

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Luke 1:1-4**

1 Introduction Part 2

October 26, 2008

Luke 1:1-4

- 1** Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,
2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;
4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Now I confess that this morning's message- like last week- is going to seem more like a history lesson than anything else. But I really feel that this is necessary to do because I have found over the years that many questions about a particular Book of the Bible can be easily answered if only we knew a little bit about the history of the writer and the times in which he wrote the Book.

For example- as we were going through **Hebrews**- it was very helpful- especially around Chapter 6- to remember that the writer was writing this book to first century Jews who were steeped in Old Testament Truth. I have watched many a preacher go through theological gymnastics trying to make **Hebrews 6:1-6** fit into a 20th Century, New Testament, Gentile mentality, and you just can't get there from here. Many of the terms and phrases and aspects that the writer used in **Hebrews** was designed to grip the Jewish heart that knew only about shadows and types and symbols, and bring that heart to Christ.

So I want to try to lay a solid foundation under your feet as we begin this exciting new verse by verse journey through **The Gospel**

According to Luke by looking at the history around this Book and the biography of Luke himself.

Again, I want to remind you that my goal is not to hurry through this so we can get to something else more exciting or more important. This is exciting and this is important, and what we want to do in this journey is to see Jesus and to delight ourselves in Him and to savor Him and to dwell with Him and to hear Him speak and to ponder why He said those things and to see Him do the things that He did and then to ponder why He did those things, and it is to walk with Him through this Gospel so that our adoration and our worship and esteem of Jesus might grow and overwhelm us so that we may see Jesus as being higher and more important than anything or anyone else.

Luke is the longest of the four Gospels- it has more words and more verses than the other three. It is a remarkable Gospel that was written with great precision by a Gentile medical doctor- that we know very little about. And once we go past these first four verses and get to the narrative part of this Book- from **Luke 1:5** all the way to **Luke 24:53**- we will never hear anything else about this man named, Luke.

So if you can just be patient and endure last Sunday and this Sunday- we're going to give two weeks to the man- this incredible and gifted and inspired writer of this Gospel, and then he will disappear from the scene all together for the remaining time of our study of the Gospel which he wrote.

So all I'm doing is to giving honor to whom honor is due- to this wonderful, wonderful man named Luke. And so, like last Sunday morning's message, this morning's message is going to be a bit of a history lesson and a bit of an explanation as Luke intends to give to us in the opening four verses. Let's read them again together:

Luke 1:1-4

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,

3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Now as I told you last time, these four verses are what are called a "prologue" to **The Gospel According to Luke**, which really begins in verse 5 with these words, "**There was in the days of Herod,**". That's where the Gospel actually begins- verse 5. These four verses are a prologue to the Gospel that begins in verse 5. But before he begins his Gospel account- like any good classical Greek writer- Luke gives us a prologue in which he discusses the *sources* that he used to write this Book. Luke wants us to understand that he is not writing in a vacuum. He's not musing. He's not writing intuitively and he's not writing some tale that he invented himself- but rather he is writing a valid history, and he wants us to know something of his sources, something of his intentions, his purpose, and the direction that he's going to go in the history that he will write.

Actually the arrival of Luke on the sacred Record of Scripture is unannounced and unexpected. He just appears there. He comes out of some obscurity into the full glare of public presence through his marvelous inspired writings, namely **The Gospel According to Luke** and **The Book of the Acts**. He first appears on the scene here in **Luke 1:3** when he says:

it seemed fitting for me as well...

and that's all we know is the word "me." Luke doesn't even name himself the first time anywhere in his Gospel.

Now Luke really was a partner of Paul- as we noted last time- for a great many years of Paul's ministry. Although Luke never names himself in his Gospel account or in **The Acts of the Apostles**- he was a long-term companion of the Apostle Paul- first appearing in **The Acts 15** in the "we" and "us" passages, all the way to the end of the Book. And even at the end of Paul's life- recorded in **2 Timothy 4:11** in one of the three passages in the New Testament where Luke is actually named- Paul says Luke is still with me...only Luke. So at the end of Paul's life, in his final Roman imprisonment, Luke was right there with this great Apostle.

