

Blessed be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome as we study the Bible, the Word of God, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Today, we'll be learning about a man named Theophilus. The Bible doesn't provide a lot of details about him, but he played a significant role in the spread of the gospel.

Before we dive into Theophilus' story, let's first establish some background on certain letters found in the Bible.

In the New Testament, we come across several letters written to individuals. These letters, originally intended for specific people, have proven to be helpful even to us today. For example, we have the letters Paul wrote to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. These letters were meant to build them up in their faith and ministry, but God allowed them to be preserved and read by many, even up to this day.

Timothy, Titus, and Philemon probably never imagined that the letters they received from Paul would be read by countless generations to come. They, along with Paul, were unaware of the impact these letters would have.

It's a bit like you writing a letter today to a distant relative, and many years from now, that letter ends up being read all over the world. You'd be amazed! That's exactly what happened with Paul and these individuals. They exchanged letters to strengthen each other in their ministry, but God had much bigger plans for those letters.

We're using these three as examples because they're well-known, but there was another important person in the Bible who played a significant role in the writing of the scriptures—though he isn't as famous as Timothy. This person is THE HONORABLE THEOPHILUS.

Just like Paul wrote First and Second Timothy, there were also letters written by Luke, which we could call First and Second Letters to Theophilus.

Many of us don't realize that the books of Luke and Acts were originally written as personal letters to one individual, not to the general public or the whole church. These books were specifically addressed to one man Theophilus. In other words, the books of Luke and Acts could be referred to as *The First Letter to Theophilus* and *The Second Letter to Theophilus*.

So, who exactly was Theophilus?

In short, Theophilus was a high-ranking official, probably a Roman, and not a Jew. He was a man of status, and he had a particular interest in the story of Jesus and His Apostles, especially Paul. However, he wasn't sure what to believe about what he was hearing. By the time he heard these stories, Jesus had already ascended to heaven, Paul was elderly, and the Apostles were scattered across the world.

Because of his position and wisdom, Theophilus sought out Luke who had traveled extensively with Paul on his missionary journeys and asked him to investigate and write an accurate account of all he had heard about Jesus and the Apostles. Theophilus wanted to get the truth and be certain about the stories he had heard.

We don't know exactly how much support Theophilus gave Luke to complete this task, but we know he did it wholeheartedly.

Luke, being a well-educated man (he was a physician) and a devoted follower of Christ, diligently compiled an account of Jesus' life from His birth to His ascension and then continued to write about the Acts of the Apostles after Jesus' ascension. He

also chronicled Paul's missionary journeys and how the gospel was spread to the Gentiles.

After gathering and writing all this information, Luke sent it to Theophilus. And these are the books we now read as the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

Without a doubt, when Theophilus received these two letters, he was greatly satisfied. His doubts were resolved, and he glorified God for the clarity he now had.

Let's take a brief look at the introductions to these letters Luke wrote to Theophilus, and then we'll consider what we can learn from him.

Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning,

I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,
so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Acts 1:1-3 (NIV)z

"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."

SO, WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THEOPHILUS?

First, consider how many valuable lessons and teachings we find in the books of Luke and Acts. If you've read them, you know how foundational and rich in faith they are.

Theophilus wasn't satisfied with just hearing surface-level stories about Jesus. He wanted to know the full details how Jesus was born, the circumstances surrounding His birth, who His family

was, what He preached, for how long, how He died, how He rose again, and where He is now. Perhaps Theophilus wanted to know all this for his own benefit, but also for his children and family.

Theologically, Theophilus exemplifies the believer's desire for a deeper, more personal relationship with the truth of the gospel. His pursuit reflects a biblical model of discipleship that seeks to understand the fullness of God's revelation. In Luke 1:3, we see Luke's intentional effort to deliver a "carefully investigated" and "orderly" account. This underscores the importance of accuracy and depth in understanding the events of salvation history, which is foundational to the Christian faith.

His goal was to avoid being misled by false teachings or the confusion that was spreading at the time. He sought reliable, accurate information. So, he went to Luke, who he believed was the best person to provide him with a trustworthy account.

And Luke, in turn, investigated thoroughly and wrote everything in detail.

Theologically, this demonstrates the reliability of Scripture. Luke wasn't merely recounting oral traditions or popular stories. He

carefully investigated the events he described, ensuring that his writings were reliable. This speaks to the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, which asserts that Scripture, in its original manuscripts, is fully truthful and trustworthy in all that it affirms.

That's why Luke says:

“...I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.”

As we've seen, Theophilus didn't just want to hear about Jesus. He also wanted to know about the Acts of the Apostles what they did, how they spread the gospel, and especially about Paul. He wanted to know who Paul was, how he encountered Jesus, and what he went through on his journeys. Luke wrote everything down, leaving nothing out!

Now, think about how much we've learned from the book of Acts about Paul's life and ministry. There's so much we can take from it. We see that the journey of faith involves highs and lows,

suffering, and challenges. This is consistent with the theology of the Christian life, which teaches that the believer's walk will involve perseverance through trials (Romans 5:3-4) and that suffering produces spiritual maturity (James 1:2-4).

So, because Theophilus sought to know and pursued the truth with diligence, it has become a blessing to us as well.

Likewise, we should be like Theophilus when it comes to matters of the Kingdom of Heaven. When we diligently seek to understand God's Word, the knowledge we gain not only benefits us, but it also helps others and future generations.

Theologically, this teaches us the importance of the pursuit of truth. The Bible encourages believers to "study to show [themselves] approved" (2 Timothy 2:15). Theophilus' quest for certainty in the gospel challenges us to approach God's Word with diligence, desiring a deeper understanding of God's redemptive plan, just as he did.

Maybe today, you're doing something small—writing something down or teaching your children. It might seem insignificant, but you don't know what God's plan for it might be in the future.

Perhaps Theophilus thought he wanted the letters for his own benefit and for his family. But God had a much greater plan for those letters, impacting millions of people in generations to come.

Ask yourself how great is the reward awaiting Theophilus? And he wasn't even a Jew!

One day, he will stand before the Lord and realize that his quest for truth not only blessed his own family but also impacted billions of people across generations. Right now, Theophilus is asleep in the grave, but at the resurrection, he will see the vast reward for his effort. And perhaps, had he known, he would have asked for even more knowledge to be written down for an even greater crown.

Because of his diligence, we have the books of Luke and Acts.

Matthew 8:11 (NIV)

"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

May the Lord help us do something today that will benefit us and future generations.

Maranatha!

Notes on Theological Concepts:

1. Reliability of Scripture: Luke's careful investigation (Luke 1:3) points to the reliability of the biblical text, which aligns with the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture.
2. Biblical Discipleship: Theophilus' desire for a thorough understanding of Jesus' life and ministry reflects the biblical model of discipleship—pursuing a deep and full knowledge of Christ.
3. Suffering and Spiritual Growth: The theological theme of enduring hardship for spiritual growth is reinforced by Paul's missionary journeys and the challenges he faced (Romans 5:3-4).

I hope this expanded version is what you had in mind! Let me know if you need any additional details.

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