

# Prologue: To Know With Certainty

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. We are starting a new series in the Gospel of Luke, which is going to be, I think, a lot! of fun.

There's a lot of really good stories, I think good storytelling in the Gospel of Luke, and we're going to be in this for almost a year and a half, and so that's quite a bit different, and I can't wait for that to start, but it's not going to start today, because the first part of chapter 1 of Luke is not a story, so it's not, it's going to, I'm just kind of giving you fair warning, first four verses of chapter 1, verses 1 through 4 are going to be boring.

Not really. I'm teasing. It's just not a story. But we're going to lay some groundwork today to help us to better understand the rest of the Gospel, and I think it's quite fascinating.

I hope that you do as well, but I want to start with reading the text of the first part of Luke chapter 1, and then we will jump off there and first discover who is this guy Luke, first of all.

We're going to talk about that to start with. So this is how he starts his Gospel. By the way, this is the longest of the four Gospels. It's the first half of his two works of history that he writes.

[ 1 : 42 ] He writes Luke, and he also writes the book of Acts. Luke actually contains most of what would be the most words, most content in our New Testament.

A lot of people assume that it's the Apostle Paul who wrote most of the New Testament. In terms of the number of books or letters that he wrote, that's true, but in terms of the sheer content, Luke is the number one author in terms of the amount that we have.

So quite interesting from that perspective. And here's how he starts. Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who were from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word or servants of the word and have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent, Theophilus.

So we're also going to answer that question. Who's this guy? And why is he mentioned there? And then finally, these four verses, one lengthy sentence here.

That you may have certainty, and this is why he writes, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught. So, who is Luke?

[ 3 : 18 ] First of all, Luke is a travel companion of the Apostle Paul. And we are first introduced to Luke in the text in the book of Acts during what is Paul's second missionary journey.

Acts chapter 15, which Luke also wrote, is the story of the first report of the first missionary journey when Paul and Barnabas reported back to the church at Jerusalem what was going on and major decisions being made there in terms of what is the gospel, what contains the gospel.

Is circumcision going to be necessary? Those kinds of questions. At the end of chapter 15, Paul and Barnabas have a disagreement about who was going to be their third member of their party in traveling.

Paul takes Silas and begins retracing their steps that they took through the region of Galatia, which is in our modern-day Turkey, kind of the south-central portion of modern-day Turkey.

It was in Galatia that they picked up a young man by the name of Timothy. We have a couple of letters that Paul wrote to young Timothy, the pastor, later on.

[ 4 : 43 ] So that name is familiar. And then in chapter 16, beginning in verse 6, we see some interesting things here happening with pronouns.

Now, the world might tell you today that pronouns are not important, or they might tell you that they're more...

Anyway, we have a kind of a controversy, not so much here, but about pronouns. But pronouns can be very interesting, and so we find them today to be very interesting.

And I want you to notice how Luke, the author, writes these words. So chapter 16, verse 6, And they...

So now he's talking about Paul and Silas and Timothy. They were traveling together through what is modern-day Turkey, through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

[ 5 : 42 ] Now, that's Asia Minor. It's not what we would consider Asia today. It's still a part of Turkey in their context. And when they had come up to Mesia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

So passing by Mesia, they came down to Troas. So it's an interesting thing that's happening here. They're trying to go in a couple of different directions, and the Holy Spirit seems to be forbidding them.

And there's a specific reason why the Holy Spirit is directing them to Troas. Because it's in the city of Troas that they come up and they meet another, what will be a future traveling companion.

So in verse 9, it says, And a vision appeared to Paul in the night, a man of Macedonia. Macedonia is just north of Greece. Macedonia would have contained, for instance, the cities that would be of interest to us.

Philippi or Philippi, the book of Philippians and Thessaloniki or Thessalonica, where he wrote the letters to the churches there, the Thessalonians.

[ 7 : 01 ] This man of Macedonia was standing there urging Paul, saying, Come over to Macedonia, meaning come across the Aegean Sea, and help us. And so when Paul had seen the vision, notice the pronoun change, immediately we.

So now Luke has joined up with Paul and Timothy and Silas. We sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to him.