Also we know that Luke was the only Gentile to write any Scripture. And we know he was a Gentile in **Colossians 4:11**- when Paul introduces his Jewish companions- his Jewish fellow workers. He says

they are of the circumcision. And then after having introduced those who were Jewish, he refers to Luke later- indicating that he was a Gentile.

So Luke is truly a very unique Gentile- who wrote more of the New Testament even than Paul, or any other writer- and yet very little is known about him. So we need to try to get to know Dr. Luke.

And we can discover some things by just looking at his writings. First of all, as I said, because he uses the terms "we" and "us" in **The Book of the Acts**- we know that he was a companion of the Apostle Paul. And that leads us to a lot of assumptions.

First of all- Luke must have been very, very faithful to be that close to Paul- because we already know that Paul did not suffer fools easily. And because of the rugged way in which Paul was treated- Luke must have also been very enduring- and loyal- and he must have been very brave because of all the things he went through with the Apostle Paul.

But what we learn in the **Gospel of Luke** about him in this prologue is that he was highly educated. He was well bred. He was skilled in language. Now how do we know that? Because the prologue is done in classical Greek. **Luke 1:5** all the way to **Luke 24:53**- was written in the more common *Koine* Greek- the language of the common man of that day. But Luke introduces this Gospel account with a very classical form of language that is unique in all the New Testament, and he is writing here a prologue in the same form and style that any Greek classical writer would typically introduce his writings. So by that we know that the good doctor follows a form that the highly educated and cultured people of that day would know. And so we could conclude then that Luke is trying to appeal to someone or to some group of people who are also very educated- which would be supported by the title that he uses in verse 3, "**Most excellent Theophilus,**"- which indicates even at *first* reading that the man named Theophilus was somebody of a higher caliber than the average Joe of that day.

And so, Luke is writing for people of both high culture and high education. And that fact tells us that Luke himself is a man of culture and education. And he takes the Gospel, as it were, and he elevates it beyond just the common people.

As you know- the majority of the Apostles were very common. The people who were known as Apostles to us in the New Testament and

those who were associated with them were simple people. And the majority of the early Church leaders were also very simple and common people. This was so true that both Peter and John were dismissed by the Jewish authorities in **The Acts 4:13** as being:

...uneducated and untrained men...

But Luke doesn't fit into that category of being either ignorant or unlearned- and neither does Paul. Paul was highly educated in the Hellenistic culture of his day. Paul sat at the feet of the greatest Jewish teacher of that time- a man named Gamaliel. And when Paul came into the Apostolic ranks- it became apparent very quickly that the Gospel was not just for the weak and the ignorant- that the Gospel was not just for the common people- it was not just for the lower classes of people- but the Good News that wretched sinners can be justified by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone was also for people of higher learning too.

And Luke's writings make that fact more established. Luke starts with a very formal- high-brow introduction. And this tells us that the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ is not just for the untutored, it is not just for the ignorant, it is for *all* men and *all* women at *every* level of life and every level of society- because all men are sinners and need Salvation. And the record of the Gospel is not some kind of a low-level tradition passed down from mouth to mouth over centuries- but it is a provable and trustworthy Record that can stand the test of the most careful historic scrutiny and it belongs on the shelf with other great histories as well.

But even though he was highly educated and highly sophisticated and highly cultured- Luke was a very humble man. And we know that because he never mentions himself by name in either Book. And that's true of all humble people. Proud people talk about themselves. Fools and arrogant people talk about themselves and they brag about their accomplishments- but humble people don't. And Luke never did. And even though his writings certainly gained great acclaim and although he is a great and gifted historian- he never mentions himself.

