

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

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

1 Introduction Part 1

October 19, 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.

I believe the Lord has led me to begin a series of messages on the **Gospel of Luke**. And I would like to begin by sharing my heart with you as to how I came to this decision and how we will proceed.

Over the last two years- I have been spending much of my *personal* devotional time meditating on the Words of Jesus and on the way that Jesus acted. I spend anywhere between 60-80 hours every week studying those Books that I am using here in the Church or on the radio. Over the last several years I have been simultaneously studying **Jude, 1John, Hebrews, and Romans** so that I can provide you with well balanced diet of nourishing spiritual food.

But I still have the need to steal away to do my own private reading, studying, and meditating- for my own personal benefit- and I found myself so attracted to the Words and Deeds of my Lord found in the Gospels. The result of this is that I love Jesus with a new found respect and longing. I long to have the single-minded devotion to His Father's Will that Jesus had to rub off on me. I long to share His profound understanding of the human heart and His ability to see

through all the outer layers of our lives and all the confusion and words- and go straight into what is really bothering us.

I long to have His way with words—words that always brought to light a person's real loves. And I long, like Mary, to sit at His Feet and drink in the living water of His Teaching, until it so satisfies my heart that I can be as free as He was from the love of money and from the love of the praise of men and from pride and from anxiety about tomorrow.

I have taken from the four Gospels a hunger to be holy, to be real and authentic, an earnest desire not to play church or play religion, and not to waste my life with things that don't matter.

And all these new found longings and this hunger have driven me to prayer that God would work me over and not allow me to creep along so slowly in my quest to be like Jesus. And out of this meditation and prayer has emerged a burning fire to study and to preach from **The Gospel According to Luke**.

Interestingly enough- one of the passages that caused me to want to preach through **Luke** doesn't even come from Luke- but it comes from **Matthew**. It is found in the first part of **Matthew 28:20** that says:

...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ...

And I can remember thinking in years past that these Words must surely grip every Pastor's heart and shine on the path of his preaching and show him the way to go. Jesus said it is the mission of those whom He sends, to teach *all* the things that He commanded and to help people learn how to obey them. And so you can understand, can't you, the force a statement like that has on a Pastor who is wondering what he should preach?

So these two things together, my experience with Christ's teachings in my own personal time of meditation and the straightforward demand that Jesus gave in the Great Commission to teach all His Commands- these two things have given rise to my decision to begin a series on **The Gospel According to Luke**.

Why Study the Gospel of Luke?

But why a Gospel? And why **Luke**? Why not **Ephesians** or

Philemon; or even **Isaiah**? Why not **Matthew**, **Mark**, or **John**? Since I became convinced of **The Doctrines of Grace** back in 2002- and devoted all my preaching to expositional preaching- I have preached through only New Testament Epistles on Sunday Morning. First **Jude**, then **1John**, and then **Hebrews**. And I did that on purpose because of the importance that the early fathers of the Church placed on the 21 Epistles. So we have done three and now it is time for a different kind of Book

I quickly ruled out **The Gospel According to John** because I have been in **1John** for 18 months on the radio and have heard much from this Apostle. And I ruled out **Matthew** because **Matthew** speaks primarily to the Jews and we just spent 28-1/2 months in **Hebrews**. So that left **Mark** or **Luke**, and **Luke** is larger and it speaks primarily to the Gentiles and it has more in it- so I wanted to tackle **Luke**.

And also- we are approaching the Advent Season of the year and there are eighty verses in **Luke** before you get to the famous Christmas section. And those eighty verses will be a great lead in to our Christmas celebration. So I chose **Luke**.

Now concerning the procedure we will follow as we journey through this Gospel- two principles have to be balanced out:

1. One is that we preserve the freedom of the Holy Spirit to interrupt and alter our plans. We must not be so locked into a verse-by-verse exposition of this book that He cannot hit us with another text from time to time that we may need to hear even more. That is called, **The Principle of Freedom**.
2. The other Principle to keep in balance with **The Principle of Freedom** is **The Principle of Discipline**. You see, dear friends, preachers are sinners who, like all sinners, tend to preach what they like and avoid what they don't like. So we must find a way not to be so selective.

