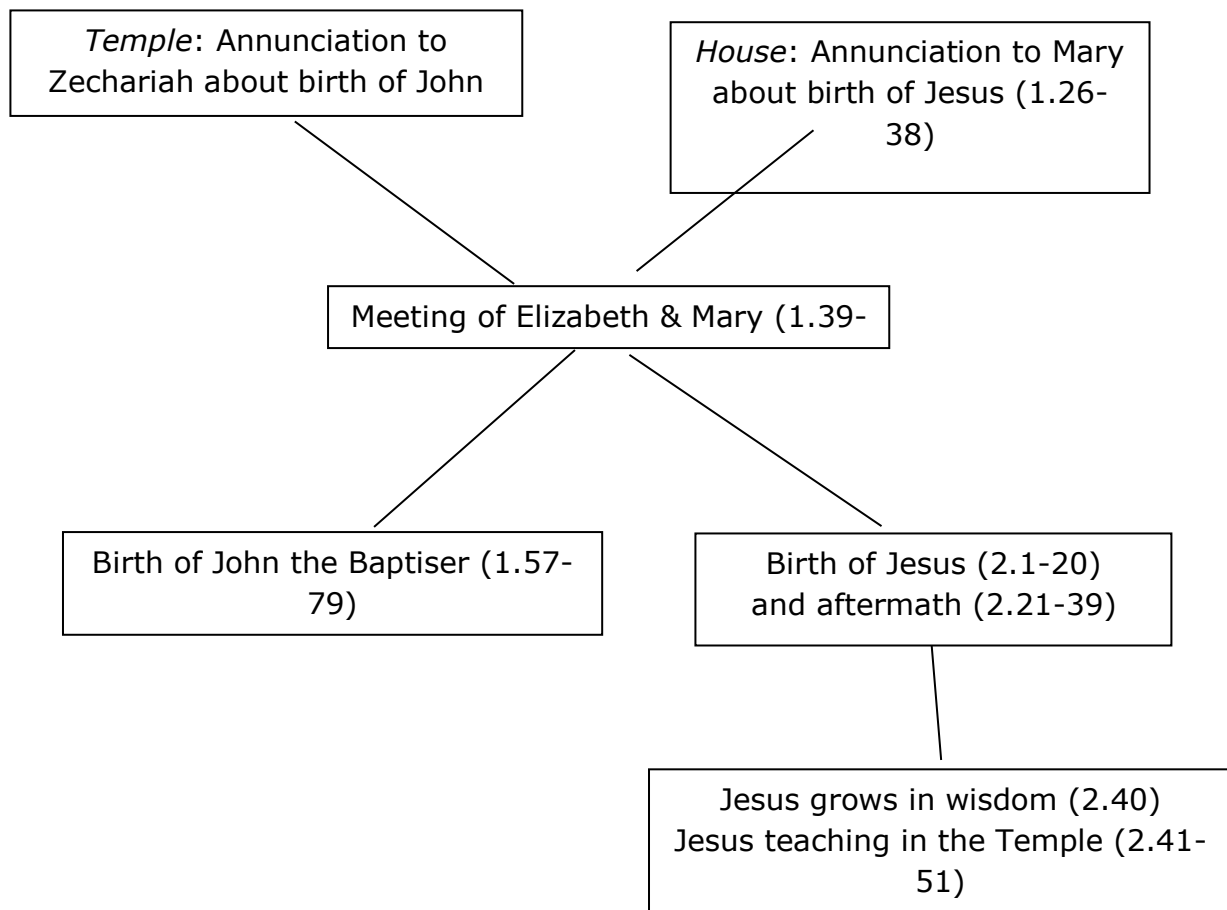
Hieronymus Bosch, *The Adoration of the Magi*, (Above and Right: Detail of village people looking at the virgin and child and their visitors) 1510.

Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.



The Podcast

The podcast will focus on this schema, as Luke contrasts the annunciation, mission and birth of John the Baptist (the 'dipper') with Jesus:



Luke's Parallelisms (*synkrisis*) of John the Baptist and Jesus

	John the Baptist	Jesus
Parents	Upright (1.6)	Mary favoured one (1.28)
Birth	Natural	Wondrous
Status	'Great before the Lord' (1.15)	'Great' (1.32)
Relationship to God	Will walk before the Lord (1.16-17)	Called 'Lord', 'Saviour', 'Messiah' (2.11)
Response to Angel	Zechariah: 'How shall I know this...?' (1.18)	Mary: 'How shall this be...?' (1.34)



Hieronymus Bosch, *The Adoration of the Magi* (detail), 1510.
Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.

Summary

From our engagement with Lk 1-2, we recognise how Luke:

1. Sees the world and the Greco-Roman culture in essentially positive terms;
2. Regards world is the arena of God's loving action, revealed in the annunciation and birth of Jesus;
3. Focuses on God and God's action through the birth of Jesus;
4. Presents Jesus as 'Child of the Earth'. This has ecological consequences for Christology and theology;
5. Sets imperial politics against the background of maternal and gestational images;
6. Subverts the dominant patriarchal value system.



Luke Paints the Icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria.
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