



1 Today we will break down the first four verses – the introduction to the Gospel of Luke – and try to answer the question: why does Luke write this Gospel?

1.1 We don't know much about Luke. He was probably a Gentile, a Greek, an educated man, and we know he was a physician.¹ Furthermore, he was a faithful friend and companion of the apostle Paul on most of his journeys.

Luke stayed with Paul until the very end, while many others abandoned him.²

He wrote two books of the New Testament: the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. He likely wrote the Gospel while Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea.

LUKE'S INTENTION

2 If we read these verses superficially, we might conclude that Luke doubts this body of knowledge and wants to reach his own conclusions. But I do not believe that is his goal. Like a careful investigator, Luke gathers evidence — not to dismantle the faith, but to confirm it. He points to an incredibly rich source of information grounded in the testimony of “many,” and he presents it in an orderly way to demonstrate that it is true.

¹ Colossians 4:14

² 2 Timothy 4:9–11



2.1 Luke certainly gained the respect of believers during his journeys, both as a physician and as a disciple of the apostle Paul. Yet even at that time false teachers were entering the churches. So Luke takes action. He uses his education, his access to eyewitnesses, his careful method — to strengthen and encourage the churches.

—In their doubts, he wanted to prove to them that the only true teaching is the one that comes from Jesus and the apostles.—

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

3 Throughout history, biblical scholars have observed that the Gospels of Luke, Matthew, and Mark closely resemble one another. Luke and Matthew likely used Mark as one of their sources. For this reason they are called the Synoptic Gospels — because they present similar events from a similar perspective.

3.1 What was the purpose of writing a Gospel? Why did Luke, Matthew, Mark, and John do this? As I mentioned earlier, they all recognized a problem emerging within the churches spreading throughout the Roman Empire. In their time, the Good News was transmitted orally. If doubts arose concerning something that had been taught, a letter would be sent to the apostles — and they would confirm or refute the matter.

3.2 Even in the earliest days of the Church, young, intelligent, and charismatic teachers began to appear, claiming that they alone possessed the true teaching of Jesus. The first generation of Christians rejected this, but their children were led astray. We can almost hear them saying, "What do you old people know? These are the real teachers!" Evidence that this was truly happening is found in "1 John."

3.3 Luke understood that transmitting the true message — the teaching of Jesus — solely through oral tradition would not be sufficient in the long run. What would happen when the

apostles died? That is precisely why he writes his Gospel. He wants future generations to know the true teaching of Jesus.

3.4 Did Luke know that we, two thousand years later, would be reading his Gospel? I do not believe so. I think he had several upcoming generations in mind. His purpose was to preserve the teaching of Jesus and the deeds He performed — deeds to which the apostles themselves bore witness, which they established and confirmed.

THREE KEY WORDS

4 (Luke 1:1–4):

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

4.1 Three things I want to highlight at the beginning:

- a) The word *Theophilus* in verse 3 means "one who loves God" or "one loved by God."

Most commentators believe this refers to a single individual. I believe it refers to a plurality — and I will explain later why I take that position.

- b) The word "exact truth" in verse 4. I believe Luke is emphasizing that the evidence, the facts, and the testimonies are reliable — and that the believer can firmly hold his faith on that very foundation.
- c) The word "accomplished" in verse 1. I believe Luke is referring to a "body of knowledge" established by the apostles themselves and received within the churches as authoritative tradition.

SOURCES AND WITNESSES

5 The sources of information were not limited to the apostles. There were Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. There was also Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ and many more.

Luke's goal is to show the reader that even if certain testimonies did not come directly from the apostles, they were nevertheless authentic. Why? Because in the end they received the "seal" — the approval of the apostles themselves, who examined every account to determine whether it aligned with the teaching of Jesus. If a testimony was false, they rejected it; if it was true, they incorporated it into their reports. In other words, after Christ's death, only the apostles had the authority to discern what was true and what was not.

5.1 Luke seeks to confirm, present, and demonstrate the true apostolic teaching — and he is able to do so because the apostles are still alive.

5.2 This organic process of intertwined testimonies corrected itself under the oversight of the apostles who were still living.

In other words, the apostolic “body of knowledge,” their tradition, was established while the apostles were still alive.

5.3 And why am I telling you this? Because anything said or written later that does not align with the teaching of Jesus and the apostles has the right to be rejected.

I know this idea carries weight, but I’m not adding a new doctrine—just a new dish on the Christian menu. As I develop these sermons, I want to show how faith in the apostles and Jesus still brings us freedom, reason, and joy in life’s journey.