And this is the first instance where it seems Paul meets Luke. And from this point forward, there are a couple other times during the book of Acts where the narrative changes from us and we to they and them.

So Paul leaves Luke in one city and then picks him up again in another city. And Luke basically travels with Paul through the rest of his second and third missionary journeys, his trip back to Jerusalem.

And then through his arrest in Jerusalem and Caesarea, his two-year imprisonment in Caesarea before they put him on a ship and send him to Rome for his trial.

[ 8 : 16 ] And Luke is with him that whole time. And so Luke is, of course, becomes very familiar to Paul and familiar to Scripture in terms of how much he writes.

And the impact that he ended up having on Paul and his ministry. So he's a travel companion of Paul. Now, secondly, he is not an eyewitness, an eyewitness of the events of Jesus.

Luke is a man who would have never seen Jesus personally, would have never met him, only would have been able to hear some of the stories about Jesus.

And so he's not an eyewitness. That makes him unique in terms of writing Scripture, particularly writing a gospel. Matthew was one of the original 12.

John, one of the original 12. Mark, a relative of the apostle Peter. Peter, most people think that Mark got most of his information from Peter and that Mark was probably like a 12-year-old boy during the ministry of Jesus and would have been around, like it was his family's house that contained the upper room.

[ 9 : 37 ] And so he would have seen Jesus in Galilee, would have known of Jesus from that perspective.

But Luke is someone who'd never seen Jesus, never witnessed any of the miracles, never saw any of it. But Luke ends up being something as well.

Well, here from verse 2, he's talking about those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word and delivered them to us. So all that he has are the accounts of people who knew Jesus, who were with Jesus, and those eyewitness accounts he knew of.

So while he was not an eyewitness, Luke was very much so a researcher. We're going to see how much of a researcher Luke becomes.

And that's an important aspect of his ministry. So he says in verse 3, having followed all things closely for some time past, he's now seeking to write this orderly account for this, what for us is a stranger, Theophilus.

[10:53] Why is he doing that? But he's writing this orderly account and researching this story of Jesus for Theophilus. Here's a third interesting thing about who Luke was.

Luke was a medical doctor. That makes Luke a little bit interesting here. In Colossians chapter 4, verse 14, Paul is identifying Luke as a beloved physician.

And so Luke would have had all of the medical training, and that's evident in the way that he writes. He's a very educated man. He writes his Greek language that he writes is almost classical Greek. Most of the New Testament, or all the New Testament, is written in Koine Greek, or common language, street language Greek. But if anyone kind of rises above that in terms of his ability with language, it would be Luke.

Paul also does. But Paul is using Greek as a second language, where for Luke, as we'll see in a little bit, Luke's first language was probably Greek.

[12:07] The name Luke is a Greek name, and we'll see more about that in just a moment. So we see some things in Luke's gospel that are different from all the other gospels, and most of the rest of the New Testament as well.

Luke uses a good number of words that aren't found anywhere else in the New Testament, so his vocabulary is increased over all the other New Testament. And he's using some, and it makes sense, when Jesus heals someone, you see him using language that a medical doctor would use in healing somebody.

So that makes sense. And that's what you would expect to find when you read a medical doctor's accounts of Jesus. Luke was, perhaps, they don't know, we don't know this part of it, a former slave.

Now, theologians would say that for a couple of reasons. One, it wasn't unusual for slaves to be doctors. Those who were wealthy enough to have multiple slaves, they might send one of their slaves, if they saw that they had the capacity for learning and so forth, they might send them for medical training, and then they would have someone in their employ, if you will, who served their purposes as a medical doctor.

So that wasn't an unusual thing. And then they were also then able to buy off being a slave and become a freedman later on.

[13:47] And so that's possible for Luke. That's just one of the mentions. And then secondly, slaves also had names that were often nicknames of who their master would be.

So Luke is a shortened name for someone like Lucius, for instance. There are a few other names that could be Lucas, could be one.

They don't know. It's kind of like, my name is Richard, and if I had a slave, he might be known as Rich. Or maybe I was a slave, since I'm known as Rich, and my master was Richard. That's their culture. That's just how they did things. So it's possible. There's no way to know that, so the word perhaps there, perhaps he was a slave. We don't know that. But that's an interesting aspect of it.

