

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

### WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

#### Lesson # 1

##### LUKE 1:1-2

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word"

"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus."

Luke 1:31

##### COMMENTARY ON: 1:1-4

##### THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US

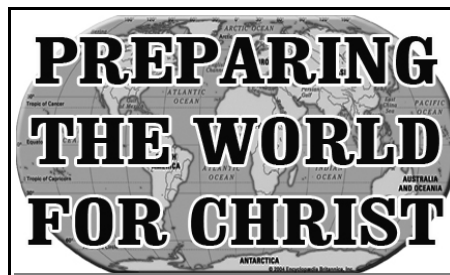
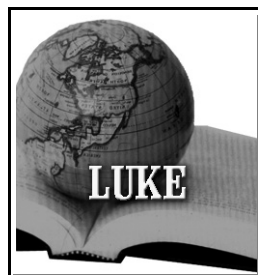
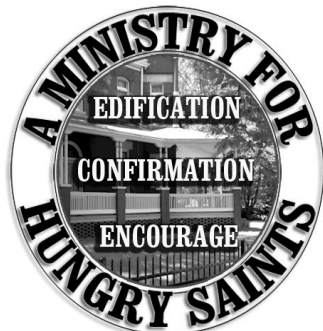
The things embraced by those in Christ are not simplistic, and they are not held loosely. God has not called us into a religious system in which thoughts of Himself are few and far between. There is no guesswork or theorizing in true faith. Philosophizing and hypothesizing are given no place of entrance, and human opinion is locked out as well. In Christ there is the dominating presence of assurance, confidence, knowing, and certitude. The saints know *"whom they have believed"* (2 Tim 1:12), as well as *what* they believe (Lk 1:1). There is no provision for doubt, distrust, or suspicion – all of which are evidences of unbelief. Today, there is an alarming presence of confusion, ignorance, and unbelief in the churches. The fundamental knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, which are what comprise eternal life, are at an unacceptable level. Luke labors to dispel such hindrances, writing to an apparently recent convert – a political dignitary. He wants Theophilus to know the things that are heartily embraced, believed, and known by those in Christ Jesus.

##### LUKE 1:3-4

"It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

"And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Luke 24:51



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke 09/05/2014

### Lesson Number 1



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### ----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# THINGS MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVED AMONG US

LUKE 1:1 "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,<sup>2</sup> Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;<sup>3</sup> It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." ..... Luke 1:1-4

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

This is a letter written to a government official who had been converted to Christ. Luke writes to assure Theophilus of the certainty of the things he has believed. This introduces to us the essentiality of being certain, or confidently sure, of the truth of the Gospel. Doubt, or a lack of confidence in the basis of faith is disastrous, even though it is quite common in our time. This Gospel will also shed light on the seriousness of tampering with the text of Scripture, and saying things that cause seeds of doubt to rise in the hearts of people. When great stress is placed on the original language, principles of interpretation, an inordinate emphasis on contextual considerations, etc, spiritual jeopardy is invited into the heart. **Certainty will be found to be in affirmation.**

The things embraced by those in Christ are not simplistic, and they are not held loosely. **God has not called us into a religious system in which thoughts of Himself are few and far between.** There is no guesswork or theorizing in true faith. Philosophizing and hypothesizing are given no place of entrance, and human opinion is locked out as well. In Christ there is the dominating presence of assurance, confidence, knowing, and certitude. The saints know "*whom they have believed*" (2 Tim 1:12), as well as **what** they believe (Lk 1:1). There is no provision for doubt, distrust, or suspicion – all of which are evidences of unbelief, not faith.

Today, with a new breed of "Christians," there is an alarming presence of confusion, ignorance, and unbelief in the churches. It is the direct

result of skewed preaching and a lack of faith. **The fundamental knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, which are what comprise eternal life, are at an unacceptable level.** This is the cause of the outbreak of sin in the modern church, the urgent need of behavior correction, and the blight of mediocrity and disinterest.

The key religious leaders of our day, with very few exceptions, have accommodated themselves to the disinterest of the people. Although physical campuses of staggering size and cost exist, and are falsely called "churches," the assemblies are largely tailored for a single gathering weekly, with a few scattered and small subgroups once a week. The meetings are generally relatively brief, at the most, perhaps, two hours, including praise, prayer, announcements,

specials, the Lord's Table, collections, and, what is called, a sermon. For most of the people that is enough.

Compare this with the disciples being with Jesus – all day every day. Everywhere He went, except for times when He prayed alone, they were with Him. None of them complained about this. I realize that it not intended to be a fixed standard. Yet, I wonder how they were able to endure so much, as compared to the modern people who say they are with Christ, who can endure so little. Of course, if people can see it, now that Jesus has ascended into heaven, and is filling all things (Eph 4:10), His disciples **can** be with Him all of the time.

## Luke labors to dispel the kind of hindrances with which the nominal church has learned to live.

**Luke labors to dispel the kind of hindrances with which the nominal church has learned to live.** He is particularly writing to an apparently recent convert – a political dignity. Yet his word is very relevant in our time. He wants Theophilus to know the things that are heartily embraced, believed, and known by those who are really in

Christ Jesus. I say **“really** in Christ,” because it is questionable that those who lack a prevailing interest in, and appetite for Jesus Christ are *“in Him”* at all. Critical evidence is sorely lacking in them. Further, this is not an acceptable condition in which those professing to be Christians ought to be found, and Scripture does not condone that stance.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO LUKE

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### LUKE WAS NOT AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST

Like Mark, James, and Jude, Luke was not an apostle. Yet, he was given to see the working of the Lord with a discerning eye. Yet he wrote to meaningful letters of Scripture.

Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke, which we are now considering, sending it to the same man to whom the book of Acts was written. In that book he did not present any doctrine, he did report the activities of the early church with remarkable precision. There is question about it being inspired by God, as is all Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17). Think of this:

- ⇒ His is the only account of the replacement of Judas (Acts 1:16-26).
- ⇒ The only record of the actual conferment of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus (Acts 2:1-4).
- ⇒ The first preaching of the Gospel.
- ⇒ The first Jewish converts.
- ⇒ The commencement of the church.
- ⇒ The first incarceration of the apostles.
- ⇒ The first purging of the church.
- ⇒ The turning of the entire city of Samaria to Christ.
- ⇒ The first conversion of someone

- returning their native country.
- ⇒ The first persecution of the church.
- ⇒ The conversion of Saul of Tarsus.
- ⇒ The first conversion of Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48).
- ⇒ The first doctrinal issue over the matter of circumcision (Acts 15).
- ⇒ The only documented record of Paul's travels (Acts 13-28).

### LUKE WAS A GENTILE

The name *“Luke”* is only mentioned two times in the Scriptures, both by Paul (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11). The KJV refers to him also as *“Lucas,”* a transliteration of the Greek word *“Loukas.”* With that single exception, the word is always translated *“Luke.”*

Because *“Luke”* is a Greek name, it is assumed he was a Greek, for, so far as we know, the Hebrews did not name their children with Greek names. This is also supported by the fact that he was not recognized by Paul as being among *“the circumcised”* – *“And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my*

*fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. Epaphras, who is one of you (Colossae), a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you" (Col 4:11-14).*

#### LUKE WAS A PHYSICIAN

Paul referred to Luke as *"the beloved physician"* (Col 4:14). Other versions read, *"dear friend Luke the doctor,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"well-loved medical friend,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"dearly loved physician,"* <sup>CEB</sup> and *"the most dear physician."* <sup>DOUAY</sup>

It is generally assumed, and rightly so I believe, that Luke ministered to Paul in the bearing of his infirmities (2 Cor 11:30| 12:5,9,10; Gal 4:13).

#### LUKE WAS ONE OF PAUL'S PREMIER COMPANIONS

Luke was the only companion with Paul at the close of his life. After writing to Timothy that his departure was at hand, he added *"Only Luke is with me"* (2 Tim 4:11). QuickVerse Bible notes says of this verse, *"Luke is the only companion of Paul at the end. This is sad, but not surprising. It is clear that an especially tender relationship had developed between the two men over the years. It is possible that Luke may have served as the amanuensis (secretary) for the penning of this epistle (as well as for 1 Timothy and Titus)."*

Throughout the book of Acts, Luke states his presence in the events chronicled therein by the word *"us."* His presence with Paul appears to begin at the point where Paul received a vision directing them to go to Macedonia. From that point on Luke uses the word *"us"* apart from quoting what someone else said—i.e. Acts 13:33,47; 14:11,17; 15:7-9,24,25,28,36; 16:9). From that point on we read:

⇒ **THE CALL TO MACEDONIA.** *"And after he had seen the vision, immediately*

*we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called **US** for to preach the gospel unto them."* (Acts 16:10)

⇒ **PRESENT IN MACEDONIA.** *"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."* (Acts 16:14)

⇒ **THE HOUSEHOLD OF LYDIA.** *"And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."* (Acts 16:15)

⇒ **THE WOMAN WITH THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION.** *"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto **US** the way of salvation."* (Acts 16:16-17)

⇒ **THE TRIP TO ASIA.** *"And there accompanied him into Asia So pater of Berean; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Seconds; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before tarried for **US** at Treas."* (Acts 20:4-5)

*we went before to ship, and sailed unto Asses, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. And when he met with **US** at Asses, we took him in, and came to Mitylene."* (Acts 20:13-14).

