

ZONDERVAN™

The Liberator

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Zondervan, *Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530*

Library of Congress Control Number: 2005934466

ISBN-10: 0-310-25817-0

ISBN-13: 978-0-310-25817-9

This edition printed on acid-free paper.

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Interior design by Rob Monacelli

Printed in the United States of America

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Chapter One

And Finally...

Exclusive? Luke 1:1-4

1-2

Okay, so I'm not slapping the word "EXCLUSIVE" all over the front cover – I'm not the first! There's plenty of other bios (authorised and unauthorised) flying up the bestseller lists. Other authors have published their take on how ancient predictions have come to life in the Here and Now with us – most of them reliable transcriptions from eyewitnesses and accredited storytellers who can say, hand on heart, looking you straight in the eye, "I was there."

[Luke 1:1] "Authorised" would be Dr Luke's version, Matt's account, Mark's take on Pete's story and then, much later, John's account. "Unauthorised" would be more dodgy versions supposedly from Thomas, Mary Mag, and plenty of other sensationalised, semi-fictional accounts of what might've possibly happened; some of them should be called the Jostick-Gnostic Gospels. Not that anyone would mess with the text today, surely!

[Luke 1:1-2] Where do we get the word "authorised" from – if it's written by an author, then it's ... erm ... "authorised", no?

¹ **God Reps = Priests.** The “go between” for God and his people – not to be mistaken for the “get-in-between”. Years back, this guy named Aaron was the very first God Rep, and since then only his family line was eligible for the post.

² **Religious HQ = Temple.** Jerusalem’s focal point of the Jewish Religion. Literally a house for God. Question is, how much does God get let out?

³ **Purest Place = The Holy of Holies.** The heart of the Religious HQ complex: the inner sanctum. Off-limits for all but the most devoted and then only once a year on a rota basis!

3-4

So since I’m well into this and have read around the subject, soaking myself in research, it rings true for me to lay down for you a definitive bio for you great God-loving readers: the What, Where, When, How and Why of the whole story. So you’ll be convinced that the stuff you’ve been taught is water-tight.

Here goes...

Expecting Luke 1:5-25

5-7

Old man Zechariah is standing beside one of a series of huge billboards with the giant-sized image of Herod the Great keeping Judea’s throne warm.

Quick Bio on Zechariah: One of the God Reps¹ – part of Aaron’s family tree, on the branch of the Abijah family. His missus, Elizabeth, could also claim an Aaron family surname. Both of them genuinely good people in God’s eyes, living in line with the Maker’s Instruction Manuals. The bad news? Their branch of the family tree is about to get lopped off; Elizabeth can’t conceive. Plus, they’re both clocking up the years.

8-10

It’s Zechariah’s 15 minutes of fame, the Mount Everest moment of his God Rep career.

It’s his group’s shift at the Religious HQ² and the old God Rep dice have landed on his name – he’s “randomly” picked out to do the incense-burning honours in God’s Purest Place³.

[Luke 1:3 – 4] The dignitary Dr Luke was writing to was a Greek name: “Theophilus.” Literally, Mr God Lover.

[Luke 1:7] In first century Near East, pre-PC days, couples who can’t moan about the stress of the school run are treated like they’re virtually disabled. The standard knee-jerk reaction was, “No Kids = No Values”. Back then, they were convinced it was God’s way of saying, “Not best pleased with you!” Course we know that God’s not like that, don’t we?!

His colleagues, the public, everyone – they're all outside, in deep conversation with God.

It's now! His big moment. He moves into the Purest Place to burn the incense to God.

11-13

Old Zech's doing the stuff when God's top angel is standing there to the right of the Incense Altar. Zechariah's freaked! He's frozen with fear, but the angel gives it, "Whoa! Don't panic, Zechariah. The top item on your wish list to God has been stamped with the word 'ACTION' and signed off by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, is going to have your baby boy. His name? John.

14-15

"He'll be a joy-factory for you and his birthday will be party time for so many. God'll look at him and always see the caption "Great" large in the frame. He'll be teetotal – no beer, wine or spirits. He'll be crammed full of the Holy Spirit. From manhood? No. From childhood? No. From birth? No. Get this: from conception!

16-17

"He'll round up so many Jews and bring them back to God their Boss. He'll clear the way for God; it'll be an action-replay of old Elijah, turning dads' hearts back to their kids, turning rebels' ears back to the wise words of their right-living advisors. He'll get people ready for God the Boss to show."

[Luke 1:11] Question is ... does Zechariah dare to wonder if God's speaking to them again?

God's voice has been on mute for 400 years! No couriers, no memos, no nothing. Check out God's last words of the Old Testament in a proper Bible. The last memo before God pressed pause was Malachi 4:5 – 6.

So what's the message now? Is it a mobilisation order for the underground insurgents to rise up and overthrow their Roman Oppressors? Is it the rallying call for the people's revolution? Nope, it's that Zech's going to be a dad!

18

But Zechariah comes back at Gabriel and asks, “And you can prove this? Face it, I’m not exactly just out of college, and my missus is no teenager either!”

19–20

The angel lays into him. “Have you any idea who I am?! Gabriel’s the name. I’ve got an all-access pass to God’s heaven! I’m delivering this message to you personally! And you have the nerve to interrogate me? You won’t say one more word until all this has played out its natural course and the baby’s gurgling away.”

21–22

Shift scenes to God’s Religious HQ, just outside the Purest Place. The crowd are nudging each other, raising their eyebrows, palms, shoulders asking, “What’s keeping him?”

He steps out, and all he can do is mime. They realise, “It’s some sort of visitation.” “He’s had a vision!”

23–25

Zechariah ties up the loose ends and clocks off duty. He goes home. Then Elizabeth gets pregnant, but keeps it on the quiet for five months. But she’s convinced, “God’s done this for me. He’s proved he’s for me by operating his shame-ectomy procedure and giving me my baby. From now on no one will look down at ‘Old-Mrs-No-Kids.’”

Luke 1:26–38

26–28

Second time in six months, God sends his top angel on an “overseas” trip: Gabriel picks up his work order for the day. It reads, “Destination:

[Luke 1:23–25] Would Elizabeth’s Psalm 23:1 read, “The Lord is my Gynaecologist ... he leads me besides broken waters...!?”

[Luke 1:24] So why does she keep it to herself? She must’ve been bursting to tell her neighbours, family, anyone – she’s pregnant! At her age!

[Luke 1:26–28] Does God have “bad books”?