Here's something that we do know. And again, this makes Luke unique from every other New Testament writer. Luke was not Jewish. Luke was a Gentile. And so that makes his authorship of these two books quite interesting.

[15:00] And you would think that that would impact his writing as well, in terms of who his audience would be. He wouldn't have necessarily, even though he does quote from Old Testament passages, because his eyewitnesses that he would have interviewed would have done that.

But he writes from a perspective of how Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. We see that right in the beginning, in the birth accounts, with the announcement of Jesus being born by the angels, with the prayer of Simeon in Luke chapter 2.

And we'll get into those things as well when we come across them, how the focus of Luke seems to be, he's not just the Savior for the Jewish nation, for Israel, but he's the Savior for the whole world. Now, some major themes that you will find in the book of Luke as you are reading this. And I would encourage you to read along in your devotional reading as we make our way through this as well.

But here are some major themes to take note of. The first is that this is the gospel of amazement. Now, it's not that Matthew and Mark and John don't ever use words like amazement, but Luke does it much more often.

[16:25] And he uses five different Greek words that can be translated to be amazed or astonished or awed. And it's quite interesting when he does this.

For instance, and we're going to run into these all throughout the text, but Luke chapter 5, verse 26, amazement seized them all. And they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, we have seen extraordinary things today.

This is such a usual, such a normal kind of response that Luke pens as he's writing this story, as he's listening to these eyewitnesses, and he's taking notes, and as he writes out his gospel, he is saying that the response to Jesus is amazement.

And my question for us is going to be, as we read these same stories, as we look through this text, as often as we have in the past read through Luke, maybe the question for me, why am I not amazed?

Can we? Can we perhaps capture that kind of amazement that the people had as they witnessed these events? And it wasn't just like the healings and the miracles.

[17:48] It was also his teaching. Luke chapter 4, and he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching. So even just his speaking amazed them for his word-possessed authority.

They weren't used to that. They were used to a lot of hemming and hawing and rabbis not taking positions and so forth.

But Jesus was different. He very much so spoke with authority, and that amazed them. And so I hope that we'll see that as we make our way through the text.

Here's another aspect of Luke's writing that is unique. Luke writes about this quite a bit. When those who should don't.

Another way of saying that is when those who shouldn't do. Let me give you a for instance of what I mean by that. Those religious leaders, the Pharisees, the scribes, the teachers, the rabbis, the supposedly spiritual people that he writes about in the gospel who should have, of anyone else, who should have been able to understand the teaching and the ministry of Jesus.

[19:15] They didn't. They didn't see it. They didn't get it. And on the other hand, the simple, run-of-the-mill, most of the time, women who shouldn't have understood, who shouldn't have caught on, who shouldn't have grasped the story.

They ended up being the ones who did get it, grasp it, take hold of it, understand it. You see it right off with, in chapter 1, the story of Zachariah who had an angel visit him and give him a birth announcement and he didn't get it.

He didn't respond in faith. So the angel struck him mute until John the Baptist was born and a simple, little teenage girl, Mary, who was also visited by the same angel, told that she would give birth to the Messiah in simple faith.

She just accepted it. Shouldn't have happened that way. One was a priest who worked in the temple. One was a simple, little teenage girl in the backwoods of Galilee.

What about that? Other stories that we'll see along the way, the Jewish crowds who didn't understand Jesus, who didn't have faith in Jesus the way a Roman centurion, a Gentile, hated by the people who expressed such a faith in Jesus.

[21:01] Jesus, you don't even have to go visit my house. I know that you can heal my servant. I know that you can heal him just by speaking in the words.

And that marveled Jesus because he had not yet seen that kind of faith in the places where he should have seen it. Why was that happening?

Simon the Pharisee who was fellowshiping and eating a meal with Jesus who was questioning Jesus and then the woman who came and knelt at the feet of Jesus and her tears falling on the feet of Jesus and she uses her hair to dry his feet.

Simon doesn't get it. But this woman, this simple, uneducated woman, she does.