We know he is the writer because tradition going all the way back into the second century indicates that. And we know he's the writer because through the process of elimination in **The Book of the Acts**- it

comes out that he is the most logical one who wrote it. And we know that whoever wrote **The Acts** also wrote **Luke** because **The Book of the Acts** begins by mentioning “**the former treatise**”, or in other words- “the earlier Book” to Theophilus which is a reference to the **Gospel of Luke**. So, Luke was a godly and humble man- he hid himself behind this great saga.

And finally, we know that Luke was a very careful scholar. You can see that in how he wrote in **Luke 1:3**, the phrase:

... **to write it out for you in consecutive order** ...

And that is characteristic of Luke. He is very, very precise. When it comes to the geography of the region, for example- and we'll see this as we go through the **Gospel of Luke**- when he's talking about geographical locations- Luke is very precise. He's also very conscious of the right titles for political rulers and he is very exact in the way he uses those titles. He is a very fastidious writer- very careful. And we see that all the way through.

And we know that Luke was very aware of the fact that both Matthew and Mark had written Gospel accounts- but being moved upon by the Holy Spirit- Luke wanted to add another Gospel that was a larger, longer, and more comprehensive and more complete record of Jesus and the Gospel.

Luke was a select man in that he belonged to a very select group of Evangelists- along with Matthew, Mark, and John- who were enabled by God to write the greatest Story ever told- the story of God's Salvation of sinners through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this narrative that he wrote swept over sixty years from the birth of John the Baptist to Paul's preaching the Gospel in Rome, and takes up about a third of the New Testament. It is a fact that Luke is the most complete story teller of the saga of Salvation in the entire New Testament.

So, we can learn all of that about him. And we kind of went over that last time. So I'm dividing this look at Luke in the introduction into four sections. Remember what I told you what they were...we're looking at Luke the physician, Luke the historian, Luke the theologian, and Luke the pastor.

And let me review- first of all- Luke the physician. The Apostle Paul tells us in **Colossians 4:14** that Luke was a physician. He is

identified there as Luke- the *beloved* physician. So the first thing to know about the man is that he was a physician- he was a scientist. That would tell us that he was a very analytical man- that he was a careful thinker- and that he was highly educated. He may well have been educated in Antioch in Syria which probably had some kind of university- some kind of educational system in which he was trained as a physician. He perhaps even came to Christ because of the great influence that the Church had in Antioch. Among the five pastors in Antioch- was the apostle Paul himself. It may have even been Paul himself who led Luke to the knowledge of the Gospel. But Luke is known, first of all, as a physician. He was a Gentile. He was not an Apostle. He was personally not an eye witness to the life of Christ. He wasn't even converted till after Christ had died, risen, and had ascended into Heaven, and the Gospel had been brought to the Gentile world- so Luke was not an eye witness.

We do know that Luke was very loyal because he stayed with Paul for so many years. We know he was a brave man because there were a number of imprisonments that he was with Paul- one in Caesarea and two in Rome. We know about his faithfulness because he traveled with Paul over thousands of miles and would have been exposed to the same hardships and terrors and the same robbers and the same hostilities and the same illnesses and the same difficulties of travel in the ancient times that Paul had. We also know that Luke must have been well thought of because Paul called him, "beloved".

And as you go through the **Gospel of Luke**- you will note there's a graciousness about the way he writes. Luke is not an in-your-face type of guy. There's a sweetness about Luke; there's a graciousness about him that comes through in his words. Luke was beloved. He was Paul's private personal physician and he endeared himself greatly to the Apostle Paul. So that is Luke the physician.

Secondly, Luke was an historian. The first three verses of Chapter 1 shows us that Luke was an historian. And as an historian Luke is greatly respected because of his precision, and his exactness, and because of the fact that he was a research historian who looked at available accounts. He had good source material. Let's look at it, verses 1&3 as he introduces the Gospel in this classic prologue, he says,

Luke 1:1&3

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

Now look at the first words of verse 2:

just as they were handed down to us...

So Luke is saying here that the declarations that many people took in hand to set forth in verse 1- or in other words- the writings that the many other people had written about Jesus were (in verse 2) **“handed down to us”**.

