

Luke Chapter 1 v 1 - 4

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[0 : 00] Welcome to all of you, and welcome some visitors amongst us. We trust that together in God's presence we may know His blessing and His help, one with another.

The verse to think about as we come to worship God and to come and meet with Him is Hebrews chapter 1. In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets many times and in various ways.

But in these last days, He's spoken to us by His Son. The God we come to worship is the living God and the speaking God. He's not a silent God or a dumb God.

He's the God who has spoken into this world throughout time and history. Spoken into the world through creation. Spoken into the world through His care and provision of the world.

And spoken to this world through His prophets throughout time. But especially, God speaks to us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the clear Word of God.

[1 : 07] The unmistakable Word of God. That's why John the Apostle, when he writes about the life of Jesus, speaks to Him and calls Him the Word. Capital W, O-R-D.

The Word. And our first hymn reminds us that it is Jesus, the Word of God the Father, who came into this world and came to be God's, not only God's voice, but God's action and God's power in our lives.

1-9-3, let's stand together as we sing. You're the Word of God the Father. Amen. God does speak to us and has made Himself known to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is through the Lord Jesus Christ we can come to God and make our needs known to Him in prayer. So let us pray together now. Let us all pray.

Our most wonderful and glorious God, our Heavenly Father, we come to You this morning as those who have heard Your voice. Thank You, O Lord, that You have spoken to us.

[2 : 36] And made Yourself known to us. Once, O Lord, we were ignorant of You. Once we were deaf to Your words. Once we were blind and lost.

Once, O Lord, we had no knowledge of You. You seemed to be just a strange story. A strange and peculiar person who has no relevance in our lives.

Yet, O Lord, You did not leave us in that position. You didn't just ignore us and leave us as we were. Groping around, looking for meaning and purpose in life.

Looking for truth, hope, life. But, Lord, we thank You that You came to us. We thank You that You came to this world in Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That You came and entered into all of our human experiences. Yes, the joys, but particularly the sorrows, the griefs, the pains. And more than that, we thank You that, Lord Jesus Christ, You, the very Son of God, bore our suffering, bore our guilt and our shame upon the cross.

[3 : 43] Thank You that You spoke so clearly and loudly in Your actions and not just in Your words. That You love us and that You will go to any lengths to rescue, to save and to restore us to Yourself, our Creator God.

But we thank You, too, that those of us who are Christians here this morning, there was that time in our lives when You spoke to us by Your Holy Spirit. You spoke to us perhaps through the testimony and the witness of other Christians.

Or You spoke to us through the things that we heard about Jesus. We thank You that You spoke to our minds, but You spoke especially to our hearts. You spoke to us words of life that raised us from death.

You spoke to us words of power that, in one sense, healed our deaf ears to Your voice. And opened our blind eyes to see what a wonderful God You are. What an amazing Savior You are for all, for any, for everyone who will listen to Your voice and who will put their faith in You.

Thank You that, O Lord, You spoke and we couldn't help but, Lord, respond to Your beautiful voice. That voice, yes, of power, but that gentle, that lovely, that tender voice that spoke to us in our sin and spoke to us forgiveness and spoke to our troubled minds' peace and spoke to us, Lord, in our anguish and in our hunger.

[5 : 19] Words of hope. Thank You, O Lord, that You are yet still speaking, speaking to us and calling each and every person to come to Jesus, to come to the Savior, to come to the One who alone gives life, not just life everlasting in heaven, beyond death, wonderful and marvelous and fantastic though that is, but gives us life now in fullness and abundance, life which nothing else in this world can give.

And we're here, Lord. We keep coming back again and again, Sunday by Sunday, because we want more. Lord, we thank You that You've given so much and what You've given is beyond words and description, but we just long for more of You, more of Your love, more of Your grace, more of Your strength, more of Your purpose.

We want to know You more. And Lord, we long that even in this time together, You would speak to us again. Speak to some of us, perhaps even for the very first time, to hear Your voice calling us to turn to You in repentance and faith.

Lord, cause us to hear Your voice, perhaps for the first time in a long time, where we've been far from You and distant from You. Lord, we haven't sought You in Your word and in prayer, and we have, in one sense, forgotten to listen to Your voice.