⇒ **SAILING FROM MITYLENE.** *"And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought **US** on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."* (Acts 21:5)

⇒ **WHEN AGABUS PROPHESED.** *"And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."* (Acts 21:10-11)

⇒ **WHEN THEY CAME TO JERUSALEM.** *"There went with **US** also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received **US** gladly."* (Acts 21:16-17).

⇒ **WHEN PAUL WENT IN TO JAMES.** *"And the day following Paul went in with **US** unto James; and all the elders*

**Throughout the book of Acts, Luke states his presence in the events chronicled therein by the word "us." His presence with Paul appears to begin at the point where Paul received a vision directing them to go to Macedonia.**

⇒ **SAILING TO ASSES AND MITYLENE.** *"And*

*were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had*

wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." (Acts 21:18-19).

⇒ WHEN SAILING TO ITALY. "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us." (Acts 27:1-2).

⇒ WHEN CONTINUING TO ITALY FROM LYCIA. "And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put **US** therein." (Acts 27:5-6)

⇒ DURING THE STORM AND SHIPWRECK. "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." (Acts 27:20)

⇒ ON THE BARBAROUS ISLAND. "And the barbarous people showed **US** no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received **US** every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold." (Acts 28:2)

⇒ WITH THE CHIEF OF THE ISLAND, PUBLIUS. "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged **US** three days courteously." (Acts 28:7)

⇒ WHEN MANY OF THE ISLAND WERE HEALED. "So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: Who also honored **US** with many honors; and when we departed, they laded **US** with such things as were necessary." (Acts 28:9-10)

⇒ WHEN PAUL ARRIVED IN ROME. "And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet **US** as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." (Acts 28:15-16)

### SOMETHING TO NOTICE

In Luke's writings, both in His Gospel, and in the book of Acts, **Luke never draws attention to Himself**. A modern writer would probably have made a number of observations, citing what it was like to personally be in a shipwreck, make it to shore in a storm, and be among a tribal people. **Luke was aware that, in their travels, Paul was the primary person, and not himself. His work was the more weighty one.**

Because of his extensive travels with, and companionship of, Paul, many of the church fathers felt the Gospel he wrote was a record of the Gospel Paul preached. While that is no doubt true, I do not prefer to state such a thing. It seems to me to detract from the book being written through the inspiration of God, as was all Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17). Also, Luke confessed he had a "perfect understanding" of the things he recorded. That is how I prefer to think of this book.

It is evident that Luke devoted his life to the Lord. From the first recorded time that he was with Paul in Troas. (Acts 16:8-11), until Paul arrived in Rome (Acts 28:16), was approximately ten years – **a solid decade with the apostle Paul, with no record of him ever leaving him.** What a sterling testimony to the reliability and devotion of this man. Being a physician, it is more than likely that he had extensive education. However, in the interest of the work of the Lord, he appears to have largely forfeited that advantage in order to devote himself to the work of Paul,

## COMMENTS ON LUKE

### IRENÆUS (16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

"LUKE, THE COMPANION OF PAUL, PUT DOWN IN A BOOK THE GOSPEL PREACHED BY HIM." HE ALSO SAYS, "LUKE WAS NOT ONLY A COMPANION, BUT ALSO A FELLOW-LABORER OF THE APOSTLES, ESPECIALLY OF PAUL."

### ORIGEN 185-253

"THE THIRD IS THAT ACCORDING TO LUKE, THE GOSPEL COMMENDED BY PAUL, PUBLISHED FOR THE SAKE OF THE GENTILE CONVERTS."

ministering to him, and recording the general activities of the church from the ascension of Christ until Paul's arrival in Rome.

The period of time from the ascension of Christ until the official joining of Luke with Paul was about seventeen years – a period filled with holy activity, persecution, and the spread of the Gospel. It is distinctly possible that Luke was present during that entire period, which would account for him saying he had a perfect understanding "from the beginning."

Some are of the opinion Luke was one of the "seventy," sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1-12). <sup>JEROME</sup> Others think he was the companion of Cleophas, which is why the companion is unnamed in the account recorded in Luke 24. <sup>THEOPHYL</sup> A legend recorded by the incredulous historian Nicephorus Callisus (died 1450) states Luke was acquainted with the art of painting, and provided the first portraits of the Lord, His mother, and His chief apostles.

**You see what men are prone to do with a little revelation. Not content with the Spirit's record, they seek to develop history to suit their own liking, and draw attention to themselves.** This trend is very prevalent in our time. Strictly speaking, the Word of God is not for scholars, but for believers. It must be recognized that scholarship, however valuable it may appear to be, takes a back-seat to believing.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THEOPHILUS

Theophilus is mentioned only twice in Scripture, both of them in the writings of Luke. The Gospel of Luke, as stated in the text, was written to this man. Additionally, the book of Acts was written to him in order to document what happened after *“the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen: To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being*

*seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:2-3).

The name Theophilus means “friend” (philus) of “God (theo). Some of the “church fathers” take the position that this is not a person at all, but is addressed to all believers, whom, they say, are friends of God. However, the expression “*most excellent Theophilus*” (Luke 1:3) seems to me to forbid such a contrived explanation. For

myself, it will suffice to say that This man was apparently a believer, had occupied some high office, and was an acquaintance of Luke. It is thought, with reasonable support, that the Gospel of Luke (56 A.D.) was written about seven years before the book of Acts (63 A.D.). Whether precise or not, that suggests some obvious devotion on the part of Theophilus over that seven-year interval of time. He did not lose his interest in the things of God over that period of time.

## MANY HAVE TAKEN IN HAND TO SET FORTH IN ORDER

<sup>“LUKE 1:1a</sup> **Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order. . .**”

**FORASMUCH.** “Forasmuch as.” Other versions read, “*inasmuch,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*Since,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*As,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*Now,*” <sup>NET</sup> “*Seeing that,*” <sup>NJB</sup> and “*since [as is well known].*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The lexical meaning of the word “forasmuch,” is “CONJUNCTION: SEEING THAT, FORASMUCH AS; SINCE NOW,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “A CAUSAL CONJUNCTION WITH REFERENCE TO A WELL-KNOWN FACT SINCE INDEED, INASMUCH AS, CONSIDERING THAT,” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> “BECAUSE, SINCE, FOR, INASMUCH AS.” <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

Luke will now cite a circumstance that had encouraged him to write this treatise to Theophilus. **One of the traits of a godly mind is that of holy deliberation – being moved along by thoughtful and proper incentives.**

### MANY HAVE TAKEN IN HAND

**“ . . . many have taken in hand . . . ”** Other versions read, “*Many have undertaken,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*a number of attempts have been made,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*Many people have already applied themselves,*” <sup>CEB</sup> “*many have been disposed to*” <sup>MRD</sup> “*Many people have set out to,*” <sup>NLT</sup> “*many people have tried to,*” <sup>IE</sup> “*Many people have tried to,*” <sup>CEV</sup> “*Many people have done their best.*” <sup>GNB</sup>

Early on, there had been a

plethora of writings about Jesus. Actually, most of them eventually fell by the wayside of erroneous thought. Perhaps some were needless redundancy, or the writer did not see enough to write about Jesus, having a very limited and rudimentary view of the Savior. We have a similar phenomenon today – many preachers, teachers, and writers that have a very limited view of the truth. There is a need for someone to rise up and throw down modern imaginations.

This also involves the awareness of how others have treated the subject of dissertation. Some things that are written are incorrect, perhaps skewed, and may even be a deliberate misrepresentation of the truth of God. There is a need for such writings to be exposed so they will not lead others astray. Other things need to be confirmed in order to establish the unanimity that exists among those who are living by faith. Still others are clumsily stated and need clarification.

⇒ Jesus Himself dealt with things like this. In the teaching of His disciples on a mountain, He four times said the following: “*Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . But I say unto you*” (Matt 5:31-48–esp. verses 31,33,38, and 43). Two times He specifically addressed certain

sayings: “*Ye have heard that is was said,*” then providing a more thorough view of things Matt 5:21,27).