She gets it. When Jesus goes and heals the possessed, the demon-possessed man at the tombs of the Gerasenes, the rest of the unpossessed people don't get it.

[22:20] The one possessed man does get it. the rich man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the tax collector who go to the temple and pray.

You see these stories. The rich young ruler who won't accept this good news that Jesus wants to give and Zacchaeus, the tax collector.

It's one story right after the other. one responds in faith and begins to pay back the rich young ruler unwilling to let go.

Even at the resurrection, the eleven disciples who don't want to believe and the group of women who do.

It's all throughout. The people who should know, who don't, they should know better, they should be able to respond, they should get it, and those you wouldn't expect to get it.

[ 23 : 36 ] They're the ones that end up being the ones who do. Luke also majors on the parables. And again, it's not that Matthew and Mark don't share parables, they do, but Luke shares more of them, and he shares more about them.

So even when you see similar parables between Luke and Matthew and Mark, Luke is going to give you more information, more background information. He might include names in his parables. He might include places in his parables. He might set up the context of the parable, which is different than what you see in Matthew and Mark.

And one of the books that I have been reading is written by Michael Card, Luke, the Gospel of Amazement. Michael Card, I don't know if you know him, he's actually a songwriter, singer-songwriter, who's written some incredible music.

He's an older man now, so much of his stuff dates back to the 80s and 90s. So whether or not, some of you date back that far too, so, you know, some of you should know who he is, but anyway, this is what he said about this.

[ 24 : 56 ] He's also a theologian, and so commentary on the Gospel of Luke. The parables of Christ are a mystery. They're not equations to be solved, and this is where we get into a lot of trouble when it comes to reading through the Gospels, when we take a parable of Jesus and we try to turn it into something that we can understand and turn into an equation.

Two plus two equals four, and that's not always the case when Jesus tells his parables. You are never done with a single parable of Jesus, or perhaps it is better to say that his parables are never done with you, and I like the way he says that, because there's something about the parables, and I think even more particularly in Luke's Gospel as we get into some of these parables that make them unique.

You will struggle with the parables the rest of your life. Whether it's all of them together, or if it's just an individual parable, you can struggle with it the rest of your life, and I'll explain that in a moment. If you choose to, you can just read it and think you understand it and move on. You're missing out, if that's the case. Parables are meant for you to struggle with the rest of your life.

They're never quite done with you. There's a couple of aspects about parables, again, even more so in Luke's Gospel. For instance, one of them is identification.

[ 26 : 46 ] When you read these parables, when I read the parables, we identify with one or another character in the parable.

And who you identify with in the parable will say much about you and where you are currently at spiritually by who you identify with in the parable.

For instance, Luke chapter 15, the parable of the prodigal son. The younger son who runs away asks for his father's inheritance ahead of time and goes and blows it on all kinds of the old King James word, wanton living.

You guys know what that means. Terrible living. Or the older brother who when the younger brother comes back and he has this what seems like bitter pharisaical response.

Which one are you? Or maybe you can even identify with the father. And you've had a son or a daughter who was a prodigal.

[ 28 : 06 ] And you can relate to that. And so many of these parables it's who am I in the story of the parable. And that might change as you go through your own life in terms of who you identify with.

And then the other part of this is the way that the parables have a lack of closure to them. The parables will have an end to the story but then the moral of the story is left off for you to figure out. For you to complete the blanks or to complete the sentence. What does this mean? Parables are and again that can be interpreted in different ways.

And you may come to a particular conclusion but then as you wrestle with it some more maybe the next time you read through that gospel you'll think well wait a minute there's this aspect to it or that aspect to it.

The problem that we have with parables is that they can be over analyzed and over explained to death and that's not their purpose.