So Luke is telling us here that he had many different sources for what he wrote in his Gospel account. You see, dear friends, Luke knew that there were many enemies of the Gospel who would want to criticize his writings and try to discredit his writings. So he made every effort to base his writing on accurate sources so that it might, as he notes in verse 4, be the exact Truth.

Luke was very careful to be diligent as it says in verse 3 to investigate everything carefully from the start, from the beginning. And verse 2 says that he sought out eye witnesses and servants of the Word who handed down their first-hand accounts.

So Luke is going to give us exact, historical details that he has himself done great research on. In addition to that, of course, the Holy Spirit will reveal things to him those things that he didn't know, a combination of which, as we'll see in just a moment, comes together in the **Gospel of Luke**.

Now Church tradition says that Luke died at the age of 84. So he lived a long life and was no doubt greatly respected by people for this marvelous historical account that he provided of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Now let's look at verse 1 and look at his sources- just a comment or two- and then we'll go on to verse 2 where we left off last week. Luke says here:

"Many have undertaken to compile an account."

So there were *many*- not just a few- but *many*. And this is including Matthew- who had written his Gospel by this time , and also Mark- who had also written his Gospel. And there were other Apostles, of course, who no doubt had written down memoirs of the experiences and the teaching of Jesus. And there were other disciples and associates of the Apostles- who had written.

So there were many- although Luke doesn't tell us exactly who they are. There were many sources that were chronicling the things:

“accomplished among us” (Luke 1:1)

Now what does Luke mean by that? Why didn't Luke just say that they wrote about the life of Jesus? The reason he put it this way is because the Gospel Record is *more* than just the life of Christ- it's more than just the story of Jesus- it is also the story of Redemption- it's the story of Salvation that has been accomplished among us. That's the issue. Christ is the main *Character* to be sure- but the main *subject* of the Gospel accounts is Salvation.

So the four Gospels are the saga of Salvation...they are the saga of Redemption...the story of God saving sinners through Jesus Christ. Again, Jesus Christ is the main Character- but the story is the story of what God accomplished *through* Christ in us by way of Salvation. And Luke says there were many of these accounts- many.

Further, in verse 2, he adds:

... they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,

And this is very important for a historian- to have primary sources and to be able to go back to the original sources. You see, if you're going to write an accurate history- you have to have first-hand source material and you have to get back to the first-hand source material. And so we can see that because he did this- Luke is a true historian.

So Luke was not only a physician who had been trained in the sciences that had to do with the physical body and the caring for it- but an historian of great care- a man who knew how to give attention to detail in the process of doing research. And he knew that his critics would shoot him down if he didn't say his sources were primary

sources. So he introduces the sources in general in verse 1, and then he introduces the sources in specific in verse 2, coming down to the fact that they were those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and servants of the Word who have handed them down..."them" meaning the accounts...to us.

So what Luke is saying here is that he is building this Gospel account on first-hand eye-witness-source material. This is affirming the reliability of what he is going to write from the Apostles, and from associates of the Apostles who were there with Jesus- both of whom can give first hand authenticity.

And remember what I told you last time that Luke may well have interviewed people who were there as well. Certainly Matthew was there and he would have met Matthew most likely during the two-year imprisonment in Caesarea which is just west of the city of Jerusalem and Matthew would have been alive and in the area. And Luke certainly knew Mark very well also. We know that because John Mark traveled with Paul, and so did Luke- they traveled together. And Mark had received first-hand eye-witness records from the Apostle Peter and so Luke had been exposed to those through Mark. And there were other disciples and other associates that he would have met.

Some commentators believe it was very probable that Luke himself could have also interviewed Mary- Jesus' mother- and gotten her first-hand account of the virgin birth- which would explain the great detail that Luke gives us of that miraculous event.