- ⇒ Jesus rebuked the church in Pergamos for having some among them that held to the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which He hated (Rev 2:14-15).
- ⇒ He warned His disciples about “*the doctrine of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*” (Matt 16:6,11-12).
- ⇒ Jesus spoke of the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch (Matt 5:14).
- ⇒ The apostles and elders came together to correct the misconception that some from Jerusalem were teaching: “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1).
- ⇒ In his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul decimated some false teaching concerning circumcision that they had been taught (Gal 5:6,12; 6:13,15).
- ⇒ Paul addressed the erroneous saying

that some had credited to him: *“Let us do evil that good may come”* (Rom 3:8). He challenged some in the church in Corinth who were saying, *“There is no resurrection of the dead”* (1 Cor 15:12).

⇒ Paul warned the Colossians about doctrinal encroachments that involved the observing of Jewish feasts, and heathen philosophy (Col 2:8-10).

⇒ Jude warned his readers about certain men who had crept in among them unawares, and were subtly turning them away from the Lord (Jude 1:4).

**Luke sees a need to provide some more focused and precise writing concerning Christ Jesus and the things related to Him.**

#### TO SET FORTH IN ORDER

<sup>1:1b</sup> . . . to set forth in order.”

Other versions read, *“set in order a narrative,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“compile an account,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“draw up an account,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“set down an orderly account,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“to put together in order an account,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“Several biographies of Christ,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> *“arrange a narrative,”* <sup>ABP</sup> *“tried to tell the story of what God has done among us,”* <sup>CEV</sup> *“compose accounts of the movement which has developed among us,”* <sup>GOODSPEED</sup> and, *“put in order and draw up a [thorough] narrative.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The mind of man, as I see things, is intended to think in an orderly and purposeful manner. This is why imaginations, self-exalting thoughts, and unreasonableness are intrusions into the mind rather than truly productive considerations. These are things to be thrown down, else sound thinking and profitable reasoning will be impossible. This is the reason for the unfortunate existence of skewed preaching and for formation of fundamentally flawed bodies of religious thought.

When Paul declared the truth, he often *“reasoned”* with the people (Acts 17:2; 18:4,19; 24:25). **He was setting forth truth within the context of Divine**



**purpose, and the totality of God’s revelation.** When he confronted opposition and had seen hostility, it was because the objectors had adopted an erroneous line of reasoning. **They had read and valued the Scriptures, combined them with human tradition, and come up with inaccurate conclusions that actually were set in opposition to the truth of God.**

Godly reasoning postulates the orderly integration of thoughts. Sometimes, but not always, this involves perceiving the proper sequence of things:—i.e., first law, then transgression (Rom 4:15); first the putting away of sin, then justification (Rom :8-9); first justification, then glorification (Rom 8:30).

In saying *“many have taken in hand,”* Luke is not speaking of apostles who had written an orderly account of the events he will describe (Matthew

and John). Those two could hardly be referred to as “many.” Rather, he is referring to spurious gospels that eventually faded away. The specific ones to which he refers had apparently already been tried by the apostles, found wanting, and removed, for which we give thanks. That was part of the responsibility of the apostles – to ensure that the truth of God was in the hands and minds of the people, and competing and fragmentary gospels removed. They buttressed this by their faithful proclamation of the truth of God, especially as revealed in the Gospel. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, did the same thing, pointing out heresy, showing its inconsistency, and lifting up the truth of God.

Later, a plethora of false gospels were distributed, which were also thrown down by those leaders who embraced and comprehended the truth of God. Among them are the following. This



is not a pleasant ministry, but it is a needful one – and spiritual weaponry has been provided to do it (2 Cor 10:3-4).

**TAKEN FROM**

<http://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/apocryphal-gospels>

- ⇒ Acts of Paul
- ⇒ Gospel of Thomas and Gospel of the Egyptians (both of these taught that sexual acts within marriage were wrong, and that salvation is not obtained through faith, but through mystical knowledge) – Gnostic gospels
- ⇒ Gospel of Judas (taught that Jesus asked Judas to betray Him so that His spirit would be liberated from His human body)
- ⇒ The Gospel of Thomas
- ⇒ Gospel of the twelve apostles
- ⇒ Gospel of Barnabas
- ⇒ Gospel of Bartholomew
- ⇒ Gospel of Mary
- ⇒ Gospel of Egyptians
- ⇒ Gospel of the Hebrews

- ⇒ The Gospel of the Nazarenes
- ⇒ The Gospel of Marcion (deleted the baptism and temptation of Jesus)–200 A.D.
- ⇒ The Ebionite Gospel
- ⇒ The Apocalypse of Peter (200 A.D.).

**SOME OBSERVATIONS**

As time continued to march toward the consummation of all things, the caliber of Christian leaders began to deteriorate. **This was largely owing to the growing dominance of institutionalization, and reliance upon academics, and educational accreditation.** Even though these formalizations were imagined to be the means of plugging up the entrance of error, they became the conduit through which it came. Instead of error being thrown down as soon as it surfaced, men formed symposiums to examine the error with nothing more than human understanding. **This tardy and ineffectual manner of dealing with error actually allowed for the formation of**

**sects, or denominations.** In this way error eventually came to be tolerated, because those who embraced it chose to call themselves “Christians.” Rather than a strong militant stance against error, a new tolerant attitude was adopted in the interest of not offending “the weaker brother.” The result of this accommodating attitude is a splintered and ineffective Christendom that has brought disgrace to God and His Son, an emaciated and powerless church, a hidden Gospel, and a dominating spiritual ignorance of the things of God.

In my understanding, this is precisely the thing that Luke wrote to counteract. He had the understanding that was required to lay out the Gospel in an orderly and God-glorifying manner. He also perceived that knowing the truth set men free from religious error as well as moral contamination and alienation from God. An ignorance of the things of God is always devastating, and therefore harmful to believers.

**THE THINGS MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVED AMONG US**

*“ 1:1c . . . a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.”*

At once, you should be able to see the disastrous effects of divisions within the professing church, with contradicting persuasions and messages, the lack of brotherly love, and cloisters that have gathered around mere human opinion.

The present condition of Christendom is a flagrant contradiction of what is stated in this text. Officially there are about 41,000 “Christian” denominations. The Roman Catholic church affirms it is the one true church. The Apostolic church, and the Orthodox church also make the claim of being the original church. Some segments of the Restoration Movement also claim this distinction, together with some factions within the Baptist church and other “Apostolic” groups.

Luke will now address something that sets “*the body of Christ*” apart from all human institutions. He will speak of those in Christ as separate from all other peoples. He will affirm they hold to a “*declaration*” that is held by no other body of people. **Part of the influence of the truth is the oneness of those who embrace and proclaim it.**

**This has always been true. When the custodians of truth fail to proclaim it, the effect of the truth itself fails.**

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed this, which actually took place in Israel. *“And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment”* (Isa 59:14-15). Other versions express those highlighted phrases in this way: “*truth has*

**At once, you should be able to see the disastrous effects of divisions within the professing church, with contradicting persuasions and messages, the lack of brotherly love, and cloisters that have gathered around mere human opinion.**

*stumbled in the street . . . truth is lacking,*" <sup>NASB</sup> *"truth has stumbled in the streets . . . truth is nowhere to be found,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"truth stumbles in the public square . . . truth is lacking,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"stumbles in the public court. . . truth is missing,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"truth hath been feeble in the street . . . and the truth is lacking"* <sup>YLT</sup> *"Truth falls dead in the streets . . . truth is gone,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> and *"Truth has fallen in the street (the city's forum) . . . yes, truth is lacking"* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

I suppose there are some naive souls who do not think truth can fall or fail, but the Holy Spirit says otherwise. The truth of the matter is that God will not allow such conditions to remain indefinitely. Rather, He will do what He said through Amos –send a famine of HEARING the Word of the Lord. Here is that salient prophecy. *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst"* (Amos 8:11-13). **This is the circumstance of our time. The Word of God still exists. However, it is the HEARING of it that is no longer common.** The pulpits have largely dried up, and been given over to cheap and ineffectual counseling at the best, and raw entertainment at the worst.

This general condition is largely unknown because the attention of professing "Christians" has been drawn to lesser things. Now, few professing believers have a clear and cogent idea of the things to which Luke now refers: ***"those things which are most surely believed among us."***

Now Luke will labor to keep such a thing from happening. He knows that if the truth is not understood, it will not be proclaimed, and it will not be translated into life. **If there is no certainty, there will not be a consistent declaration.** Therefore, he will, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, put them down in writing.