In **The Acts 20:26&27** Luke records for us what Paul said to the saints at Ephesians when he left and what I want to be able to say to you when my work is done here:

26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

And no preacher can honestly say that he has not failed to declare unto the people "all the counsel of God" if he simply hits the high points of the popular verses while avoiding everything else that the Scriptures teach. So one of the best ways to fulfill **The Principle of Discipline** is to slowly and patiently preach verse by verse through an entire Book of the Bible. And what happens when you do that is that, over time, every conceivable subject known to Man, every Theological issue, every Biblical question, every apparent contradiction will be confronted head on and dealt with.

Now these two Principles- Freedom and Discipline- are in a state of constant tension with each other because it is not always easy to tell whether a desire to interrupt a series comes from the Spirit or from a real fear of what the next verse says. But there is no escape from this tension, and so all I can promise you is that I will do my level best under God to listen to the prompting of the Spirit and to declare unto you- "all the counsel of God".

What I can promise you is that some of your most cherished held beliefs- things that you were taught when you were first saved and things that you have held on to for years will be challenged by this Journey through Luke. I want you to know two things about that:

- A. It is not my intent at all to be in any controversial. I am not seeking out to tear up anything- I seek to build and to plant and to raise up- but it is inevitable that in building, planting, and raising up- some things will, by necessity, have to first be rooted up, torn down, and thrown away.
- B. I do not say and I do not believe that I am right and anyone who disagrees with me is wrong. I have never said that and I do not believe that and I pray that I don't come across like that. But I do believe that God is right and that God the Holy Spirit meant something very specific when He wrote every verse in the Bible and my desire in this Journey is to ask and answer three

questions about every word and every verse and every passage in **Luke**:

1. What did God say?
2. What did God *mean* by what He said?
3. How can I apply this Divine Truth to my life?

And I covenant with you this morning, dear friends, that, Lord willing- I will be faithful to study to show myself approved unto God so that like a skilled craftsman- I will be able to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Each Sunday morning I will be ready and prepared to bring to you another expositional sermon that will be another piece of the whole counsel of God.

And what I ask from you is that you don't just come to sit on these pews- but that you pray and prepare your heart ahead of time to do expositional hearing. Some of you may want to start getting here early so you can pray before service so that not only your minds will be girded up- but that your ears and hearts will be ready for God's Word.

The Biography and History of Luke

The Gospel According to Luke and the diary of the early Church- **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**- was written by a man named Luke around AD 60 or 61- some 32 years after the Resurrection. By the time that **Luke** wrote this Gospel account- 10 of the 21 New Testament Epistles and 2 Gospel accounts had already been written. **James, Galatians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians, Romans, Philemon, Colossians,** and **Ephesians** had been recorded and were in wide circulation as far away to the West as Britain and as far away to the east as India.

The Epistle to the Romans- which alone contains almost 65% of all Christian Doctrine- had been completed and had been taught in all the Christian Churches and in the early Theological Schools for over 5 years prior to **Luke** being written. And both Gospel accounts of **Matthew** and **Mark** had already been written.

However, all five Books from the Apostle John, four additional Epistles from Paul, both Epistles from the Apostle Peter, **The Acts**,

Hebrews, and **Jude** had *not* yet been written prior to Luke writing his Gospel account.

Interestingly though- most of all the major Doctrines of the Christian Church- including The Virgin Birth, The Deity of Christ, Jesus' sinlessness, The Resurrection, The Imputation of Righteousness, Justification by Faith Alone, Original Sin, The Second Coming, The Sovereignty of God, Radical Human Ruination, Sovereign Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance had all been formulated and were being taught throughout the known world to some degree as being part and parcel to Biblical Christianity before **Luke** was ever written.

And Theological Schools to train young men to be godly pastors and elders were already established and thriving in Africa, Antioch, Syria, and Ephesus by the time that **Luke** wrote this Gospel account.

Now according to the Apostle Paul- Luke was a very loved and trusted companion- who was both a medical doctor and a Gentile- and who had accompanied Paul on several missionary trips and who had acted as a scribe to the Apostle Paul to document the early days of Christianity.

Colossians 4:7-14

7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him);

11 and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

It is thought by several theologians that Paul personally commissioned Luke to record this Gospel account from Paul's personal Revelation from Jesus even more so than from Luke's.

During the time that Luke was recording this Gospel account- the largest Church- in terms of the number of people- was still in Jerusalem but the majority number of Churches was outside Israel- in Gentile lands and was comprised primarily of former pagans who had been justified by faith alone.

Also, Nero was the Emperor of Rome, and had already begun the terrible persecution against the Church that would eventually banish John to the isle of Patmos and which would bring martyrdom to both Paul and Peter.