Speak to us, Lord, if, Lord, we need to hear something particular and special to our lives, pertaining to our sin, pertaining to the way that we are living and behaving, pertaining, Lord, perhaps to our need of comfort and support and strength.

[7 : 01] Lord, You know us completely, and so we look to You. Give us ears to hear, and speak to us, we pray. And do us good, we ask, for we bring these prayers and requests to You, Lord, knowing that You hear and answer, because You have proven that in the purpose, in the person of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen. Bit unfamiliar to us. Good. Good. Well, let's read together in our Bibles and turn to 2 Peter. That's the second letter of Peter, chapter 1.

And that's page 1222. Page 1222. 2 Peter, chapter 1. I'm going to read the whole chapter.

We're not actually going to be looking at this particularly. I'll, a bit later on, tell you where we're going to be turning to. But this gives us a very good link to where we're going to be thinking about as well in a few moments.

It's 2 Peter, chapter 1. Reading the whole of the chapter. Page 1222. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, have received a faith as precious as ours.

[8 : 25] Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

Through these, He's given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness mutual affection, and to mutual affection love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But whoever does not have them is short-sighted and blind, forgetting they've been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election.

[9 : 43] For if you do these things, you'll never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you have.

I think it's right to refresh your memory, as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

And I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you'll always be able to remember these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ in power.

But we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the majestic glory, saying, This is my Son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain. We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[11 : 04] Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

If the young people and children would like to go out to their particular activities now. Thank you. Please, would you turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke and Chapter 1.

Gospel of Luke and Chapter 1. Again, if you've got one of the church Bibles, one of the red ones, then that's page 1025, page 1025.

Now, this morning we're going to start studying the Gospel of Luke. It's the longest book in the New Testament.

Okay, the longest book in the New Testament. And we're going to start studying it, and it's probably going to take us, oh, I don't know, 20 years maybe, or something like that, to finish.

[12 : 18] No, hopefully a bit less than that. But it's going to be a long time, studying through and going through. But we'll have breaks, don't worry. We won't be looking at Luke every single morning for the next few years.

But particularly looking at this together. And so I want to read the first four verses, because the first four verses are Luke's introduction to his Gospel, his record of the life of Jesus.

And we're going to be looking at that together. And then in the coming weeks, as you're well aware, the first chapter or two of Luke is really about preparing for Christmas, preparing for the coming of Christ.

So that sort of lends itself well for us as well as we lead up to this time of the year. So Luke chapter 1, verse 1, I'm reading through to verse 4.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.

[13 : 22] With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you've been taught.

In the year 1611, a little while ago, a new translation of the English Bible was published. On the opening page of that Bible were printed these words.

To the most high and mighty prince, James, by the grace of God, the king of Great Britain, France and Ireland, defender of the faith.

It became commonly known, and is commonly known, as the King James Bible. It was dedicated to him by those translators. And the King James Bible has become, by everybody's account, the most influential book ever to be written in the history of the English language.

And it continues to be so. When we read the introduction to Luke, the first page, in one sense, of Luke's Gospel, we find, in one sense, it's also dedicated to somebody.

[14 : 36] Luke sets out to write this orderly account of the life of Jesus Christ. He dedicates it to most excellent Theophilus. Who's Theophilus? Who is he dedicating it to?

The King James was dedicated to King James, the first of England, King James, the sixth of Scotland. Well, Theophilus is only mentioned one other time in the whole of the New Testament.

And that's the very start of Acts, Acts of the Apostles, where we read, in my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach.

That second volume, in one sense, also written by the same author, clearly, because he says, in my former book, this is the one we've got here, Luke, in Acts, we have the second of those books in the volume, written by this same author.

And he calls him here most excellent Theophilus. Now, it could be that he's just being very polite and being nice to him and calling him something nice, but it also could be and probably was that

Theophilus had some rank, he had some office, he was somebody of position.

[15:43] What does Theophilus mean? Well, the name means friend of God or loved, lover of God or someone who loves God.

Now, that was a common name, actually, not an uncommon name, quite common, Theophilus, amongst the days in which this is written. It could be that he was a Christian, we're not told for sure that he was or that he wasn't, but he'd been taught things, hadn't he, verse 4, that you may know the certainty of the things you've been taught, or been taught things about the Christian faith. He'd heard about them, they'd been related to him. And Luke's desire was that Theophilus would, through this book, through this record of the life of Jesus, not only know about these things, but be certain of them, that you may know the certainty, you may be convinced, you may be assured of what he's heard about Jesus, that it was true, reliable, dependable.