## A DECLARATION

<sup>" 1:1c</sup> . . . **a declaration** . . . " Other versions read, *"a narrative,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"compile an account,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"draw up an account,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"set down an orderly account,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"put together in order an account,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"draw up a relation,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> *"draw up accounts of the events,"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"biographies,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> *"a narrative of the facts,"* <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *"put in order and draw up a [thorough] narrative."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

John Gill writes this explanation of the verse: "THAT IS, THEY UNDERTOOK TO WRITE AND PUBLISH A VERY PARTICULAR AND EXACT NARRATIVE OF THE BIRTH, LIFE, ACTIONS, DOCTRINES, MIRACLES, SUFFERINGS, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST; THINGS WHICH LUKE, AND OTHER CHRISTIANS, HAD THE FULLEST AND STRONGEST EVIDENCE, AND WERE CONFIDENTLY ASSURED OF, AND MOST FIRMLY BELIEVED, EVEN WITH A FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH." <sup>JOHN GILL</sup>

The point Luke is making is that these various accounts did not present a clear record to the people. In some cases, this might have been a deliberate attempt to malign the Christ and those who believed on Him. However, although that is possible, it does not appear to me that this is the circumstance to which Luke refers. I rather see this as referring to the attempts of relative novices to set forth the Christ. They did not have enough understanding to present the facts of the case, taking into account the following.

- ⇒ That the facts men sought to report were actually the working of *"the wonderful works of God"* (Acts 2:11; John 14:10).
- ⇒ That the facts were done in fulfillment of God's *"will"* (John 4:34; 6:38).
- ⇒ That they were done in fulfillment of the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17).
- ⇒ That the end of Christ's life was more meaningful than what He did as He *"went about doing good, and healing all who were possessed of the devil"* (Acts 10:38) – Rom 8:34.
- ⇒ That men needed more than an

example of how to live.

- ⇒ That Christ's greater ministry was in heaven, following His death and resurrection (Acts 2:33-36; 5:31 Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20-22; Heb 7:25; 8:1).
- ⇒ That Jesus did not come to bring peace (Matt 10:34).

**Men still have this tendency of presenting the truth of God in the wrong manner.**

- ⇒ As though Jesus came to solidify domestic families.
- ⇒ As though He came so men might be in good health, and have much wealth.
- ⇒ As though He came so men could be the head, and not the tail, be lenders instead of borrowers, and function as leaders in governmental circles.

In all of these emphases, an unshakable body of reality is not required – **but such is required for men to stand by faith, and prepare for the end of the world and the coming of Christ.**

## THOSE THINGS

*" . . . of those things . . . "* These things relate specifically to Christ Jesus – the reason for His entrance into the world, what was accomplished while He was in the world; and what He is doing now that He has been seated at the right hand of God. **All of the contrived purposes of men are not supported by facts, but by suppositions.** They do not rest upon the death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ – and that is because those realities were driven by a high and God-ordained purpose.

## MOST SURELY BELIEVED

*" . . . which are most surely believed . . . "* Other versions read, *"which have been fulfilled among us,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"things accomplished among us,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"been surely believed,"* <sup>NIV FOOTNOTE</sup> *"those events which took place among us,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"the matters fully believed*

among us" <sup>DARBY</sup> "those things, whereof we are fully persuaded" <sup>GENEVA</sup> "those events, of which we have full assurance," <sup>MRD</sup> "things which are surely known among us," <sup>TNT</sup> "matters that have been fully assured among us," <sup>YLT</sup> "the certainties which have taken place among us," <sup>IE</sup> "the facts which are received with full assurance among us," <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "those matters which have been fully established among us," <sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> "having full assurance among us," <sup>ABP</sup> "the story of what God has done among us," <sup>CEV</sup> "the things that happened among us to complete God's plan," <sup>ERV</sup> "accounts of the movement which has developed among us," <sup>GOODSPEED</sup> "those things which among us have been most certain," <sup>JUB</sup> and "the surely established deeds which have been accomplished and fulfilled in and among us." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

BIRTH, LIFE, ACTIONS, DOCTRINES, MIRACLES, SUFFERINGS, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST; THINGS WHICH LUKE, AND OTHER CHRISTIANS, HAD THE FULLEST AND STRONGEST EVIDENCE, AND WERE CONFIDENTLY ASSURED OF, AND MOST FIRMLY BELIEVED, EVEN WITH A FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH."

**JOHN CALVIN.** "IT LOOKS, THEREFORE, AS IF HE WERE EXPRESSING A RESOLUTION TO DO WHAT HAD BEEN ALREADY DONE. I REPLY, THOUGH HE DEALS GENTLY WITH THOSE WHO HAD WRITTEN BEFORE HIM, HE DOES NOT ALTOGETHER APPROVE OF THEIR LABORS. HE DOES NOT EXPRESSLY SAY THAT THEY HAD WRITTEN ON MATTERS WITH WHICH THEY WERE IMPERFECTLY ACQUAINTED, BUT BY LAYING CLAIM TO CERTAINTY AS TO THE FACTS, HE MODESTLY DENIES THEIR TITLE TO FULL AND UNSHAKEN CONFIDENCE."

**ALBERT BARNES.** "THAT ALL CHRISTIANS DO "MOST SURELY BELIEVE" THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. IT IS THEIR LIFE, THEIR HOPE, THEIR ALL. NOR CAN THEY DOUBT THAT THEIR SAVIOR LIVED, BLED, DIED, ROSE, AND STILL LIVES; THAT HE WAS THEIR ATONING SACRIFICE, AND THAT HE IS GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOREVER."

This by no means is offered as undeniable proof of the meaning of the passage. I only intend to point out a change took place in the thinking of purported language experts.

**The lexical meaning of the word translated "believed" is as follows:** "TO BEAR OR BRING FULL, TO MAKE FULL; TO CAUSE A THING TO BE SHOWN TO THE FULL; TO FULFIL THE MINISTRY IN EVERY; TO CARRY THROUGH TO THE END, THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED; TO FILL ONE WITH ANY THOUGHT, CONVICTION, OR INCLINATION; TO MAKE ONE CERTAIN, TO PERSUADE, CONVINCE ONE; TO BE PERSUADED, PERSUADED, FULLY CONVINCED OR ASSURED; C3) TO RENDER INCLINED OR BENT ON; **USAGE:** AV - BE FULLY PERSUADED 2, BE MOST SURELY BELIEVED 1, BE FULLY KNOWN 1, MAKE FULL PROOF." <sup>THAYER</sup>

I therefore conclude that, from the standpoint of etymology, there is no justifiable reason for not accepting the standard reading, "those things which are most surely believed among us."

**I cannot begin to imagine the kind of answers that might be put forward. As a whole, Christendom cannot even agree on who Jesus is, why He came, what He accomplished, what He is doing now, and the things related to Him coming again.**

I do not know when the imagined meaning of "what God has done among us" was thought to be correct (as compared to "surely believed." This was not representative of the thinking in the past. Below are some examples of how this text was viewed by respected commentators. This does not constitute proof of the matter, but only substantiates that a change in thinking took place in the Christian community.

**PULPIT COMMENTARY.** "THERE WAS EVIDENTLY NO QUESTIONING IN THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST DAYS ABOUT THE TRUTH OF THE STORY OF THE TEACHING AND THE MIGHTY WORKS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH."

**JOHN GILL.** "THAT IS, THEY UNDERTOOK TO WRITE AND PUBLISH A VERY PARTICULAR AND EXACT NARRATIVE OF THE

**ADAM CLARKE.** "FACTS CONFIRMED BY THE FULLEST EVIDENCE- των πεπληροφορημενων πραγματων EVERY THING THAT HAD BEEN DONE OR SAID BY JESUS CHRIST WAS SO PUBLIC, SO PLAIN, AND SO ACCREDITED BY THOUSANDS OF WITNESSES, WHO COULD HAVE HAD NO INTEREST IN SUPPORTING AN IMPOSTURE, AS TO CARRY THE FULLEST CONVICTION, TO THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO HEARD AND SAW HIM, OF THE DIVINITY OF HIS DOCTRINE, AND THE TRUTH OF HIS MIRACLES."

**MATTHEW HENRY:** "THAT THE THINGS HE WROTE OF WERE THINGS THAT WERE MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG ALL CHRISTIANS, AND THEREFORE THINGS WHICH THEY OUGHT TO BE INSTRUCTED IN, THAT THEY MAY KNOW WHAT THEY BELIEVE, AND THINGS WHICH OUGHT TO BE TRANSMITTED TO POSTERITY (WHO ARE AS MUCH CONCERNED IN THEM AS WE ARE); AND, IN ORDER TO THAT, TO BE COMMITTED TO WRITING, WHICH IS THE SUREST WAY OF CONVEYANCE TO THE AGES TO COME."