Also during this time frame- some 32 years after the Resurrection- the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing and the Levitical priests were still offering animal sacrifices to try to avert the Wrath of God against their sins, and most Jews were still actively engaged in following the partial Revelation of God as given in the Old Covenant.

Most Noble Theophilus

So that is the setting and background and dates and events which surround this Book. So now let's turn to **Luke 1:1–4** and read the Preface, or the Prologue to Luke's Gospel- and not only his Gospel account- but also his record of The Acts of the Apostles.

You see, if you take Luke and Acts together, you discover that Luke wrote much of the New Testament. (This is partly why I gave my second son "Luke" for a middle name.) You can see that these two Books are really two volumes of one work when you read the first few verses of each. So let's read **Luke 1:1–4** together first:

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 turn and read **The Acts 1:1-3**:

1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

2 until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

So it is clear from the fact that since both **The Gospel According to Luke** and **The Acts of the Apostles** were written to the same man and because Luke reminded Theophilus in **The Acts 1:1** about the “**the former treatise**” or in other words, “the first Book”, meaning his Gospel account- that Luke had intended to write this two-volume work for this man named Theophilus.

But just who was Theophilus? Some have tried to argue that the word *Theophilus* is not really an individual person at all- but is a symbol for all Christians for whom Luke is writing. But the Biblical evidence is against this view. It is true that Theophilus is made up of two Greek words (*theos* and *philus*), which would mean “friend of God.” But the decisive argument against taking Theophilus as symbolic is the title “most excellent” that Luke used just before his name in **Luke 1:3**.

This title is used three other times in **The Acts** in reference only to ranking Roman officials. The Greek phrase that was translated as “most excellent” in **Luke 1:3** was used again in **The Acts 23:26**, when Luke wrote:

Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings.

But that very same Greek phrase was translated twice as “**most excellent**” in **The Acts 24:3** when Luke referred to “**the excellent Felix**” who

was the Governor of Judaea and in **The Acts 26:25** when Luke referred to the **“most excellent Festus”** who was Felix’s successor.

So there is no reason not to believe and good evidence to believe that the **"most excellent Theophilus"** was indeed a real live Gentile man-who probably held some important office in the Roman government-and who was either already saved or who was very interested in Jesus.

Dr. Luke and His Purpose in Writing

But first, how do we know the author of this two-volume work was, in fact, Dr. Luke, and just who was Luke, anyway? Luke is referred to by name in the New Testament three times. In **Colossians 4:14**, Paul writes from Rome to Colossae,

Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

In the letter to **Philemon**, which comes from the same time as **Colossians**, Paul said in verses 23&24:

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

With the translation of the King James Version being “Lucas” here instead of Luke. And finally, in 2 Timothy, probably the last book Paul wrote, also from Rome, to Timothy who was back at Ephesus, Paul said in **2Timothy 4:10&11**:

10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

So what we learn from these verses about Luke is that:

- ✓ He is a medical physician
- ✓ He is a "fellow worker" with Paul in ministry
- ✓ He sticks with Paul to the very end even when his close associate Demas drops out of the race, in love with the world, and

- ✓ Understandably, he is "beloved." Paul loves Luke. That is no small testimony to Luke's faithfulness.

So Luke's unwavering commitment to the Apostle's teaching, evidenced in Paul's love for his partnership, and Luke's intellectual competence, evidenced in his medical profession, fit Luke to undertake the most ambitious task of any other New Testament writers, namely, a two-volume work covering both the Work and Teachings of Christ on the earth and then the history of the spread of the Christian Church in its first thirty years. So the debt that we owe to Luke is tremendous.

But how do we know for sure that it was *this* Luke who wrote **Luke** and **Acts**? Well, first of all- the titles that you see at the top of the Gospels in your Bible that say, "*According to Matthew*," or "*According to Mark*," or "*According to Luke*"- those titles were added later- after these Books were written by Christians who first gathered these Gospels together into one collection. The chapter divisions and the numbering of verses were also added later to assist believers as they studied God's precious Word.

Luke, nor any of the other Gospel writers, ever mentions his own name. So how do we know who wrote this two-volume work? The main reason that we believe that Dr. Luke actually wrote this Book is that the earliest list of which Books belong in the New Testament (which is called The Muratorian Canon from the second century)- that ancient list ascribes both of these Books to Luke, and there was no evidence then and there has not been found any evidence since then to think that someone else wrote them.