Well, what about Luke? How do we know that this is Luke who writes this gospel? His name's not mentioned in the gospel, he doesn't sign it off with Luke or begin it with his name Luke.

Many of the New Testament writers do that, don't they? We read there in Peter, in his letters, how he starts off, Simon Peter, and Paul's letters are very much the same. But we do know that the writer, sorry, we do know that Luke himself was a real person.

[17:09] We know that he was a companion of Paul. He went on his missionary journeys with him. In 2 Timothy, as Paul writes to his friend Timothy, chapter 4, he speaks about only Luke is with me.

Everybody else is gone. He's only got one friend left with him and that's this person Luke. We know that this Luke was also with Paul when he was imprisoned. When he writes to another friend, Philemon, near the end, he speaks about Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus sends you greetings as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

It could well be that Luke wrote the book of Acts while he was there with Paul. Paul had not much else to do in one sense. He was in prison. He couldn't go out preaching. Luke was there.

Perhaps there he was writing about the book of Acts which contains mostly the life and missionary journeys of Paul. And when we read through Acts, we actually find that in Acts, the author is present when certain things are happening.

He talks about we doing this and we doing that. Just a couple of examples in Acts in chapter 16.

After Paul had seen the vision, he got ready at once to leave for Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

[18:33] And then verse 11, from Troas we put out to sea. From there we travelled to Philippi and we stayed on several days. On the Sabbath we went. It's clear that this person who's writing the account of Paul and the missionary journey and Acts, he was there in the mix travelling around the Mediterranean at that time and recording what was happening.

Paul tells us that Luke was a doctor, a physician. our dear friend, he writes in Colossians chapter 4, Luke the doctor sends greetings.

This means that he was not a Jew, as Paul was a Jew, he would have been a Gentile, a Greek, he would have been well educated, which would explain why he was able to write so well.

In fact, Bible scholars, Greek scholars recognise that Luke's Greek is the most polished, the best Greek in the New Testament in the writing.

And it means that he was someone who would have had specific medical training. And in fact, when we read through the Gospel of Luke, we see again and again that sort of medical mind comes out.

[19:44] One particular instance that shows that is in the parable of the rich man going through the eye of the needle. Remember that parable? It's more easier for a camel to pass the eye of the needle than a rich man to get into heaven.

When Luke writes about the needle, he actually uses a special word, a medical word for a surgical needle unlike an ordinary common day needle. Mark and Matthew and the others, when they use that parable, they just talk about a needle and thread type of needle.

He uses the special word for a medical needle. And when he talks about illnesses and things, he gives medical explanations that wouldn't be known to others.

So there's very strong evidence in the New Testament for us to believe, yes, this was written by Luke. And in fact, from the very beginning of the church, the early days of the church, Luke was believed to have been the writer.

And so it's almost certain that indeed he was. But of course, it's not who wrote the gospel of Luke. That's really the vital thing or the important thing.

[20 : 48] What really matters is why it was written and what it's all about. And of course, what does it have to say?

Not just to Theophilus, but to those also who read it. And what does it have to say to us living here nearly 2,000 years after it was penned?

Well, Luke, of course, if we look at this introduction, recognizes other people have written about the life of Jesus. He says, many have undertaken to draw up an account for things that have been fulfilled among us.

He's not the first. He's saying to write an account of Jesus' life. Others have done it. Others have made an account of it. He probably had in mind Mark.

Mark, again, is universally recognized by theologians and scholars as the oldest of the gospels, written first of all. And in fact, Luke certainly had read Mark's gospel account.

[21 : 50] Matthew had also read it as well because there are parts of Mark's gospel, large parts of Mark's gospel, that are almost exactly the same in Luke and in Matthew as well.

These writers, Mark included, and possibly others as well, maybe Matthew too, had got their material where? Where they got their idea to write about the life of Jesus?

Well, we're told here, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. They'd got the events of the life of Jesus, the teaching of the life of Jesus, the miracles of the life of Jesus, not from stories or myths, but from people who had been there, seen it, heard it, done it.