[ 29 : 36 ] The purpose of the parables is just for us to wrestle with how do we come to the conclusion how do we finish the story what is the moral of the story and Jesus doesn't supply the answer for us he just simply tells the story oftentimes leaving us confused like the disciples and saying what in the world did he mean by that and sometimes we see the back room story where the disciples meet Jesus in a house somewhere and they say well you told that story what in the world did that mean and then he retells the story again and still leaves it with a sense of okay I'm still not sure I get it and that's okay we have to be okay with that we have to be we have to allow the Holy Spirit to use these parables in us to change us to grow us to mature us over time to let them sit and let them go unsolved another interesting aspect of of Jesus is the paradox that is Jesus I want to show you Luke 5 26 again I showed this to you earlier but you'll see that I changed a word so this is this is Rich's changing up the word sort of amazement and amazement sees them all and they glorified God and were filled with awe right and then the ESV text says and we have seen extraordinary things today well the word extraordinary the ESV translates as extraordinary the new American standard remarkable amazing the NLT we have seen the actual Greek word is paradoxa we've seen paradoxical things today we've seen things that are a paradox now what is a paradox a paradox are things that don't fit we have a preconceived idea of how this works and what Jesus just did doesn't fit that what Jesus just said doesn't come alongside and para come alongside of and what's interesting is the word doxa do anybody know what the word the Greek word doxa means we we get our word doxology from it it's glory glory a paradox paradox it's it's it's an unusual way to understand the text that when they were amazed by what Jesus did and what Jesus said and they recognized that it didn't fit their preconceived mold of how would this have gone what they were saying is what Jesus said and did came alongside of and brought glory to God in a way that they didn't expect it's a paradox it's a paradox for them so you might even use the word unorthodox Anybody know what the word ortho means?

Some of you you've heard of like an orthopedic surgeon right? Or orthodontist ortho meaning straight right? Because you go see an orthodontist and what does he do with your teeth?

[ 33 : 58 ] Straightens your teeth right? It means straight or true or right but the root of it is straight so if something is orthodox it fits the mold it's right it's true it's straight unorthodox might also be a way of saying this Jesus was unorthodox it seems like for instance he called a particular man by the name of Matthew to be one of his disciples Matthew was a anybody remember tax collector whoo that didn't fit the mold that what what I mean tax collectors were numbered with all the bad people all the horrible rotten low down worst of the sinners you had all the sinners and then you had the tax collectors they were worse kind of like congress and then the media you had all the sinners and then you had the tax collectors were bad news because not only were they robbing people they were doing it for a foreign government that was oppressing them and they hated them and Jesus called one of them to be his disciple that's that doesn't fit the mold

Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees Jesus and his disciples because they didn't fast and pray like the rest of the people did what is going on with that why don't you fast and pray like like the rest of us and Jesus said well listen when the bridegroom's around that's not a time for fasting that's a time for feasting that's a time for celebration the bridegroom's here it's there's prophetic there's prophecy in that okay it's it was and that impacted Luke's writing so greatly we'll see that in a moment Jesus why do you and your guys harvest wheat on the Sabbath day that's not right that's not straight yeah Jesus would say well yeah it is okay because the Sabbath was not meant to be something that we serve the Sabbath was meant to serve us okay so yeah and Jesus you just healed that man on the Sabbath day how dare you and it didn't fit their mold it was paradoxical it was it just didn't seem right same area he speaks the beatitudes to them you see the biggest display of that is in Matthew chapter 5 but he does it here in the gospel of Luke as well and he speaks to a way of life an attitude of life that doesn't seem to fit with the way the world works it doesn't work he tells them to love their enemies what these are things that for us they fall almost on deaf ears because we've heard love your enemies you know most of our lives but that's not how the world works and even when we're confronted with real life situations where we're called to love our enemies we don't we kind of tuck that back and we no it's not how it works it doesn't work that way but we see that again throughout the gospel these paradoxical moments that don't fit the mold it's not how it's supposed to be and Jesus turned their world upside down we see that throughout the gospel of

Luke and then Luke's grasp of the old testament this is the Hebrew word hesed or I have to get out of spitting range because the Hebrew way of saying hesed is hesed you got to get the I'm not Jewish so I can't do it right but but you get the idea it's actually a kind of a ch sound but you got to pronounce it in the back of your throat not not where you normally would pronounce like chair that's up at the front anyway this this Hebrew word hesed which all the translations in the Old Testament all the Old Testament translations whenever they come to this word it's almost impossible for them to translate this word into English because there is no English equivalent to this Hebrew word or this concept of hesed and so I have this is the