And these eye-witnesses are further described by Luke as being ministers or servants of the Word. In the Greek language when you have one article, an article is like "the," when you have one article and two expressions, those two expressions modify or describe the same entity. If it said in this verse, for example, there were those who were the eye-witnesses *and* the servants- then we might conclude he was talking about the two groups. But when they are THE eye-witnesses and servants, we know that servants are further modifying the eye-witnesses. So these were eye-witnesses who became servants or ministers of the Word.

Now something that we need to keep in mind as we read through **Luke** and **The Acts** is that Luke uses the words "word" and "Gospel" interchangeably. When Luke says, "The Word", he is referring to "The Gospel". For example- in **The Acts 8:4** the Bible says:

Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

That Word that they were preaching was the Gospel- the Gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ. In **The Acts 10:36** it says:

The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)

What was the Word that God sent to the sons of Israel? It was the Gospel of peace available to sinners through Jesus Christ. And Luke uses it that way in **The Acts 6:4**, **The Acts 11:19**, and **The Acts 14:25**.

So he says in **Luke 1:2** that they were eye-witnesses- who were there and they saw it and they were given the responsibility by God to become servants of the Gospel. That is they were to carry that Gospel out- so they were the proclaimers- the preachers. They knew Jesus, they watched His life and His ministry, and they went about preaching with regard to that personal first-hand experience.

So these are the ones out of the many who really established the Truth. These were the faithful preachers. And they, Luke says, have handed down to us the true accounts.

Now the phrase "**delivered them unto us**" that you see in **Luke 1:2** is a technical term used in Greek literature for possessing something authoritative. So what Luke was assaying here is that these eyewitnesses handed down the authoritative Truth to us.

So, Luke is a historian. He makes no claim to be an eye-witness himself- but he does make a claim to having eye-witness sources- who were both Apostles and their associates.

Now look at **Luke 1:3**:

It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning,

Luke is saying here that he has come to a perfect understanding of everything from the beginning of the Gospel. In Alabama English- Luke says that he's got a grip on all of it. He has by careful investigation, he has by fastidious research come to a perfect understanding of everything from the very start. And because he had acquired such a precise understanding- he was compelled to write. And

when he did write- verse 4 says, people reading it would know the exact Truth.

Now look at the last part of **Luke 1:3**:

... to write it out for you in consecutive order,

This phrase "in order" means "carefully" in the Greek. In other words- Luke didn't just copy down his sources. It wasn't just a sort of an assembling of all kinds of source material- that's not the case. Luke didn't just copy Matthew, he didn't copy Mark, and he didn't copy the other things that had been written. In fact, Luke is very, very unique in a number of ways. There is material in the **Gospel of Luke** that is not found anywhere else in the other three Gospels.

Luke found this material through his sources and what he didn't have through his sources- the Spirit of God gave to him Sovereignly. And even what he did have through his sources- the Holy Spirit guarded supernaturally- so Luke would record it accurately, precisely, and exactly as God wanted it to be recorded without error.

And let me show you why this is so important. For example- almost half of Luke's material is unique to his Gospel account. Almost half of what is in **Luke** is found nowhere else. For example, if you chronicled the four Gospels- you'll find about 35 miracles- 35 specific miracles recorded in the four Gospels. But of those 35 miracles- 7 of them are found *only* in **Luke**.

There are about 50 parables that Jesus taught- and of those 50 parables- 19 of them are found *only* in **Luke**. And also there are about 30 events in the life of Jesus which only Luke records and no one else. So 7 miracles, 19 parables, and 30 events in the life of Jesus are found nowhere else in the entire Bible except in **The Gospel According to Luke**.

So we have Luke, the physician, Luke the historian, and now I want you to meet, Luke, the theologian. Read **Luke 1:3** again:

It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

Now what is the mark of a good theologian? A good theologian is someone who is analytical, someone who is systematic and logical. And the **Gospel of Luke** is generally chronological; it starts with the birth of Christ, goes on to the boyhood of Jesus, the baptism of Jesus, then moves into His public ministry, and goes to the cross. And you've got ten chapters of Him traveling to Jerusalem to die, the cross, and then the Resurrection follows the Cross. So Luke is chronological- and The Book of the Acts is also chronological. It starts with the Spirit of God being promised, then the Spirit of God comes, the Gospel goes to Jerusalem, then into Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. So there's a flow of chronology, and there has to be in any good history.

