



CAPITOL COMMISSION®

Medical Doctor to the Governor: Just the Facts

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Luke 1:1-4 *Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2) just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3) it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4) that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.* (NKJV)

FOR THIS REASON WE ALSO THANK GOD WITHOUT
CEASING, BECAUSE WHEN YOU RECEIVED THE WORD OF
GOD WHICH YOU HEARD FROM US, YOU WELCOMED IT NOT
AS THE WORD OF MEN, BUT AS IT IS IN TRUTH, THE WORD
OF GOD, WHICH EFFECTIVELY WORKS IN YOU WHO
BELIEVE.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

Why does Luke do all this work for one person? How extensive was his source material to compile his historical account? What was fulfilled and Who fulfilled it? Who were both eyewitnesses and ministers of the word? How did Luke acquire such an accurate understanding? In what way is Luke's account different from those who preceded him? Why is it so important that this Governor knows the truth with certainty?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JANUARY 22: LUKE 1:5-14 **THE IMPOSSIBLE ACQUIRED THROUGH PRAYER**
- JANUARY 29: LUKE 1:15-22 **UNBELIEF UNSPOKEN!**

This carefully crafted preface relating the purpose of Luke's Gospel is all just one sentence of classical Greek style. We know that Luke was a Medical Doctor because Paul specifically describes him as such in Colossians 4:14. This compassionate doctor was a "*fellow laborer*" with Paul on his mission team (Philemon 24, 2 Timothy 4:11). Also, Luke becomes the first pastor of the first church in Europe when he is left by Paul in Philippi to care for that young church after suffering such severe persecution (Acts 16:8-40). Though recognized as the author of Luke and Acts by the unanimous witness of the early church fathers, Luke is so humble that he never mentions his own name. We only know the precise times in Acts he is with Paul on the mission team by Luke's use of the first person plural, "*we*." Though he is the only Gentile author in the New Testament, he will write more than anyone else, a significant 28%. In fact, 50% of his Gospel covers material not found elsewhere. Most significantly, his has the most accurate chronology of all the Gospels.

THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, CONVERTING THE
SOUL; THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE, MAKING
WISE THE SIMPLE; ... THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE
TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER. PSALM 19:7, 9

I. FROM THE APOSTLES

LUKE 1:1-2

It was common knowledge in the time that Luke wrote his carefully investigated account of the work and words of Jesus Christ, that there were "*many*" accounts circulating from those who had tried to do the same before him. They had accomplished the difficult task of taking careful notes and compiling the "*things which have been* (completely) *fulfilled*" from the messages of the "*eyewitnesses and ministers of the word*" who "*delivered them to us*." This was one means by which the thousands who had repented and received Christ "*continued in the apostles' doctrine*" (Acts 2:42). These were carefully organized and cherished accounts of the historical facts related by the

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 14TH FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 14TH FLOOR SPEAKER'S CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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first preachers of the Gospel, so that these believers could remember the example of Christ and obey His sayings. On the day of Pentecost, when the apostles first preached, *“there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven”* (Acts 2:5), *“that day about three thousand souls were added to them”* (Acts 2:41). Later, when Peter and John healed the man who was lame from birth and were arrested for their sermons, (using the same word for *“many”* in our passage) Luke says, *“many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of men came to be about five thousand”* (Acts 4:4). The *“men”* would have been primarily heads of households, so one can only imagine how *“many”* of these prized, authentic accounts were circulating in Jerusalem and around the world.

*THE LAW OF YOUR MOUTH IS BETTER TO ME THAN
THOUSANDS OF COINS OF GOLD AND SILVER.
PSALM 119:72*

II. FACTUAL ACCURACY

LUKE 1:3

Luke the pastor and physician now humbly commits to joining all the other authors, but uniquely embracing the overwhelming task of seeking to consult with these thousands of accounts, compile the best and compare all he can find, to personally write his own most accurate account for his friend. Such may have been a twenty-year project, probably begun where early tradition almost unanimously places him in Antioch, where he would have learned from Barnabas and Saul, and eventually to Caesarea where Luke cares personally for Paul while he is incarcerated there, due to persecution from false accusations in Jerusalem. Meanwhile he would have traveled with Paul on part of his second and third missionary journeys, been for some time in Jerusalem and for about two years near Jerusalem in Caesarea. What makes Luke's account so unique is that he can claim *“a perfect understanding of all things”* in regard to the life of Christ as related by all the apostles and eyewitness

preachers, everywhere they went. He had completely investigated everything available, carefully from the very beginning, tracing things back to their source and interviewing all the various first generation leaders, gaining eyewitness testimony from those who were risking their lives to proclaim the truth. His goal was perfect accuracy, causing him to take the time to go into minute detail in order to get his facts straight and compile everything into precise chronological order.

*FOR ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH
PASS AWAY, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE WILL BY NO MEANS
PASS FROM THE LAW TILL IS FULFILLED. MATTHEW 5:18*

III. FOR AUTHORITY

LUKE 1:3-4

In the midst of this project, Luke becomes the best historian of his time and, as in all of Scripture, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. What is most astounding is that all this time-consuming work was done for one person! He gave, His Excellency, Governor Theophilus, this most carefully investigated and factual account of the life of Jesus Christ, so that he would possess a full and complete knowledge with absolute certainty the reliability of the things concerning which he had been informed. Most likely Luke had been praying for Theophilus, in light of Jeremiah 29:7 and Ezra 6:10, and certainly Paul would have encouraged him in such prayer for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Governor Theophilus may have been a believer, but struggling regarding the truth about Christ. With all the many accounts about Him in circulation, it is probable that some of them disagreed with one another, and that may have been a problem for him. But since the word for *“instructed”* can refer to information that can be true or false, he could have received false information that was keeping him from turning to Christ. Luke's care for him in *“prayer and the ministry of the word”* (Acts 6:4), through the work of the Holy Spirit, gave certainty for his faith in Jesus Christ.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Most importantly, do you know for sure that when you die you will live with Christ forever in Heaven?
- 2) Do you demonstrate that you are a believer by your delight in knowing Christ and His Word?
- 3) What are you doing for others in prayer for them and sharing the light of God's Word?