English standard translation of the word from Psalm 86 verse 15 and it's found throughout the Old Testament we've talked about this before but you may not have been here or remember this but you oh Lord are a God merciful and gracious slow to anger abounding in steadfast love we have a song that we sing that carries with it the same idea but this has said this steadfast love this is a definition I believe by the way that is from God's perspective this loyal love this love that God refuses to quit on because he has made this commitment Genesis 15 this one way this unconditional commitment between us and his chosen or between him and his chosen people that Abraham fell asleep and couldn't complete this covenant between him and God it was a one way covenant only God committed to the covenant covenant it didn't matter if

[ 40 : 25 ] Abraham did or not if you remember Genesis chapter 15 it's kind of a gruesome where the animals are split in half and they walk through the middle of that that's a way to strike a contract in the Old Testament we just kind of sign a document and we're good with it but with them to sign a contract it was quite extensive and God made the commitment to his people that said I will love you I will more than that have mercy on you more than that I will have compassion towards you more than that I will show you kindness because I decided this is God saying that because God decided not because you did not because you have any commitment to keep you didn't make a commitment in the first place I did and it's only based on my commitment

I don't know how Luke gets this but he does a Gentile one who shouldn't have but did a Gentile gospel writer seems to get this throughout his gospel when he lavishly talks about the mercy of God Mary will sing about it Luke chapter 2 you'll see it throughout the people who cry out for mercy but it's written I think from Luke's perspective from man's perspective it's the concept of chesed this steadfast loyal love but instead of it being from God's perspective it is from our perspective what it looks like for us from

God's perspective it's his choice his decision his commitment it's all him from our perspective here's kind of the definition here when the person from whom I have no right to expect anything good gives me only everything good every aspect of our lives from our salvation from the house the relationships the food anything that we have that we can call good only comes from a merciful and loving

God who has chosen of his own will to say I will love these people and perhaps a shorter way of saying that it's just simply undeserved!

Mercy! I don't deserve it! And yet that's all he ever gives me! Chesed we'll see that throughout on display these people who have no right to expect any good thing from Jesus approach him and ask for his mercy anyway and he gives it freely another aspect of Luke's gospel that is quite interesting these gospels are not written in chronological order and sometimes that throws us off okay the same is mostly true for

[ 45 : 07 ] Luke of the four gospel writers he's the one who gets it the closest in terms of chronological order but in the end it's still not John's gospel if you're familiar with John's gospel half of his gospel from chapter 12 to the end of the gospel is like one week in time it's like through chapter 11 it's like the first three years of his ministry all condensed into 11 chapters and he's got a specific purpose in mind he's only bringing up seven signs or miracles seven specific miracles each one different than the other because he's trying to demonstrate the deity of Jesus and here are the signs that he displayed during his ministry and then the second half of his gospel is just one week in time the passion week that's it Luke does something that's similar to that but it's not quite as drastic as what

John does in his gospel from chapter 9 verse 51 through chapter 19 part of chapter 19 we have what is the journey where in the up to chapter 9 verse 51 it's Luke just from our perspective perhaps just sharing random stories of the ministry of Jesus perhaps in chronological order but he's just random teachings and miracles of Jesus and then in chapter 9 verse 51 there's a switch and it's

almost like a switch on the wall once verse 51 comes up it's a change in what he's doing and it's this verse here most of the translations most of the newer translations don't translate it quite as literally as this unfortunately when the days drew near for

Jesus to be taken up to be crucified buried resurrected taken up into heaven when the days drew near for him to be taken up he's in Galilee he's in the north and he set his face to Jerusalem some of the more modern translations will say he determined to journey to Jerusalem he determined to travel to Jerusalem but literally the language is he set his face it does speak of a determination that says I'm going to Jerusalem that is my mark that is my mission that is where I'm headed and I know what's awaiting me there it is the reason why I came this is toward the end of his ministry so he knows he's not coming back from Jerusalem he knows he will be crucified when he gets there and that everything will change so he knows he's in Galilee and he sets his face and then from that point forward verse 51 of chapter 9 to chapter 10 chapter 11 chapter 12 13 18 19 19 when he arrives at Jerusalem you see Jesus making some incredible statements that so often get misinterpreted!