But, it is not strictly chronological. There are times when Luke wants to make a theological point- so he gathers material thematically around that theological point. So he will not become slavishly chronological if at some point he needs to deviate from his chronology to enrich a point with issues or with discussions or events pulled from various times but to illustrate a point that he's making in that very chronological flow he'll do that. So it is both chronological and it is thematic at certain points, and he'll pull things from various parts of the history of the life of Christ and bring them in to one focus in a given text in order to enhance the point that is being made there.

Bottom line then is, the way to understand the phrase "**in order**" is to understand it as in logical order. But it doesn't strictly mean chronological. At times, as I said, he's thematic and puts material together around a theme rather than historical sequence. This one Greek phrase helps us to understand Luke as a theologian. He is writing systematically. He is writing logically. He is writing in a progression that is intended, here's the key phrase, in a progression that is intended to persuade someone else to believe.

A theologian's job is to persuade someone to believe, to lead you to understand Divine Truth- to help you to understand a Doctrine by a thoughtful, logical, progressive, systematic, persuasive explanation. And that's exactly what Luke is going to do in this Gospel.

I don't just give you information in this Church. I give you information that is trustworthy and logical and systematic and true- so that you will believe and so that you can put the pieces together and so

that you will be strong in the Lord and in the Power of His Might- not simply so that you can just get smarter.

And the goal of Luke in this Gospel is to persuade a person or people to believe. And that's a theologian's desire. It is a distinctly, logical, sequential effort to bring someone to full persuasion about Jesus Christ. His goal is to lead the reader to believe the Gospel, to believe the full Truth of God's Saving purpose in Christ, to believe the Story of Redemption, and to believe the Message of Salvation- so that lost people will be saved and so that saved people will be strong. I like to think of it this way, Luke is saying this... *"I'm writing this out for you in logical, persuasive clarity"*... and that's a theologian's task.

So as we journey through this Gospel- Luke is not simply going to say *"this happened"*, but he is also going to show us the theological significance of what happened. And as he shows us the theological significance of what is happening- Luke is going to build around that theological theme a little bit to increase his persuasion. And there are a number of things that he deals with.

So as you look at Luke the theologian- you see that he was quite a remarkable theologian. The first great area of theology that concerns Luke is God's Sovereignty in history. Luke was a firm believer in the Absolute Sovereignty of God. And you cannot be a real theologian without believing in this primary Doctrine- God is Sovereign, God is absolutely Sovereign, God is absolutely Sovereign over everything, and God is absolutely Sovereign over everything- all the time.

Luke saw Salvation history as God's Sovereign Plan of Redemption unfolding through Jesus Christ. Salvation had come. In fact, he uses the word "now" 14 times. He follows Salvation history through the birth, the boyhood and the baptism of Jesus, and through His ministry as God continues to work His saving Plan. And then Luke follows Jesus for ten chapters from Galilee as He comes down to Jerusalem- toward the Cross, and His movement toward the Cross chronologically and historically is filled with powerful theological implications as He heads for that monumental redemptive substitutionary death on the Cross.

The great passion week of Jesus is from chapter 19 to the end of chapter 23, and chapter 24 ends with the Resurrection of Christ. All through this you see God's Hand working the great Work of

Redemption. He follows Salvation history and sees God ruling in all of it.

And the second thing is that he not only understood that God was Absolutely Sovereign- but Luke also understood the universal extent of Salvation. Luke clearly comprehends that Salvation was not just for the Jew- but was for everyone. Remember that Luke was a Gentile and he was writing to Theophilus- who was also a Gentile. So Luke was a part of the Gentile world, and he wanted it to be made very clear that this wonderful reality of God's saving purpose, this great saga of redemption included the non- Jewish world.