#### More Suitable Contextually

In my judgment, the words "surely believed," blend in better with the text. Luke's Gospel is estimated to have been written between 60-70 A.D. The book of Acts contains records of Paul arriving in Rome, which was close to 60 A.D. All of this being true, at least thirty, and as many as forty, years had passed since Jesus ascended into heaven. To me, it is inconceivable that "us" is limited to those who actually witnessed the events chronicled in this Gospel. Notwithstanding, because this cannot be conclusively proved, I must let the matter rest there, stating that this is how I understand it.

#### AMONG US

" . . . among us." The vast majority of the versions read "among us." I understand this to mean Luke is writing to Theophilus about the things of which believers of that time were persuaded.

#### WHAT ABOUT "AMONG US" TODAY?

What would a person say today about what is "most surely believed among us?" – and who would "us" be? If one was to attempt to speak for all believers – which is who Luke was speaking for – I cannot begin to imagine

the kind of answers that might be put forward. As a whole, Christendom cannot even agree on who Jesus is, why He came, what He accomplished, what He is doing now, and the things related to Him coming again. In fact, it

is my persuasion that if any local congregation was asked to put forward the things concerning which everyone was persuaded, there is no question in my mind but that the people would attempt to defend their sect – and, even

at that, they would probably be able to make only a relatively brief statement. This kind of language – “*most surely believed*” is simply not the way contemporary Christians speak.

## THEY DELIVERED THEM UNTO US

“ 1:2a *Even as they delivered them unto us . . .*”

*Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and*

**Notwithstanding this rather obvious conclusion, there is such a diversity of gospels, saviors, and salvation being preached that it is mind-boggling.**

### THEY

“*Even as they . . .*” Other versions read “*those.*” <sup>NKJV</sup> As Luke will clarify, these were the apostles – men personally chosen by the Christ Himself. Throughout His ministry, from the beginning to the end, they were with Him. They are declared to be the “*first*” in rank that were placed within the church, which is the body of Christ: “*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him . . .*” “*And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles**, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues*” (1 Cor 12:18). The “*prophets*” placed “*secondarily*” in the church are not the “*prophets*” classed with Moses –i.e. “*Moses and the prophets*” (Luke 16:29,31; 24:27; John 1:45). Insofar as preeminence was concerned, Jesus said, “*For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John*” (Matt 11:13). Their ministry was to prepare for Christ. The prophets that are secondary in the church are those with gifted insight into the things of God, who consistently speak “*unto edification, exhortation, and comfort*” (1 Cor 11:3). There were men of this caliber in the church at Antioch of Syria: “*Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain **prophets and teachers**; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of*

*Saul*” (Acts 13:1). Also, note that “*teachers*” are third in rank in the church (1 Cor 12:28).

It is what the apostles taught that Luke described as “*those things which are most surely believed among us.*”

### DELIVERED THEM TO US

“*. . . delivered them unto us . . .*”

Other versions read, “*just as,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*based on,*” <sup>CJB</sup> “*According as*” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “*They received their information from,*” <sup>GWN</sup> “*on the authority of,*” <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “*They wrote what we had been told,*” <sup>CEV</sup> “*What they have written agrees with,*” “*They wrote what we have been told,*” <sup>GNB</sup> and “*using reports handed down.*” <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

You see what a tangled web has been woven by those who represent the text as saying “*things accomplished among us,*” <sup>NIV</sup> instead “*things that are most assuredly believed among us.*” In the first instance, we have men writing about things that took place among them, but their report is not what it ought to be. Therefore, Luke is required to write some additional things, and to do so in an orderly manner.

The “*done among us*” is not at all Luke’s meaning. He is going to account for the things that are **surely believed** among the saints, tracing it back to what the apostles had made known about what was accomplished by Jesus.

It is the doctrine of the apostles that is to be preached, and taught with insight. The early church was faithful in continuing “*steadfastly in,*” first of all, “*the apostles doctrine*” (Acts 2:42).

What is referred to as the “*great commission*” was delivered specifically to the apostles (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16). It is true that, by inference, this is to be done by others: “*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen*” (Matt 28:20) – **although no inspired man every said such a thing.** No one should preach who is ignorant of “*the apostles’ doctrine.*” Further, no man is sanctioned to preach any “*doctrine*” or “*gospel*” that was not taught by the apostles. **Any message that does not center in, and is not summed up in, the Lord Jesus Christ, is neither gospel nor truth.**

Notwithstanding this rather obvious conclusion, there is such a diversity of gospels, saviors, and salvation being preached that it is mind-boggling. Professed “*Christianity*” is more divided than any other body of religious thought. Even though believers are told, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” (1 Cor 1:10), men have insisted on causing and maintaining divisions, not having the same mind, and not using the same judgment. That simply means they have not taken this admonition seriously, and that is a sin of the greatest gravity.

## THEY WERE EYE WITNESSES

<sup>1:2b</sup> . . . **which from the beginning were eyewitnesses** . . . "Other versions read, "from the first were eyewitnesses," <sup>NIV</sup> "those who saw them from the first," <sup>BBE</sup> "the original eyewitnesses" <sup>CEB</sup> "those who from the start were eyewitnesses," <sup>CJB</sup> "which from the beginning saw them their selves," <sup>GENEVA</sup> "They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples," <sup>NLT</sup> "which from the beginning saw them themselves with their eyes," <sup>PNT</sup> "who from the beginning became eye-witnesses," <sup>YLT</sup> "and those who from the [official] beginning [of Jesus' ministry] were eyewitnesses." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

It is possible to read this and imagine that anyone who was an eye witness to the working of those things most assuredly believed among us, was qualified to be a witness. But this is not at all the case. This very fact is what casts the shadow of doubt on men's use of, what they have chosen to call, "the great commission."

These men were hand-picked by the Lord Jesus Himself. Luke himself gives the account: "And when it was day, He called unto him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles; **Simon**, (whom He also named Peter,) and **Andrew** his brother, **James** and **John**, **Philip** and **Bartholomew**, **Matthew** and **Thomas**, **James** the son of Alphaeus, and **Simon** called Zelotes, And **Judas** the brother of James, and **Judas Iscariot**, which also was the traitor" (Luke 6:13-16).

Mark's Gospel adds this: "And He ordained twelve, **that they should be WITH HIM, and that HE MIGHT SEND THEM FORTH TO PREACH, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils**" (Mark 3:14-15). Everyone was not free to be with Jesus all of the time. There were people He "sent away" (Matt 15:39; Mk 4:36; 6:45; 8:9). But it is **never** said of His apostles, "and He sent them away."

**I Understand this to mean that our understanding must begin with the testimony of the apostles. The Spirit will illuminate their word to us, but we will not know what they knew until we have been exposed to what they said.**

Jesus told "the twelve" things He did not say to anyone else (About Elijah and John the Baptist, Matt 17:10-12). He explained things to them He did not explain to anyone else (expounding the parable of the sower, Mk 4:11-20). He took them places to which He took no one else (Gethsemane, John 18:1). They were permitted to be with Him, when no one was allowed to be with them (the Last Supper, Lk 22:15). **Their calling, experience, and purpose were absolutely unique.**

The qualifications for an apostle were spelled out by Peter, as they were awaiting the promise of the Father: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us **all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.**" (Acts 1:21-22). Even at that time, two were found who met the qualification: "Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mathias" (Acts 1:23) – but only one was chosen, Mathias. The inspired record says "he was numbered with the twelve" (Acts 1:26), and "the twelve" are mentioned as being in place before Saul of Tarsus was called (Acts 6:2; 1 Cor 15:5). Paul was the exclusive apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11).

**There were things revealed to the apostles that were not directly revealed to anyone else.** For example, no other

people were told, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into ALL TRUTH: for He shall not speak of Himself; but **whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.** He shall glorify Me: for **He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.** All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that **He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you**" (John 16:13-15).

I Understand this to mean that our understanding must begin with the testimony of the apostles. The Spirit will illuminate their word to us, but we will not know what they knew until we have been exposed to what they said. That is the way Jesus intends for this to work. It is why He kept the twelve with Him all the time. It is why He told them things no one else heard.

It was necessary for an apostle to have seen everything Jesus did in His ministry, and hear every revelation or explanation of the truth that came from His mouth. They had to have been exposed to all of the events of Christ's ministry, from the beginning to the end. The role of the Holy Spirit toward them was to breathe life into all of these things, bringing them to their remembrance, and opening them to their understanding. Thus, they could declare them with insight and power.

This is how the body of Christ works. Various gifts are given to people, as determined by the Lord

Himself. These gifts are to be used for the edifying of the body of Christ, in order that the body may function as it is intended. **In this arrangement certain benefits are enjoyed through other members of the body, who have**

**become the means through which Jesus ministers to His brethren – the church.** The apostles are the appointed means through which the “doctrine” is expressed – the record Luke will now set before Theophilus, and ultimately us

also, in an orderly and precise manner. His understanding of what the apostles taught, given to him by the Head of the church both qualifies and enables him to do this. Luke’s record is about what Jesus began to do and teach (Acts 1:1).