Because they miss the urgency they miss the urgency of Jesus on this journey so when he says things like hey don't go tend to your family don't go tend to your oxen in the field don't go bury your father who just passed away hate your father and mother and we struggle with how to understand those but if you forget or if you've never heard that he speaks these kinds of teachings in the midst of this journey to Jerusalem then you'll misunderstand the urgency of it okay why is this so important why do I want to seemingly abandon my family to follow Jesus in this moment because he is presenting himself to Israel as its Messiah the bridegroom is here the time for the kingdom is right now this is not time for dilly dallying this is not time even for things that are priorities in your life because there is no greater priority than the

[ 50 : 35 ] Messiah is standing right in front of your face how are you going to respond because that response to Jesus the Messiah presenting himself as your king is right now not five minutes ago not five minutes from now it's right now you're standing face to face with Jesus what will you do oh I'm going to go bury my dad he just died that's an important thing but not when Messiah is standing right in front of you presenting himself as Israel's king which is what he's doing do you see that do you see the urgency of that that's going to impact that whole section of his gospel so we must remember that and I will certainly remind you as we make our way through that text there's a drum beat that's going on there and some of you have been here for a while when

I taught Luke on a Tuesday night we had this drum beat going on and there's a reason for that we need to be aware that that's the context where Jesus says some of these seemingly outlandish things and then you hear some preachers or teachers or commentaries trying to make comment or preach or teach about these things that Jesus tells us to do!

And it's like they don't get it they miss the whole context from which they were taught so you can't teach them in the context of where we are today okay so the idea of me hating my mother or father or not burying my own father when he died it doesn't make sense in our context today it made sense in the context in which he said them but it doesn't those of you who had loved ones died did you bury them did you do wrong because you buried them no okay because we're not face to face with Messiah coming to present the kingdom like they were then we'll get into that as we make our way through number seven Luke serves as a bridge a bridge between the gospels and the letters a bridge between generations the first generation of believers who were eyewitnesses and the second generation of believers who only heard about

Jesus Luke serves as a bridge between two worlds of leadership the first group of people who experienced Christianity they had the one leader who was perfect in every way the next generation multiple leaders who were all very much so imperfect okay there's a transition there between old and new testament world the old testament people as we'll see as we make our way through chapter two of Luke the old testament saints that were waiting for Messiah and the new testament saints who are now following that's our call to follow the Messiah and there's there's one more that you don't have on your notes you can call it a bonus you can call it number eight whatever you want to do Luke's focus on prayer we're gonna we're gonna talk about that too

Luke talks about prayer more than any of the other gospels and focuses in on prayer and the role that it plays and it will play real quickly who is this guy Theophilus a couple of ideas ultimately we don't know so here are the two best guesses and all you have is a guess Luke may have used the name simply to represent those who are lovers of God that's what Theophilus means Theophilus is

two Greek words put together Theos God and Philos love so Philadelphia is Philos love and Adelpia is the word for brother so Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love okay it's two Greek words put together here the two Greek words put together Theophilus is God so Theodore someone who adores

[ 55 : 28 ] God and Theophilus someone who is a lover of God so it might have been just a generic name to describe anyone who would come and read who was a lover of God who would read his gospel possibility number one if he was a specific person possibly Theophilus may have been a Roman official who was somehow involved in Paul's trial and so Luke's gospel became part of Paul's first defense in Rome possibly that he began that he did his research when Paul was imprisoned in Centuria for two years before they finally shipped him to Rome so Luke who was with Paul in Centuria would have had opportunity to drop down short journey into

Jerusalem or over to Galilee and to meet with these eyewitnesses can you imagine you can imagine Luke interviewing Mary he he is the only one who has the birth story from Mary's perspective you can see that interview taking place okay so incredible incredible stuff there no reason to be dogmatic about who this Theophilus character was Luke's gospel some of the characteristics that I hope that you will take notice of as we make our way through the text Luke's gospel is solidly based in the facts of verifiable history Luke is amazing this way he's not writing as if this is a fairy tale okay he's not saying once upon a time he has noticeable identifying characteristics throughout his gospel that let you know time and place time and place he dates it we didn't he didn't have dates how we would say back in 1976 we celebrated

