

December 19, 2017

Luke 1:1-25

¹Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. ⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." ¹⁹The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur." ²¹Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. ²²When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. ²³When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ²⁵"This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

The Rev. Andrew Pomerville, Senior Pastor, The Peoples Church / East Lansing, Mich. / Reformed Theology Focus

"... so that you may know the truth ..."

As a father to pre-teens, I find myself explaining things more than I would like. I used to get away with guiding the children to do, say, or be a certain way, and they trusted my motivation, expertise, and general parental vibe to put them on the right path. Somewhere along the way, my son and daughter lost that naïve ability to accept and now need an explanation.

I can't really blame them. This is what their mother and I have wanted all along. We hope and pray our children will grow into thoughtful, considerate, compassionate individuals who will ask questions as they

strive to become the adults God has called them to be. The problem is knowing how to share all that they might need to understand, believe, and become. How do I impart a lifetime of experiences that have influenced my faith, hope, and love? The task is daunting but it is oh so rewarding.

The author of Luke/Acts sets out on a similar journey—one of wanting the reader to believe in the truth of Jesus. And so, in a decent and orderly way, the author puts pen to paper and creates an account of Jesus that is meant to help the reader grow in faith, just as he/she experiences God anew and afresh with each morning.

Let us think this Advent about how we share what we know about Jesus Christ. What stories, experiences, and moments are necessary for another to hear so that they might have a similar theophany with our Lord? Share your worries, wonder, and doubts as much as you offer your trust, hope, and faith. And in sharing the message, see the story unfold anew.

Prayer

Gracious and ever creating God, help us partner with you in the creative storytelling that helps us grow, learn, and love through your Holy Spirit. Open our minds to find new ways to live in the narrative of your life, death, resurrection and ascension as we further become the members of your Kingdom that you have created us to be. Amen.