## THEY WERE MINISTERS OF THE WORD

“ 1:2C . . . and ministers of the word.”

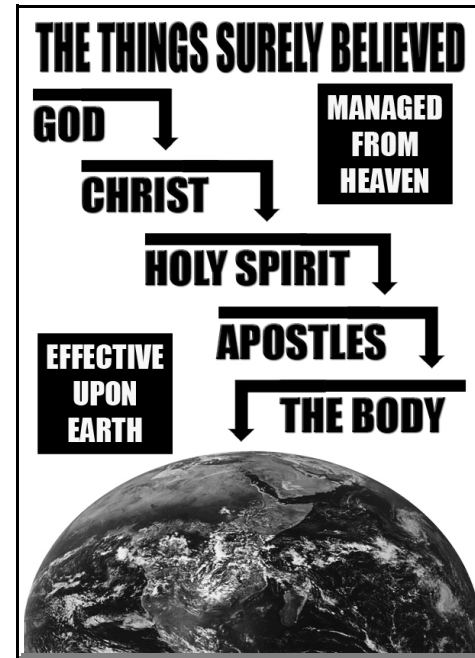
Luke is still writing concerning the apostles, in whose doctrine the early church continued steadfastly.

### MINISTERS

“ . . . and ministers . . . ” Other versions read, “servants of the Word,” NASB “preachers of the word,” BBE “proclaimers of the message,” CJB “attendants on the Word” (Luke 1:2 DARBY “servants of God’s word,” GWN “reports circulating among us,” NLT “officers of the Word,” YLT “preached the story,” IE devoted to the service of the divine Message,” WEYMOUTH “ministers of the message,” WILLIAMS “assistants having been of the word,” ABP “served God by telling people his message,” ERV “teachers of the message,” GOODSPEED “who served this Word with their very lives,” MESSAGE and “ministers of the Word [that is, of the doctrine concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God].” AMPLIFIED

The word translated “ministers” is not the same word that is ordinarily translated “minister,” or “servant” (doulos), which means slave, or someone on subjection to another. Here, however, the Greek word used here is “hoop-ay-ret-ace,” which means “IN THE NT OF THE OFFICERS AND ATTENDANTS OF MAGISTRATES; ANY ONE WHO AIDS ANOTHER IN ANY WORK.” THAYER It is more the idea of an official that is laboring together with the Head, rather than one who is merely carrying out orders.

Some notable commentators are of the opinion that anyone and everyone who witnessed the work of Jesus, including the seventy that were



sent out, are included in this text. I do not subscribe to that view. In fact, it appears that Luke’s narrative suggests that is exactly what had produced incomplete accounts of what was surely believed among the brethren. The things Jesus promised to the apostles were not delivered to every believer.

⇒ “He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

⇒ “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27).

⇒ “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. “All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-15).

A similar order is found in the revelation given to John on the Isle of Patmos. Here is how it is stated. “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw . . . John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne” (Rev 1:1,2,4). Notice the hierarchy.

⇒ God gave the Revelation to Christ.  
 ⇒ Christ gave it to His angel.  
 ⇒ The angel gave it to John.  
 ⇒ John delivered it to the messengers of the seven churches to whom the message was to be delivered.  
 ⇒ The churches were told that the messages was spoken by the Holy Spirit to the churches (Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

There was a thoroughness in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the apostles that was unique. It was because their work was unique. They

put the foundation in place, while all others built upon it. That foundation had to be flawless, so it was and remains, strictly managed from heaven.

#### OF THE WORD

“ . . . of the word.” In this case, the “word” is used in its general sense – a message, as opposed to a single word. However, there is a sense in which this message is single and

unchangeable. **It is not one of several equally valuable messages, but stands by itself, over and above all other messages.** It is not a word that is adapted to times and circumstances, but is a message that addresses men at the levels where everyone is the same – either saved or lost, righteous, or unrighteous, in Christ, or outside of Christ. This is a message that will never require updating. It is from an

unchangeable God (Mal 3:6), concerns an “**eternal purpose**” (Eph 3:11), and “**eternal salvation**” (Heb 5:9), with “**eternal life**: (Tit 1:2), and “**eternal glory**” (2 Tim 2:10). It offers “**eternal redemption**” (Heb 9:12), and promises an “**eternal inheritance**” (Heb 9:15). That, dear reader, is a “**great salvation**,” and no one can afford to neglect it (Heb 2:3). No discerning person will want to disregard the salvation of God.

## IT SEEMED GOOD TO ME ALSO

“ 1:3a **It seemed good to me also...**”

Other versions read, “*it seemed fitting,*” NASB “*I too decided,*” NRSV “*I thought it would be a good idea,*” GWN “*it seemed proper,*” MRD “*I determined also,*” TNT “*it occurred to me that it would be well,*” LIVING “*it has seemed right,*” WEYMOUTH “*felt impressed to,*” WILLIAMS and “*It seemed good and desirable to me.*” AMPLIFIED

John was led by God to provide some additional details about the things most assuredly believed among the followers of Jesus. All of the facts related to the life of Jesus upon the earth would not be recorded by a single man. This would allow for multiple witnesses of the life of Jesus that were in some ways different, yet perfectly

harmonious. **The true nature of Jesus was revealed in all four Gospels, with none of them competing with another one.** It appears to me that this was necessary because of the astounding number of things Jesus said and did, the number of individuals that were impacted by His Presence, and the scope of the things that He said and did. **I gather that no single person was capable of containing and recalling such sheer volume.**

The inspiration of God transcends human reasoning, but, in some ways, the capacity of created beings remains limited to some degree. There is even a certain transcendency to these considerations that, for me, dictates

limited comment. It will suffice to say that, for Luke, it made perfect sense to record events related to the life of Jesus, informing Theophilus of the quantity and nature of the things that were most assuredly believed among the followers of Jesus.

**Within a sectarian environment, this kind of thing situation would rarely, if ever, be presented.** For one thing, sectarianism does not allow for such a volume of considerations. Additionally, the theology of the factionist tends to intellectual and spiritual simplicity. **Varying, yet valid, perspectives are not allowed in a sectarian environment., which, by its very nature, is both narrow and bigoted.**

## HAVING HAD PERFECT UNDERSTANDING FROM THE VERY FIRST

“ 1:3b . . . , **having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first . . .**”

Other versions read, “*having investigated everything carefully from the beginning,*” NASB “*I myself have investigated everything thoroughly from the beginning,*” NIV “*having followed all things closely for some time past,*” RSV “*having traced the course of all things accurately from the first,*” ASV “*made observation, with great care, of the direction of events in their order,*” BBE “*having traced the*

*course of all things accurately from the first,*” ERV “*as soon as I had searched out perfectly all things from the beginning,*” GENEVA “*after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning,*” NJB “*having followed from the first after all things exactly,*” YLT “*it occurred to me that it would be well to recheck all these accounts from first to last and after thorough investigation,*” LIVING and “*after having searched out diligently and followed all things closely and traced accurately the course from the highest to the minutest detail from the very first.*” AMPLIFIED

I must confess that I do not at all agree with the majority of these translations. They present a picture that is wholly lacking. Most of these versions present Luke’s Gospel, as a though it was merely the result of a detailed study of all of the documents and witnesses that had been in circulation. Such expressions do not take into consideration the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who doubtless moved Luke to write this account. The Holy Spirit also must have given him understanding, as Jesus did before He left the world, and as the Spirit did when He recalled the words of Jesus to

the apostles (John 14:26), and guided them into all truth (John 16:13). How is it that God would open the eyes of the understanding of all believers to the truth of the Gospel, but would allow Luke to gain understanding by an academic exercise? **Has an academic approach to the Scriptures ever been the mode of the Kingdom.** Is it remotely possible that the prodigious ministry of Jesus could be summed up by merely reviewing that has been written about Jesus? And then, would God make such a record part of *“the Scriptures?”*

Therefore, I reject these versions of Luke 1:3, counting them as nothing more than the expression of human imagination.

But it is not enough to merely disagree with these representations. I intend to show you their utter absurdity.

**If Luke’s Gospel is really a sort of compilation of other documents and reports that were extant during that time, then his Gospel would be unique only in the matter of order, or sequence.** However, this is not at all the case.

#### FIFTY TWO THINGS LUKE REPORTS THAT ARE NOT IN ANY OF THE OTHER GOSPELS

Here are fifty-two things recorded by Luke that are not in any other section of the Scriptures. No other Gospel reports them. They include thirteen parables, a number of Jesus’ miracles, and events related to His betrayal, death, resurrection, and post resurrection appearances. This is probably not a complete index, but will confirm the magnitude of a task that could simply not be accomplished with the human intellect and discipline alone.