So if we don't have any credible evidence to the contrary- we are wise to give credence to early tradition. So there is no reason at all for anyone to doubt that Luke, the beloved physician, wrote both **The Gospel According to Luke** and **The Acts of the Apostles**.

Now let's go back now to the preface in **Luke 1:1–4**. What is the main point of these four verses? The main point that Luke has in writing these first four verses is to tell his *purpose* in writing both **Luke** and **The Acts**. Look again at **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;

In other words- Luke is saying- *"Seeing as how many other people have written about those things that we cherish and believe- It seemed good to me, too, ... to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been taught."*

So Luke is writing to persuade this Roman official (and probably other Gentiles just like him) that the Christian teachings which he has heard about Jesus are true. Everything else in these four verses is subordinate to this purpose and helps to support it.

So two questions should be asked about this purpose to convince Theophilus of the Truth of Christian teaching:

1. Is it important to persuade someone of the Truth of Christianity?
2. How can that be done?

Persuading People of the Truth

And the answer to the first question is, *"Yes, it is important to try to persuade people that the fantastic claims that Christianity makes are true."* And this question is necessary because there are many today (both professional intellectuals and ordinary lay people) who see the Christian faith as being nothing more than a leap into the dark, a foolish and arbitrary decision to embrace something for which they cannot prove, which operates in violation of human reason and logic and something for which they see no adequate reason to believe.

And in many cases, people bring in the Holy Spirit to replace objective evidence in such a way that if you ask a person why he believes the Gospel, he may answer something like, *"The Holy Spirit witnesses to me that it is true."*

But this is *not* at all the way Luke understands Faith. First of all, Luke was not satisfied with the evidence that Theophilus already had from those who had taught him about Jesus. And so Luke does not merely pray for God to somehow show Theophilus it is all true- but he personally undertakes a very heavy intellectual task: he writes a fifty-

two chapter book- all for the purpose of certifying to Theophilus the Truth of the Christian claims that he has heard!

Secondly, Luke praises the Bereans in for *testing* the Apostle's teachings to see if they were true. We read this in **The Acts 17:10-12:**

10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.*

12 Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

Luke was eager to encourage just the opposite of a "blind leap of faith". Third, when recording the Resurrection of Jesus and how the Apostles came to faith in the risen Christ, Luke says in **The Acts 1:3:**

To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

So according to Luke, Christ was very concerned to give proofs—not, of course, geometric proofs that come from axioms and theorems, but proofs in the sense of fully adequate evidence in their experience. Therefore, Jesus did not want to encourage a blind leap of faith. Otherwise, he wouldn't have lingered forty days.

So I conclude that Luke thinks it is very important to try to persuade people of the Truth of Christianity and that Faith, for Luke, is a personal acceptance and readiness to act upon what one is absolutely persuaded to be true.

Now please understand that this does not rule out the Holy Spirit at all- because without His Supernatural Work in us- no one would ever own up to the Truth of the Gospel. For example, Luke says of Lydia, in **The Acts 16:14**, that as she listened to Paul's compelling sermon by the river:

... and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

If God does not Sovereignly open the heart of Theophilus, and our hearts as well- all Luke's writing is in vain. But the point that I am making is that Holy Spirit does not *replace* true objective evidence and persuasive words- He simply *empowers* them and removes the natural rejection that keeps people from believing. So yes, it is important to try, like Luke, to persuade people of the truthfulness of the claims of Christianity by using objective evidence and persuasive words, and then trust the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of their heart.

The Reliability of Luke's Witness

The other question I asked in view of this is, "*How can this persuasion be done?*" What will persuade a reasonable person that Christianity is true? It seems to me that there are two basic ways we humans come to be convinced of anything:

- A. To see it or hear it for ourselves and then draw inferences from that direct encounter
- B. To have a witness tell us about it if we were not there.

And in this second case our confidence of the event depends on our estimation of the reliability of the witness and the way his message fits into reality as we see it.

Now, neither Theophilus nor any of us (nor Luke) have ever personally seen or touched or heard Jesus; we did not personally see the risen Christ or any of His miracles, nor did we hear His remarkable teaching come from His Own Mouth. And Luke knows that all the knowledge that Theophilus has of Christ, and in all likelihood all that he will ever have- is secondary- the product of other witnesses.

So if Theophilus or any of us is to be personally persuaded that Christianity is true- we must become convinced of the reliability of the witnesses, and, just as important (perhaps even more important), we have to see that this claim to Truth fits in and helps make sense of reality as we experience it.

