

# ***BYOBible***

## ***How Did We Get Our Bible?***

October 3, 2021

**Overarching Theme:** In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

### **Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

### **Core Point:**

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciples for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1<sup>st</sup> Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

### **Reflect on this Scripture:**

#### **Luke 1:1-4 NRSV**

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, <sup>3</sup> I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

### **This Week: Luke 1:1-4**

Luke opens the Gospel with a perfectly constructed, stylized introduction, (prologue), setting forth the occasion and purpose for his writing. In his prologue, he acknowledges that "*many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us*" through Jesus.

Although Luke does not name the others who had written – possibly because at this early date their writings were not yet called Gospels and individual names had not been attached to the accounts – he obviously knows of other accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus (probably at least the Gospel of Mark, possibly a passion narrative, and traditions found also in John). Luke was not an eyewitness, and he may not have included himself among the

“servants of the word.” Instead, he had followed the events closely, received and researched the traditions handed on by the eyewitnesses and servants of the word, and profited from the writings of his predecessors. Evidently, he had collected his material from both oral traditions and earlier writings.

His purpose in writing is to provide an *orderly account* for a person who otherwise unknown to us, named Theophilus. Because this name means ‘lover of God’ some have wondered if the name might be symbolic for disciples in general, but others believe that Theophilus was an early wealthy Christian convert who may have supported Luke in his writing and scholarship. At any rate, Luke wants Theophilus to be clear about “*the truth concerning the things*” related to the gospel and the ministry of Jesus. In that spirit, Luke offers his Gospel and in so doing also provides a window into the writing and compilation of the Scriptures.

-Adapted from New Interpreters Commentary, Vol IX, 39-40

### **Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:**

1. Clearly Luke’s prologue infers that there were many accounts circulating about Jesus and his ministry in his day. Luke tells us that he investigated everything carefully in preparation for writing his gospel, a very natural and orderly process. Since this infers that the gospels weren’t ‘dictated’ by God (nor did they descend ‘miraculously’ from heaven), does this encourage or discourage your confidence in the inspiration of Scripture? Why?
2. Luke speaks of ‘*events that have been fulfilled among us,*’ apparently referring to historical occurrences in the ministry of Jesus. Thomas Jefferson famously ‘edited’ the gospel of Luke and other NT documents, removing ‘events’ such as Jesus’ miracles and resurrection. How do you respond to those who, like the deist Jefferson, posit that the ‘events’ that Luke referred to are just inspiring stories that early Christians fabricated in order to encourage faith? How do you think Luke would have responded to Jefferson?
3. Luke’s purpose in writing is clear: “*that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.*” Clearly Luke believes that the gospel that follows is a reliable and trustworthy account of the ministry of Jesus. Does his understanding of ‘truth’ give you confidence that the gospels provide an essentially accurate picture of the life and ministry of Jesus? Why or why not?
4. The role of prayerful community discernment and the positive impact of these writings upon believers were important factors, among other things, in the growing acceptance of the four gospels and the other writings that have become our New Testament. How have the gospels

in particular impacted your spiritual journey? Can you think of a particular story, parable or verse that have been significant in your life?

**Activity for the Life of a Disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC and/or to journal in the "Morning by Morning" gratitude resource.
2. Take the "Chapter Challenge" to read or listen to a chapter a day from the one of the Gospels each day this week.
3. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: **Luke 1: 3-4 NRSV**  
*<sup>3</sup> I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.*