Many of them were close disciples of Jesus and followers of Jesus. So when we read Luke as we do the rest of the Bible, we're not reading some gossip, as it were.

We're not reading just rumor or possibility or what might have happened. But notice, those who were from the first eyewitnesses, from the beginning of the life of Jesus, people who had been there and seen it, people who were faithful in handing down, in passing on accurately what they'd seen and heard.

[23 : 14] That's why several other writers in the New Testament make that point as well. They're very, very careful to make that point. In 1 John in chapter 1, just listen to how John writes the first of his letters.

That which we, sorry, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

John was there. He walked with Jesus. He heard Jesus. He says, look, we're writing down to you those things which were known to us, real to us.

That's why we read as well from 2 Peter. Do you remember when we read there in chapter 1? For we did not follow, verse 16, cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

people who disparage the Bible, people who say that the record of Jesus is just a lot of myths and fairy stories like Hansel and Gretel, they are failing to recognize that these people made it very clear.

[24 : 23] They were eyewitnesses. They were not just people who'd heard it third or fourth hand. They were people who were there. We're told, Luke calls them servants of the word.

That means they were faithful, faithful and accurate in the way that they passed on the truth about Jesus to those who came after them and to the church.

And remember as well, when Peter writes, he says this, he recognizes he's going to die soon and he wants everybody to be assured and certain of the things that they've heard about Jesus.

So he says to them, doesn't he, I will make every effort to see that after my departure you'll always be able to remember these things. In other words, he says I'm going to, literally I'm dying, I'm going to make sure that you have them.

I'm going to write them down. That's why I'm writing them in this letter. Peter, we believe, was the source of Mark's gospel and told him about the life of Jesus. Paul tells the church at Corinth about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the real resurrection, the physical resurrection, the visible resurrection, that it was seen by hundreds of people.

[25 : 36] And he goes on to say that these people are still alive as eyewitnesses of what happened. From 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 6, after that, Jesus appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living.

So as I'm writing to you, 30 years later, after the resurrection of Jesus, which is about the sort of time Paul was writing and possibly the time that Luke was writing, there are lots of people still alive. I'm, what am I, I'm 50, 26, seven years ago was the Battle of the Falklands, the Falklands War. I remember it. I watched it on the telly. I can still visualize the pictures, things like that.

It's not that long ago, is it? It may seem a long time for young people, 30 years ago, but as you get older, 30 years is just yesterday. Remember things very clearly and vividly, your wedding day or other events.

Well, if you've got Jesus walking amongst you and he's risen from the dead and you saw it, you're not going to forget that, are you? That's what Luke is saying, what Paul is saying, what John is saying, what Peter's saying.

[26 : 46] These things are eyewitness accounts. And Luke is writing his gospel only now, he says, because he's been spending a great deal of time investigating all these eyewitness accounts, researching to make sure, tracing back each story, each event to people who were there, who saw it and could verify it.

So he says, with this in mind, verse 3, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account. It wasn't that he didn't trust what Mark said, it wasn't that he didn't trust what the other gospel writers have said, but he wanted to put something down.

We know, of course, he was moved by God. God was laid it on his heart, the Holy Spirit was directing him in this. But it doesn't mean that he was slipshod or careless. He's saying, look, I've investigated this from the very beginning and I've spent time, I'm a man of science, remember, medicine man, a man of science.

I don't just take things on face value because so and so says it, I have to have it accurately proven. And so when we have Luke, yes we do have large parts of Mark's gospel which he knew and would have verified and checked on, but we have large parts of Luke which are not found in any of the other gospels either, things that he particularly had investigated for himself.

Sixteen of Jesus' parables that are found in Luke are not found in the other gospels. We know this is God's handiwork, this is God bringing together just the things that we needed to know.

[28 : 22] John tells us in his gospel, he said, if everything that Jesus said and did was recorded in the books, they'd fill all the libraries of the world. The Holy Spirit, God is specific about the things that he tells us about his son, specific in the things that we need to know for our salvation and relationship with him.

And in one sense, it's only when Luke is satisfied with his investigation that now he writes an orderly account a very careful account, a very laid out account, a plain account.

But what is Luke going to write about? What is Luke going to tell us? What is it that he's investigated? What is it that he is now laying before Theophilus in such a way to say this is something that will strengthen your faith which will cause you to know with certainty the things you've been taught?