You can see that Luke was very concerned about what's going on in Samaria, and in chapter 10 he's concerned about the rejection that occurred in Samaria. He is very concerned about Salvation extending everywhere.

By the way, as a footnote, Matthew never uses the word "Salvation" even one time in his Gospel account. Mark never uses the word "Salvation" one time, and John used it only once. But Luke uses the word "Salvation" five times in the **Gospel of Luke** and another five times in **The Acts**. So we can see that Luke emphasized Salvation. And he emphasizes that it was not just for Jews.

In fact, Luke sees the Gospel not only for all nations- but also for all kinds of people. He's very concerned about prodigals and Samaritans- who are half-breed outcasts. He's concerned about women who were seen as low class in the society. He's concerned about really fallen women, sinful women, demon-possessed women, prostitutes, outcasts. He's concerned about tax collectors. He's concerned about a despicable man by the name of Zaccheus and tells us the story of Zaccheus which is nowhere else. And he's concerned about lepers. He's got a lot of lepers in here, at least ten in one passage, who were the pariahs of society during that day.

He likes to talk about tax collectors and every time he mentions a tax collector- who was the most despicable person in the Jewish culture- it's always in a favorable light. Now even though all of that is true- Luke doesn't ignore the Salvation of the rich- he makes a big deal of the Salvation of one rich man- Joseph of Arimathaea- who gave his tomb to Jesus.

So although he doesn't ignore the Salvation of the wealthy and the upper class- I think he wrote for them in mind indicated by the

prologue- he spends an awful lot of time focusing on Jesus' ministry to the worst of humanity. Luke saw that the ministry of the Great Physician was to those who were desperate- and that Salvation was for everybody.

Another interesting theological theme is that Luke makes a major thrust in discussing the ministry of the Holy Spirit- much more so than any of the other Gospel writers. He focuses on the Holy Spirit- particularly early in the Gospel of Luke. The Holy Spirit is just everywhere in the first few chapters. The Holy Spirit is involved in the birth of John the Baptist; He is involved in the birth of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is there early on talking to Mary, and talking to Zacharias. The Holy Spirit is leading Simeon to come and worship the Christ child. The Holy Spirit is involved in the baptism of Jesus and in the temptation of Christ, and we learn a lot about the Holy Spirit from Luke.

And, of course, we learn about Jesus Christ from Luke. Luke has a great theology proper- the Doctrine of God as Sovereign over everything. Luke has a good Pneumatology- he understands the role of the Holy Spirit. He has a great Christology which, of course, is the theme of the whole Bible- the Doctrine of Jesus Christ.

You want to know something else very interesting? **Luke** is the only Gospel that mentions **The Doctrine of Justification**. **The Doctrine of Justification** is the heart of Christian theology; it's the very heart of Reformation theology that we have been declared righteous. Luke discusses **The Doctrine of Justification** when he writes about the publican and the sinner who went into the temple to pray and the publican- who was a tax collector-against an outcast, a pariah, a despised and hated man- who went home justified, and Luke gives us our first introduction into just what Justification is a how we obtain it.

And Justification is also in the story of the prodigal because this wretched, wicked sinner comes home and he has no value, no virtue, no worth, nothing, and his father puts on the robe and gives him the ring and has a feast. And that's what Justification is- it's God Sovereignly taking an unworthy sinner who belongs in the pig slop and covering him with the robe of Righteousness. And even Zaccheus is a picture of God's Justification, as is the sinful woman in chapter 7.

So, Luke understands theology and he makes a point of these great Doctrines. And there are other theological themes that we will see in **Luke**- the fear of God, praise to God, forgiveness, joy, wonder, worship. Luke says a lot about worship; he shows the majesty of Jesus and His ministry to people in need; Luke focuses on the prayers of the Lord.