So I believe that Luke wants to provide Theophilus with both of those assurances: the reliability of his own narrative and the intrinsic fitness of his message to Theophilus' condition, and to ours. The fitness of his message to our condition, its power to make sense out of our

experience—that can't be given in the prologue; it has to come out of the narrative itself. That is what is going to be fun to uncover as we move along from week to week. But the other means of persuasion, namely, the reliability of his narrative—that he can and does bolster in his prologue.

Specifically, Luke tells Theophilus in verse 3 that his narrative is based on thorough and careful research:

Luke 1:3

...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;

Luke says that he has followed all things; that is, he does not include anything that he has not traced back to a very reliable source. He has followed all things accurately; his work has not been careless but painstaking, as befits the seriousness of the subject. He has followed all things accurately for a long time. He has not been hasty in his work. He has been patient. That is the first thing that gives integrity to his narrative.

But no matter how careful one is with his research, his narrative can only be as good as his sources. So the second thing that Luke stresses is the number and the quality of his sources of information. We find that in verse 1:

Luke 1:1

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

In all likelihood- one of those written sources that Luke had access to was **The Gospel According to Mark-** and I will try to point out why I believe this as we move through this Gospel. So verse 1 guards us against two errors that people make when they study the Gospels.

One is the error that our belief in the inspiration of the Bible implies that each writer got all of his narrative directly from God by dictation- and that is simply not true. Luke clearly shows us here that he wrote his Gospel account on the basis of sources and research. So inspiration means that God chose Luke and guided him in his writing in such a way that God insured that it would all be true and powerful.

And the other error that verse 1 guards us against is the claim that many people make that until the writing of our four Gospels, Jesus' teaching and deeds were only passed down orally. Again, that is not historically accurate.

If, as Luke says, many had earlier written down accounts of Jesus' sayings and deeds, then there is no reason to think people had not done this from the very start. So the first thing Luke stresses is the number of his sources- and verse 1 says that there were "many".

Then he stresses their quality in verse 2: these narratives that we find in Luke are in perfect harmony with what the eyewitnesses have reported,

Luke 1:2

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

Notice that Luke includes himself among those who received reports directly from the eyewitnesses and ministers of the word: "Just as they were delivered to "us" . . . by the eyewitnesses."

So not only are there *many* sources which Luke can use to corroborate each other- but even better- Luke has had direct access to those eyewitnesses themselves- so as to confirm his *own* narrative by *their* testimony.

Now the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word that Luke refers to here are the Apostles. And we know this from the way that Luke describes the work of the Apostles in **The Book of the Acts**. These are the chosen men who have the God ordained task of bearing witness to what they have *personally* seen and of ministering the Word- which probably means *preserving* both the Sayings and the Deeds of Jesus in writing, and to explain the meaning of all that Jesus did and said to the Churches.

So what I am trying to say is that when Luke wrote this Gospel account- Paul and Peter and John and others were still alive, and they were either interviewed by Luke for these Books, or in some other way they affirmed the events that Luke wrote for us here.

And we see these two tasks in several texts. **The Acts 1:21& 22** records how the Apostles went about to replace Judas among the twelve Apostles. In this account, Luke records for us that Peter said,

21 Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—

22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

Then, in **The Acts 6:4**, after they had appointed others to serve the tables, Peter says of the Apostles:

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Then in **The Acts 13:31**, Paul refers to the twelve Apostles like this: (after his resurrection)

And for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.

And finally in **The Acts 26:16**, Paul describes how Christ commissioned him to be a part of this Apostolic band by appearing to him and giving him these very tasks. Christ says,

But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

So the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word with whom Luke could confirm his work were not just ordinary eyewitnesses- but they were the chosen and appointed instruments of Christ Himself who had the authority of the risen Lord behind their teaching- they were, in fact, the Apostles.

In summary, then, Yes, it is necessary to persuade people of the Truth of Christian Claims. And Dr. Luke aims to do this by means of his two volume work consisting of his Gospel Account and **The Book of the Acts**. The way this could happen for Theophilus and for us is, first, to see that here is a witness that can be relied on to present us with the Christ Who really was, and second, to see in the teaching and life of this Christ a reality that helps make sense out of our experience and fill our deepest longings.

And this is the Jesus that I have been finding in my own meditation, and I am excited about inviting this great Jesus into our

morning Church Services for some time to come- so that we may know Him and love Him and adore Him and obey Him.

Let's come and pray.

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