Well, it's right there in verse 1 in that little word, fulfilled. Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled amongst us.

Luke is telling us that what he's about to write is part of God's plan coming into being. What he's writing to us are the promises of God fleshed out in his day and age.

[29 : 39] It happened while he was there. It happened in his life. It happened in his world. And he uses that particular word. It's a particular Greek word fulfilled. He's chosen it specifically to show that everything that follows is part of a preconceived design.

Everything meshes together. Everything is fulfilling and bringing about what God had purposed, what God had promised in the Old Testament. It's all coming to life.

We see that, don't we? As we look at the beginning of the Christmas story, we see this extraordinary thing that those who were there recognized that what was happening to them was part of God's plan and fulfilling of his promise.

Turn over the page in chapter 1 of Luke to verse 54. Here's Mary in her wonderful song of praise to God. And she says this, speaking of God, he has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.

The coming of Jesus into the world, this miraculous birth. Mary, by the Holy Spirit, knew this was part of God's promise that he's given long ago that a Messiah, a Savior would come.

[30 : 58] And then just over to the next page with Zachariah's song of praise. Verse 68. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a horn of salvation. The horn of salvation is a symbol of strength, a strong and mighty one, is what it's really saying. Somebody strong and mighty to save us in the house of his servant David.

Verse 70. As he said through his prophets of long ago. Again, this is what God had been saying again and again and promising. Days coming, this incredible and mighty Savior will come into the world and he'll come into the world in this particular way and he'll accomplish these particular things and now it's all being fulfilled.

Luke's carefully researched record of the life of Jesus is an in-depth account of God bringing everything together that he determined, that he'd promised, that he'd planned for his people throughout the Old Testament.

And we're to read this gospel in that way. We're to read it in that sense of this is God doing something amazing and marvelous and wonderful.

[32 : 15] That's why, of course, when people come to the gospels or the Bible or the life of Jesus, they say, that's impossible. Nobody can just touch somebody and they can see when they've been blind for 40 years.

Nobody can raise somebody from the dead. Nobody can produce food for 5,000 people from just five loaves and two fish. It's impossible. No one could have done that. Of course.

No ordinary human being could have done that. Of course. No one who lives in this world could have done the things that Jesus did. That's what we're meant to see. This is something divine.

This is something supernatural. This is God. It's got his fingerprints all over it. This is something out of this world. The almighty God stepping into our environment.

He's meant to be different. He's meant to stand out from the crowd. He's meant to do what is impossible. Or what is the point of believing in him? Or why on earth is he any different from any other prophet or religious leader or teacher?

[33 : 16] Nicodemus, the religious leader who knew Jesus in John's gospel, came to him at night and he said this, we know you're a teacher who's come from God for no one could perform the signs you're doing if God were not with him.

When you come to the Bible and read it, yes, you're expecting to see things that you don't see every day. You're expecting things which are remarkable and extraordinary and impossible because we're dealing with God.

This is what God is doing. God's outworking. God's handiwork. So what is it that Luke wants? What is it his desire?

When we read through and see God in Jesus at work in this world, what is it that he's hoping to accomplish in the life of Theophilus and his other readers?

Verse 4, that you may know the certainty of the things that you've been taught. That you may know for sure that these things are true, that these things are reliable.

[34 : 24] Theophilus. I think he was somebody yet to be convinced about trusting Jesus. He was a man of integrity like many people who would say, I'm not going to just believe something on the say-so on somebody else.

I'm not just going to take this at face value. Unfortunately, in our day and age, that isn't the case. People will pick up the newspaper and they'll believe what they read because it's written there and they won't investigate it and check it out for themselves.

They won't take the time to see, is this really true about this politician? Is this really true about the beginning of the world? Is this really true about science? We actually have become less concerned to find out and get to the bottom of the truth.

We've become more spoon-fed people. And the truth is this phrase. Sadly, many people reject the gospel and reject the Bible not because they've investigated it or read it or studied it or found out whether this is true or not, but simply because they've been spoon-fed things that say, oh, you can't believe that.

They heard it down the pub. Somebody said, oh, you know, they found down in Israel, they found all these other gospels that show that the Bible is wrong. Have they really?