- ⇒ THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (LK 1:5-23,57-80).
- ⇒ MARY’S CONTACT WITH ELIZABETH (LK 1:39-45).
- ⇒ MARY’S SONG OF PRAISE (LK 1:46-56).

- ⇒ THE TAXATION AT THE TIME OF JESUS’ BIRTH (LK 2:1-3).
- ⇒ JOSEPH AND MARY GOING TO BETHLEHEM (LK 2:4-5).
- ⇒ THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN BETHLEHEM (LK 2:6-7).
- ⇒ ANGEL’S APPEARANCE TO THE SHEPHERDS (LK 2:8-20).
- ⇒ THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS (LK 2:21).
- ⇒ THE PRESENTATION OF THE BABY JESUS TO THE LORD (LK 2:22-24).
- ⇒ THE RECORD OF GOD’S WORD TO SIMEON, AND SIMEON’S PROPHECY (LK 2:25-35).
- ⇒ THE RECORD OF ANNA THE PROPHETESS (LK 2:36-38).
- ⇒ THE GROWTH OF JESUS (LK 2:40, 52).
- ⇒ THE TRIP OF MARY, JOSEPH, AND JESUS TO JERUSALEM WHEN HE WAS TWELVE (LK 2:41-51).
- ⇒ THE COUNSEL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO THOSE WHO ASKED HIM QUESTIONS (LK 3:10-14).
- ⇒ THE GENEALOGY IS TRACED FROM ADAM TO JESUS (LUKE 3:23-38).
- ⇒ JESUS’ SERMON IN NAZARETH (LK 4:16-30).
- ⇒ MENTIONED A TIME WHEN “THE POWER OF THE LORD WAS PRESENT TO HEAL THEM” (LK 5:17)
- ⇒ HEALING OF THE WOMAN BOWED OVER FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS (LK 13:10-17).
- ⇒ HEALING OF THE MAN WITH DROPSY (LK 14:1-6).
- ⇒ HEALING OF MALCHUS’ EAR (LK 22:49-51).
- ⇒ DETAILS OF HIS APPEARANCE TO THE TWO ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS (LK 24:15-45).
- ⇒ OPENING OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES, THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES (LK 24:45).
- ⇒ THE ASCENSION OF JESUS (LK 24:51).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS (LK 7:41-47).
- ⇒ WOMEN WHO SUPPORTED JESUS (LK 8:3).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL WHO TORE DOWN HIS BARN (LK 12:16-21).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF SERVANTS WAITING FOR THEIR LORD, WHO CAME TO THEM AND SERVED THEM (LK 12:35-40).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE (LK 13:6-9)
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LK 10:30-

- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN (LK 15:8-10).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON (LK 15:15-31).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD (LK 16:1-9).
- ⇒ ACCOUNT OF LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN (LK 16:19-31).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW (LK 18:1-8).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE PRAYERS OF ONE PHARISEE AND A PUBLICAN (LK 18:9-14).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE POUNDS (LK 19:1-17).
- ⇒ TEN LEPROUS HEALED, WITH ONLY ONE RETURNING (LK 17:11-19).
- ⇒ ABOUT COUNTING THE COST (LK 14:28-33).
- ⇒ ACCOUNT OF ZACCHAEUS (LK 19:1-10).
- ⇒ ACCOUNT OF TWO DISCIPLES GETTING THE COLT TIED, AND BRINGING IT TO JESUS (LK 19:30-35).
- ⇒ THE IDENTITY OF THE TWO WHO PREPARED THE PASSOVER ON THE EVE OF CHRIST’S BETRAYAL – PETER AND JOHN (LK 22:8-12).
- ⇒ JESUS TELLING PETER OF SATAN DESIRING TO SIFT HIM, AND THAT HE WOULD PRAY FOR HIM (LK 22:31-32).
- ⇒ AN ANGEL APPEARING IN GETHSEMANE AND STRENGTHENING JESUS AS HE PRAYED (LK 22:43).
- ⇒ JESUS SWEATING, AS IT WERE, GREAT DROPS OF BLOOD (LK 22:44).
- ⇒ HEALING OF MALCHUS’ EAR, THAT PETER CUT OFF (LK 22:51).
- ⇒ PILATE AND HEROD BECOMING FRIENDS (LK 23:12).
- ⇒ JESUS SAYING TO THE THIEF, “TODAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE” (LK 23:43).
- ⇒ THE REPORT OF CLEOPAS AND HIS COMPANION TO THE ELEVEN AND THOSE WHO WERE WITH THEM (LK 24:33-35).
- ⇒ THE OPENING OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ELEVEN AND THOSE WITH THEM AFTER HIS RESURRECTION (LK 24:44-49).
- ⇒ AFTER JESUS’ ASCENSION, THE DISCIPLES RETURNING TO JERUSALEM WITH GREAT JOY, CONTINUING IN THE TEMPLE, PRAISING AND BLESSING GOD (LK 24:51-53).

**Permit me to emphasize that I will not accept the postulate that such a record could possibly be accomplished without the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

- 37).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF THE MAN WHOM, AT MIDNIGHT, ASKED TO BE LENT THREE LOAVES (LK 11:5-8).
- ⇒ PARABLE OF A MAN WHO PREPARED A GREAT SUPPER (LK 14:15-24).

Permit me to emphasize that I will not accept the postulate that such a record could possibly be accomplished without the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.



## TO WRITE IN ORDER

**" 1:3c . . . to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."**

Other versions read, "an orderly account," <sup>NKJV</sup> "in consecutive order," <sup>NASB</sup> "the direction of events in their order," <sup>BBE</sup> "carefully ordered account," <sup>CEB</sup> "write to thee with method," <sup>DARBY</sup> "from point to point," <sup>GENEVA</sup> "a careful account," <sup>NLT</sup> "I put it in order," <sup>IE</sup> "a connected account," <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> "exactly what took place," <sup>CEV</sup> "in orderly fashion," <sup>EMTV</sup> "from the highest to the minutest detail." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This does not suggest that Matthew, Mark, and John were not written in precise order – for they were so written. Luke is rather comparing his writing with the writings of "others" who had taken upon themselves to record the things associated with Jesus, relying upon their own understanding. Those spurious gospels had obvious left out some critical things, and that because they were not inspired. Of course, those who imagine that Luke's Gospel is the outworking of his own

particularly in salvation, is not characterized by randomness or a lack of order. **That He does things in an orderly manner is seen in the creation, and even more so in salvation.**

Jesus portrayed this in one of His matchless parables. "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; **first** the blade, **then** the ear, **after that** the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). **Orderliness allows for progression.**

This kind of order is seen in the accomplishment of salvation.

- ⇒ First foreknowledge, then predestination, then calling, then justification, then glorification (Rom 8:29-30).
- ⇒ First come, then learn (Matt 11:28-29).
- ⇒ First keep, then do (Deut 26:16).
- ⇒ First deny self, then take up your cross, then follow Jesus (Matt 16:24).

- ⇒ First suffering, then reigning (2 Tim 2:12).

Even so, there was a certain orderliness in reporting the life of Jesus.

- ⇒ The birth and preparatory ministry of John the Baptist.
- ⇒ The birth of Jesus.
- ⇒ The growth of Jesus.
- ⇒ The baptism and setting apart of Jesus.
- ⇒ The ministry of Jesus.
- ⇒ The appointed growing opposition of His enemies.
- ⇒ The betrayal of Jesus.
- ⇒ The death of Jesus
- ⇒ The resurrection of Jesus.
- ⇒ The appearance of the risen Jesus.
- ⇒ The ascension of Jesus.

All of this is summarized in Jesus saying He had to "**finish**" the work He had been given to do (John 4:34; 5:36). **Of course, a progressive work, and the finishing of an assignment, assumes an objective – in this case, the fulfilling of God's purpose.**

It is imperative that this be seen – that Jesus was fulfilling an assignment, and purpose of His Father. This is comprehended by declaration, and by observing the orderliness with which Jesus carried out His Father's commandment.

**There is a sense in which the orderliness of the Gospel confirms that it came from God Himself.** God is a God of order and precision.

**Of course, a progressive work, and the finishing of an assignment, assumes an objective – in this case, the fulfilling of God's purpose.**

understanding and analytical skills have unwittingly classed him with those who wrote spurious gospels.

The working of the Lord,

- ⇒ First repent, then be baptized (Acts 2:38).
- ⇒ First the schoolmaster, then faith comes (Gal 3:24-25).

## KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THOSE THINGS

**" 1:4a That thou mightest know the certainty of those things . . ."**

Other versions read, "the exact truth," <sup>NASB</sup> "the truth," <sup>NRSV</sup> "certain

knowledge," <sup>BBE</sup> "the soundness of the instruction," <sup>CEB</sup> "how well-founded are the things," <sup>CJB</sup> "the verity of those words," <sup>DOUAY</sup> "that what you've been told is true," <sup>GWN</sup> "so you can be

certain of the truth," <sup>NLT</sup> "to reassure you of the truth," <sup>LIVING</sup> and "that you may know the full truth and understand with certainty and security." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Here is an area where the modern church has not done well – making sure the people know the certainty, or absolute truth and reality, of what they have believed.

And how does Luke go about establishing the “the certainty of those things” which have been believed?” He does not use arguments to establish the truth. He does not appeal to some form of human logic, or the original language, or the original manuscripts. He does not cite some hermeneutical principal, or rely upon linguistic expertise. or declare that he

has omniscience. Neither, indeed, does he claim, logical aptitude, or reasoning superiority. Such things may be highly valued by men, but they do not appear to have been considered valuable by Luke.

Luke simply affirms what happened, without even making editorial remarks. He relies upon the power of the Gospel itself. He apparently knew that he was being directed by the Holy Spirit, which made his record something that could be used by the Holy Spirit to establish confidence in the truth of the Gospel.

The “certainty” is established by a witness, by a proclamation – by preaching! This perfectly accords with the statement of Paul, with whom Luke spent considerable time. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:21). This statement provides ample proof for the fact that Luke’s Gospel is not the result of an intellectual exercise, or the mere perusal and summarization of records and testimonies that were extant at that time.

## WHEREIN THOU HAST BEEN INSTRUCTED

“1:4b . . . wherein thou hast been instructed.” Other versions read, “about things you have been taught,” NASB “Thing of which you have been informed,” RSV “those things about which you were given teaching,” BBE “the soundness of the instruction you have received,” CEB “the things which you have been taught by word of mouth,” WEYMOUTH “doctrines of the faith of which you have been informed and in which you have been orally instructed.” AMPLIFIED

It is estimated that Luke wrote this Gospel in the reasonable vicinity of 56 A.D. If that supposition is anywhere near correct, it provides us with the kind of preaching and teaching that was considered normal in those days. There were false teachers, to be sure, as First

Corinthians (2 Cor 11:4), Galatians (Gal 1:6), Philipians (Phil 3:18-19), Colossians (Col 2:8), Jude (Jude 1:4), and Revelation (Rev 2:14-15; 2:24) confirm. But even then, these were not yet the standard things being preached. They were departure from the norm. For the most part, people who were said to have believed the Gospel, had believed the true Gospel (Acts 9:42; 13:48; 16:1; Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 3:5; Eph 1:13; 2 Thess 1:10; Heb 4:3).

However, in our time, it cannot be assumed that those who say they have believed have responded to the true Gospel of Christ. Now, both the preaching and the hearing of the Gospel has to be questioned, and that is largely owing to the fruit that such preaching has produced.

Suffice it to say, when a person has believed the Gospel that is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16), a legitimate effort can be expended to ensure they know the certainty of what they have been taught. In fact, it is imperative, that if the intended growth up into Christ takes place (Eph 4:15), the people must be brought to the point where they can confidently confess, “For the which cause I also suffer these I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim 1:12). Or, as John states in his first epistle, “that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). That is the ultimate reason for Luke’s Gospel.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/19/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The second lesson will cover verses 5-17 of chapter 1: “AN ANGEL REVEALS SOMETHING TO ZACHARIAS.” It had been a long dry spiritual period, and Israel was not in good shape. They were living under the power of Imperial Rome, and were being allowed to conduct their religious routines. Although there was a high priest and priests, there had been no prophet for many years – even centuries. But the time had now arrived, long prophesied by the holy prophets of old, when a Messiah would be sent to Israel. He would, according to the prophets, be preceded by a power messenger from God. Now Zacharias learns this involves him and his aged wife. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

**PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

**A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS**

**"Openings and Introductions"** = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; **"Lead Singing"** – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; **"Calling"** = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; **"Sermon"** = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; **"Exhortation"** = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; **"Table Meditation"** = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ's role in salvation; **"Lead Scripture shower"** = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; **"Lead prayer session"** = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; **"Lead Intercessory Prayer"** = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; **"Closing Scripture/Benediction"** – Closing of the AM Gathering

**SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY**

**The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO**

**DURING AUGUST, 2014**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Blakely, Benjamin (AM Opening).</li><li>2. Blakely, Given O. (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).</li><li>3. Blakely, Hannah (Read AM Sermon Text).</li><li>4. Blakely, Jonathan (AM Table Meditation, AM Sermon, Lead AM Singing).</li><li>5. Blakely, June (Lead PM Prayers, Teach AM Class).</li><li>6. Blakely, Mattie (Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction)</li><li>7. Blakely, Michael (Play Piano, Teach AM Class, AM Table Meditation, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).</li><li>8. Blakely, Michele (Play Piano (Opening Word).</li><li>9. Blakely, Paul (Lead Scripture Shower).</li><li>10. Blakely, Roxanne (Lead AM Scripture Shower).</li><li>11. Cobb, Matthew (AM Exhortation, AM Sermon).</li><li>12. Cobb, Justin (Lead Scripture Shower, PM Table Meditation).</li><li>13. Cobb, Nicole (Lead PM Singing).</li><li>14. Cobb, Robert (AM Table Meditation, AM Exhortation, AM Calling, PM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).</li><li>15. Cobb, Seth (Read AM Sermon Text)</li><li>16. Dill, Sarah (Closing Scripture/Benediction).</li><li>17. Hutchcraft, Aaron (AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, PM Introduction, PM Exhortation).</li><li>18. Hutchcraft, Adah (AM Opening, PM Introduction)</li><li>19. Hutchcraft, Aleia (Read AM Sermon Text, Closing Scripture/Benediction)</li><li>20. Hutchcraft, Barbara (Lead AM Singing, Lead Scripture Shower, PM Introduction).</li><li>21. Hutchcraft, Debbie (Play Piano, AM Calling, Lead PM</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Singing, Lead PM Singing)</li><li>22. Hutchcraft, Gene (AM Sermon, Teach AM Class, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).</li><li>23. Hutchcraft, Jason (AM Exhortation, AM Calling, AM Exhortation, PM Sermon, PM Exhortation).</li><li>24. Hutchcraft, Judah (Play Piano Specials, Read PM Sermon Text, Introduction to PM Sermon, Introduction top PM Sermon).</li><li>25. Hutchcraft, Silas (Read PM Sermon Text).</li><li>26. Miller, Enoch (Closing Scripture/Benediction).</li><li>27. Parker, Melissa (Lead Scripture Shower, AM Calling, Lead PM Singing).</li><li>28. Parker, Tony (AM Table Meditation, Teach AM Class).</li><li>29. Sims, Annie (Read PM Sermon Text).</li><li>30. Sims, Baylie (Read AM Sermon Text).</li><li>31. Sims Girls – Annie, Hannah, Rachel ().</li><li>32. Sims, Rachel (Closing Scripture/Benediction)</li><li>33. Sims, Ricky (PM Table Meditation).</li><li>34. Sims, Tasha (Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).</li><li>35. Williams, Emma (Read PM Sermon Text).</li><li>36. Williams, Jeremy (AM Calling, AM Sermon, AM Exhortation). Williams, Levi (Read AM Sermon Text, Closing Scripture/Benediction).</li><li>37. Williams, Logan (Play Communion Music, Lead AM Singing. Introduction to PM Sermon).</li><li>38. Williams, Nichole (AM Opening).</li><li>39. Williams, Sydnee (Read PM Sermon Text)</li><li>40. Preparing Lord's Supper (Various sisters).</li></ol> |
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**THE BODY OF CHRIST**

It is a fact: *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him"* (1 Cor 12:18). He did not set them in the home, but *"in the body."* He did not place them in society, but *"in the body."* They are functioning members of the body who fill necessary functions – edifying roles in the solemn assembly (1 Cor 12:19-27). The functioning value and ministry of *"the body"* is realized when it is *"together,"* not when the people are separated. The ministry of each member is determined by their faith – *"a measure of faith"* that has been given to them in order to the *"profit"* of the entire body (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7). This is how the Lord has put together *"the church, which is His body"* (Eph 1:22-23). We make no apologies for the ministry of the entire body – publicly, in the assembly, and in order to the edification of the saints. This is all done in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and regard for those who are in Christ Jesus, and who, in faithfulness to God who gave these various abilities. Our assemblies are designed to allow for the various expressions and insightful responses of all who are of honest and good heart, have faith, and are in, and living for, the Lord Jesus.