America's bicentennial we they couldn't say it like that so they identified things by who was in charge in what region and in what year their reign was so when you go through this he's talking about the things that were accomplished among us so you have people who are talking about the things that actually happened and these eyewitnesses and that they were not just any eyewitnesses they were also ministers or servants of the word they had a reputation as being honorable faithful servants of the word these weren't just any any guy off the street these were people who had a reputation now here's your tiny print from Luke chapter actually Luke chapter 2 the birth story that you know little kids will get up and read christmas time right starts with this identification stuff but we see it again chapter 3 verses 1 and 2 in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Itcheria and Traconanus and Lysinius tetrarch of Abilene not Texas during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas all of that before he says the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness John the Baptist that's how he introduces John the Baptist with all of those identifiers verifying when and where it took place this is not in a galaxy far far away or once upon a time this is history and it's verifiable and you can go back you can take these gospels and these documents and you can go back in history and see that they actually happened as

Paul would say this was not done in a small place it was worldwide that it was accepted secondly Luke's gospel is an orderly and purposeful account of the life and ministry of the savior so Luke committed to this writing down this orderly account and its purpose we see in this next statement that Luke's gospel can be believed and it must be believed Luke's gospel tells us the truths that we need to understand in order to understand the gospel in other words in order for us to be saved to know that we are

[ 61 : 08 ] Christians to know that we have trusted in Christ as our savior that's the importance of this that we can do that with confidence he says it with certainty so that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught it can be and it must be believed it is a matter of life and death of eternity in heaven or eternity in hell must be believed and must be handed down to other faithful witnesses this whole exercise that we're going to undertake going through the gospel of Luke is our effort to just hand down the truth of the gospel from one generation to the next hopefully from one faithful witness to more faithful witnesses!

This is the goal! This is what we have in mind! This is what we will attempt to accomplish! in the next year and few months so if you don't know Christ if you've never trusted him I would implore you put your faith and your trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation it is the only hope that we have this is not this book that we carry this book that we have on our phones this book that we talk about hopefully we read from this is not just religious mumbo jumbo like you find in other religious documents this is not just theory it's not just it is history it is the recordings of the things that

happened among us that were accomplished that people could rise up in a court of law hold up their right hand and say yes

I will speak the truth these things actually happened and many of them stake their lives on it if it was just a legend if it was just a fairy tale if it was just religious symbolism would anyone be willing to be crucified for that to have an axe to your neck to be burned at the stake for something that you knew was a lie no one did that but they did die for what they knew to be true so that's my prayer for all of us that we would grow in our knowledge and understanding of the gospel and that we would be willing to then share that beyond ourselves with those who will also be faithful witnesses let's pray lord we thank you for this word of god that we have these bibles that contain all these words and all these sentences and and sometimes we may struggle with understanding them but lord i pray that we would all know and understand that what we have before us in the word of god is your truth your words events describing actual history lord our faith our what we hold dear is not just a philosophy but lord it centers on the one event that is the resurrection of jesus from the dead without that we're all wasting our time but lord i believe that we would be willing to to stand up here today and to say yes i believe it is true i know it is true that jesus christ is the perfect sinless son of god who gave his life as a ransom for many who shed his blood for me and died and took my sin my punishment upon himself but that he also rose again from the dead for real it really did happen and we can hold on to that truth as a precious precious promise precious reality and know that we are saved know that i belong to the to the lord i belong to you thank you for that lord i pray that over these next weeks and months as we share through this gospel of luke together that we would all have just that much more of a sense of amazement and wonder and awe of who you are what you have done lord we love you there's much

that we may not understand but lord even today we can understand the simple truth of the gospel that you came perfect willing to take our place on the cross you suffered and died and you rose again that's it and we believe we simply believe and we love you so grow us lord in these next weeks and months that we would have that much greater of an appreciation of you our savior our lord and we ask these things today in jesus name amen voy