CERTAINTY AND RELIABILITY

6 All right, let us continue. When Luke speaks in verse 4 about certainty and reliability, what is he truly communicating to the reader?

He sees doubt and confusion increasing within the churches. As I mentioned earlier, the questions were multiplying: “Did Jesus really walk on water? Did He truly turn water into wine? Did Jesus truly rise from the dead?”

Because of that, Luke wants what he writes to be an encouragement to the believer. In other words, he desires that the Christian have a firm foundation and solid evidence upon which he can persevere in faith. That is what he is communicating to the reader.

THEOPHILUS – ONE PERSON OR MANY?

7 The name Theophilus, as I mentioned earlier, is understood by many biblical teachers to refer to a single individual of high rank. Theophilus was a common name at that time. These same teachers suggest that he financed Luke’s travels, which was also customary in that culture. They further assume that he was someone who had recently been “born again.” Luke addresses him as “most excellent,” which indicates a person of status. And all of this may very well be true.

7.1. However, I personally believe that Luke is addressing those who love God. Why is that? I asked myself a simple question: why would Luke invest such effort in writing and examining witnesses for the sake of just one person? Would it not have been more effective to go directly to Theophilus and instruct him personally, just as Paul taught in the synagogues day and night?

7.2. If what I am saying is correct, then what Luke is doing here is remarkably profound and noble. Luke understands that the one who believes the gospel is a future citizen of the kingdom of God. That is why he addresses *us* as “most excellent.” He reminds *us* that we are people of dignity, nobility, righteousness, truth, and humility. We are those who bear the image of God in this world.

7.3. In other words, Luke is addressing people who desire to know God, who trust His promises, people who long above all else for a fulfilled and truly meaningful life — a life free

from sorrow and evil. He speaks to those who understand that such a life can never be fully achieved here, and because of that realization they desire to become citizens of God's kingdom — a kingdom where God promises to grant what we most deeply long for, above all that we would become perfectly good human beings, like His Son, Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS FAITH?

8 Before I conclude this sermon, I want to address a crucial question: what is faith? Faith can be understood in two ways:

- a) I believe what I want to believe
- b) My beliefs are grounded in facts³, evidence, and reason

8.1 Let us begin with point a):

a) Such a person accepts only those facts that align with his preexisting beliefs. If the facts do not align, he rejects them — even if they are supported by evidence and reason.

He or she takes this position: "I believe what I believe, and nothing you say will convince me otherwise."

8.2 Consider the example of a soccer fan. If he is ideologically devoted to his team and that team fairly loses a match, he will do everything possible to defend his belief: "The referees were biased." "The match was fixed."

On the other hand, statistics and evidence clearly show that the opposing team was better that day. It would be reasonable to admit that. But he refuses, because his ideological commitments will not allow it.

Such a person is not open to dialogue. He is not interested in what is logical or reasonable, even when supported by evidence.

8.3. Now we come to point b):

b) Here we are speaking about a person whose thinking is oriented toward evidence and facts. This person is open to dialogue, to examination, and to changing his mind — but only if alternative claims are grounded in solid evidence that is rational and coherent.

For example, if someone were to present scientifically verifiable evidence today that the bones of Jesus had been discovered, such a person would be compelled to conclude that the Bible — and what it teaches — is false.

³ In this case, facts are events that are claimed to have occurred. For example: Jesus walked on water, Jesus healed the sick, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

And here lies the tension. “The Christian faith does not fear evidence. It stands or falls on historical events.” If Christ has not been raised, then everything is in vain.⁴ But if He has been raised, then truth is grounded in reality — not in ideology.



FAITH AND REASON

9 Unfortunately, many Christians from the very beginning have elevated faith above logic and reason. Luke’s perspective, however, is different. If faith is not grounded in evidence and reason, then it becomes foolishness. Luke believes that faith must be supported by evidence and by events that are rationally connected into a coherent narrative — a story that holds together.

9.1 This raises the question: is there a difference between faith and reason? Yes, there is. Through reason we may conclude that Christianity is true — and yet still not enter into faith. Faith does not arise from rational obligation alone, but from a personal commitment to fully submit to the teaching and truth of Jesus.

Faith is more than reason — but it is never against reason. It is grounded in facts, evidence, and truth.

COULD IT ALL BE MADE UP?