But in the heart of Luke's theology is the Cross...the Cross, the Cross, the Cross. 14 Chapters- from **Luke 9:51** all the way in to **Luke 23**- Jesus is going toward the Cross...going toward the Cross...going toward the Cross- because that's where God fulfilled His redemptive Plan- Jesus moving relentlessly to the Cross. The key verse in all of **Luke** is found in **Luke 19:10**:

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And one final thought about Luke's theology, Luke is very interested in the Second Coming. So he records much of what Jesus said about His glorious return. So Luke tells us that Salvation is future, that Salvation is eternal, and that there is a Glory to come and the Savior will be back for His people.

So there is Luke the physician, Luke the historian, and Luke the theologian. He's quite a guy, isn't he? And finally- we have Luke the pastor.

It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

So why did Luke write this two volume series of **The Gospel of Luke** and **The Acts**? To convince Theophilus to be saved! Now I don't know how Luke knew Theophilus. We don't know anything about Theophilus. We know he was probably on the upper side of society by the term "most excellent." That Luke gives him- so we can assume that Theophilus was an important person. And what was Luke's goal here? Well, Theophilus had been taught...it says at the end of verse 4, he had been taught, he had been taught things about Christ. Obviously we could conclude, however, that the teaching was unclear or incomplete.

And so Luke says, "*I want you to have the exact truth.*" And that is a pastor's heart.

So Luke does all of this research, all of this incredible writing to give to this man- to either bring him to saving faith or to give him a greater understanding of his faith. And it is more likely that he was already a believer and needed a more perfect understanding.

And it is a pastoral work to bring Theophilus to exact Truth. And let me tell you- dear friends- anything short of that is a failure to understand the responsibility of the pastor, isn't it?

You see, my job as a pastor is not to fuss with your emotions. My job as a pastor is not to make you feel good about yourself. My task as a pastor, it's just like Luke's was- to bring you to an exact understanding of...what?...of the truth of God, isn't it? As I say, we don't know anything about Theophilus. But we know enough about Luke to know that Luke cared enough about this man's soul to bring him to the exact understanding of the Truth. He cared enough about him to write this long, intense, complex, monumental history and theology of Salvation and give it to Theophilus. That's a remarkable evidence of personal concern to shepherd the soul of one man.

Now that fact that Luke gave this to Theophilus doesn't indicate that he didn't expect anybody else to read it. I'm sure he did. I'm sure he expected the friends and family of Theophilus to read it. But the fact that he knew the others would read it and that it might even go beyond that in no way diminishes the graciousness of his heart and his love for that one man. He knew that every soul was precious to the One Who came to seek and to save the lost. And like his Lord- Luke had a shepherd's heart.

Isn't it wonderful that he served one man so well and God took that effort that Luke gave to one man and spread it across the globe in thousands of languages? And millions of people have come to Salvation over the last 2,000 years through the letter that Luke wrote to this one man.

And this proves that if you take care of the *depth* of your ministry and God will take care of the *breadth* of it. You do something as profound as what Luke did here and it will go to whatever end that God desires it to go. Millions of people have been converted by the account that Luke wrote for Theophilus.

Luke gave Theophilus exact Truth. What a great statement. "Exact" is the Greek word, *asphaleia*, it means: *reliable or certain*. Luke gave Theophilus a precise, reliable, accurate, and complete understanding of the amazing saving story of Jesus and the Gospel...clear, complete, sifted from all error and persuasive.

He wanted this man to know the Truth. And I don't have any different desire than Luke did. I want you to know the Truth.

So this remarkable physician, historian, theologian and pastor had the greatest privilege this life could ever offer any man- to be inspired by God to write an exact, reliable, powerful, precise, persuasive history and theology of the saga of Salvation. And this writing has become the instrument God used for the Salvation of millions.

You know what my prayer is? That that same work will go on in us and here in this Church as we journey through **Luke**. That many, many more will be saved as I preach Luke's Gospel here- and as it finds its' way on tape and then goes out over the radio and to all the world.

So I ask you to be faithful to pray that God will once again use this wonderful physician, historian, theologian and pastor named Luke and the words that he wrote in this Gospel account as an instrument in our day- to bring many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.