[35 : 38] Oh, a man down the pub told me that so I'm going to believe him. That's true, isn't it? Now, Luke has written this and he's spent time in it and he's recorded it because he wants us to

investigate for ourselves.

If Jesus is who he claims to be and who Luke declares him to be with eyewitness record, then we cannot ignore him. And we can't just brush him aside and we can't just brush Christianity aside and we can't just pretend that everything is okay with us and God.

Luke wants us to know, to know the certainty that what we've heard about Jesus Christ is true and reliable and that we can put our faith in him.

I just want to split us up into four groups for a moment as we come to a close. I wonder if you fall into one of these groups. Are you perhaps somebody who's heard about Jesus but you've not put your trust in him?

You've not believed what you read in the Bible. You've not believed about Jesus. And again, you've listened to the man down in the pub or you've read the Sun newspaper that tells you that we all came from aliens and Mars and things like that.

[37 : 00] Sorry, I may be arrested and taken to court for saying things about the Sun newspaper which aren't true. But forget about that. You're somebody, it's incredible. It's impossible.

It's unbelievable. It's unreliable. I can't believe these things. Well, to you, let me say this. Here is a well-researched, reliable, clearly laid out piece of historical evidence about the life of Jesus.

Will you read it? Or will you just say, no, I'm too busy. I haven't got time. Actually, actually, that's you saying, no, I'm afraid of reading it. Because if I read it and it's true, then it's going to change my whole perspective on myself, on my world, and on God.

Perhaps you're somebody who's not believed, but you've heard. Well, here is the certainty of what you've heard. Here's the evidence written down, black and white, with a much more reliable, well-researched document than any other.

Perhaps you're somebody, but you've heard about Jesus and you're intrigued. There's part of you that's drawn to it, and I like the idea that God loves me. I like the idea that there's a God in the world. I find it interesting, but, you know, there's so much going on.

[38 : 15] There's so much being said from scientists about disproving the world and its origins and God and evolution, and there's so many things.

It's just so confusing. Dear friend, there are many things that science has done which is wonderful in helping our generation with medicine, technology advances, but there are very important questions that science cannot give us the answer to.

It cannot explain to us love. Love is not simply a chemical reaction in the brain. It cannot speak into the needs we have concerning hope.

Science is not able to deal with a guilty conscience and a sense of being unforgiven. Yes, there are many things that we can look to and thank God for that have been discovered and scientific leaps forward, but there are very vital things concerning your soul, your inner workings that science cannot explain, but they're here for you.

Here you can find the truth. Here there is that which can convince you. That actually there is a God who loves you. Find out more, investigate more, be drawn in for yourself.

[39 : 38] Perhaps you're somebody who is a Christian, somebody who is a believer, and you've trusted Christ, but again, you know, you're finding yourself as a Christian completely bombarded by all sorts of teaching which goes against the Bible.

You know Christ, you're trusting Him, but you're really struggling. Doubts keep coming up in your mind and you want to believe and you want to trust Christ, but then this comes out and that comes out and the people you live amongst and work amongst, none of them are Christians and their lifestyles, and it's really difficult.

Luke says that you may have the certainty, you know the certainty of the things you've been taught. He wants you and I to be strengthened in our faith, that we've heard about Christ, we've put our trust in, He's reliable, and though the world may speak against Him and we may struggle with that and find it hard, here is strength for us in our faith.

We're going to stand up and say, no, I know this Jesus I believed in and however you may have conceived of Him or thought of Him and been taught about Him, I know He's someone who loves me and who died for me and who has a love for you too.

And then finally, dear friends, perhaps you're a Christian and your faith is strong, you know the Lord Jesus, you're confident in the Word of God, but in your heart, you're saying, I long to know Him more.

[41 : 00] I long to love Him more. I long to live for Him more. I just want more and more of Jesus. I want to be deepened and I want to grow and I want to mature in the faith.

Well, here it is. It's the Word, isn't it? The Word of God frees and strengthens and nourishes here that we might know the things we've believed in and actually live them out and apply them to our lives.

Luke's got that one goal in giving this gospel to Theophilus and to us and to the world. His prayer finds its fullest expression in the words of John and I'll close with John chapter 20.

At the end of his gospel near the end, he writes this, but these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in His name.

May God help us and bless us and make His Word evermore what He longs for it to be, a place of strength and encouragement.

[42 : 06] May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.