10 All right, let us continue. Is it logically possible that someone invented all of this about Jesus? Yes, logically it is possible. My reason tells me that I do not possess one hundred percent certainty. Everything that happened in the past or will happen in the future is, in some sense, abstract to us — because we do not see it.

“What we see feels real to us.”

⁴ (First Corinthians 15:17–20) “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”

10.1 Consider death as an example. We know that it is a universally established reality. But do we truly believe it? I do not think so. Speaking personally, I never regarded death as a concrete reality until I faced my own illness. I never experienced death as real until I saw it around me in the hospital.

10.2 What young person seriously contemplates death? To them it is abstract — but that does not mean it does not exist.

10.3. This way of thinking is not limited to the young. It follows us even into old age.

Walter Hooper, a close friend of C.S. Lewis, recounts an encounter during the time when Lewis was seriously ill. He describes an elderly neighbor — a committed atheist, around ninety-seven years old — who went for a brisk walk every day. Whenever they met, the man would ask whether Lewis was still alive. And when he was told that Lewis was very ill, he would confidently reply: “There’s nothing wrong with me. I’ve got a long time yet.”⁵

Think about that.

A man nearing one hundred years of age, speaking as if death were still far away — as if it belonged to someone else.

And yet, before him stood the reality: a younger man, seriously ill, possibly near death.

What does this show us?

That death, even when it is close, remains abstract to the human heart.

It is not only the young who ignore it. Even those who stand at the very edge of life can still live as though it will never truly reach them.

10.4 In the same way, we can think about Jesus. There is substantial evidence that He existed historically and that what is written in the Bible makes sense and is reasonable to believe.

The course of history itself demonstrates that His coming marked a turning point — a moment after which humanity moved in a different direction.

10.5 Yet until we personally confront this as a universal reality, it remains abstract to us.

10.6 In other words, just as we daily — often subconsciously — try to avoid the truth that death is part of our reality, we avoid with the same intensity the truth that God created this reality with the intention of fulfilling His plan — a plan that directly affects our lives.

CRITICS AND THE BIBLE

11 A biblical teacher once gave an excellent illustration of how critics want us to view the Bible and the teaching of Jesus. Imagine an alien arriving on earth. A small group of people see him, but he says nothing. These same people decide to become his followers and begin inventing

⁵ Walter Hooper, in the introduction to *The Weight of Glory* by C. S. Lewis, recounts an encounter with an elderly atheist neighbor who, despite being nearly one hundred years old, expressed confidence that he still had “a long time yet” to live (pp. 7–8).

stories among themselves, placing words into his mouth as if he had spoken them. Then they spread these fabricated stories to others so that they too might become followers of this alien.



11.1 Is that possible? Logically, yes. Are there people in this world capable of such behavior? Yes, there are. I have personally encountered individuals willing to believe almost anything. But the real question is this: why would anyone invent something like that?

11.2 When we read the Bible, we see that many believers — the apostles and their disciples — were killed for their convictions. So I ask: who would fabricate a story and then willingly die for what he knows to be a lie?⁶

11.3 Critics want to portray the Bible as a book that begins with the words, “Once upon a time...” They want to reduce it to the level of a fairy tale.

In other words, many have rejected the Bible not on the basis of evidence, but on the basis of preconceived assumptions.

11.4 In conclusion, the Bible is historically and archaeologically testable. The God of the Bible did not perform miracles in secret, hidden from public view. These works were done before multitudes.⁷ Those same witnesses testified to what they had seen — and many ultimately gave their lives for those convictions.

⁶ It is important to distinguish here between Christian witness and ideological fanaticism. Even today, there are ideologies for which people are willing to give their lives. However, in many such cases these movements justify violence against others or even demand aggression toward those who refuse to accept the ideology. The apostles, by contrast, did not spread their faith by the sword, nor did they physically harm others. Their message was one of love for enemies, truth, and the righteousness of God. They did not die while killing others; they died as witnesses to what they claimed to have seen. The distinction is crucial: a fanatic dies for an idea he seeks to impose on others, while a believer in Christ dies bearing witness to what he believes is true — without violence, without defending himself by force.

⁷ (First Corinthians 15:3–6) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.”

“That is why Luke seeks to encourage us to stand firm in our faith.”

11.5 And when I reflect carefully, I come to this conclusion: the problem has never ultimately been the evidence. The problem lies in the human heart, which persistently resists acknowledging that there is a God who has the right to be God in our lives.

11.6 Of course, that statement deserves careful development. If my interpretation has stirred your interest, I will unfold this theme more fully in the sermons to come.