

The Gospel according to Luke

1:1-4

The Word (part 1)

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I. Intro

As we take up this new study in one of the gospels I think it a worthy question to ask and answer and that is, “*Why should we gather together and study this book?*” The reason for the question really addresses the broader question and that has to do with the certainty of our Christian faith. It has been noted that there are four facts that start with our daily life and move towards the greatest certainty of our faith.

- **Unique life:** There are unmistakable evidences of our faith that deal with our daily transformation such as: A peace in our spirit, a consciousness of a relationship to the presence of our creator, and hope and fearlessness about our future that causes us to be joyfully excited about our departure instead of fearful. This is further realized in the reality that this “Unique life” is visible in a “Universal life”. There is the fact that all regardless of background, time periods education and experiences all have experienced the same unique life. Even in different cultures and in churches that don’t all agree on every detail of doctrine there is a universal life that all have and continue to experience.
- **Unique Organization:** Here I think perhaps it’s best to say that the church is Unique entirely because it’s not an organization but rather an organism. As an organism it can be traced back to the “living” connection that a handful of men had with their Master

that united them together in a way that even the gates of hell could not separate. This organism has withstood the storms of time and will continue no matter how much satan and the world tries to destroy and divide.

- **Unique book:** Here again we have 66 books by over 40 different writers over a 4000-year period of time with a complete consistency as indeed it was written by One author. Its message is unique: That salvation is from sin and that we can enjoy this for free, fully, and permanently! Its power is unique: it is from God the Spirit; its life is unique as it isn't just about the destination but equally about the journey. It's thought is superior as it critiques all other thoughts and influences all other opinions. Its preservation is unique: This book has survived the unending criticism of men in sciences, education, geography, history. Those who have held the truths of this book have died believing the truths and time again were proven right for them and the continue trust in God's Word!
- **Unique Person:** The greatest certainty of our faith is in the Person Jesus Himself as we have the Uniqueness of His life: That Jesus' earthly life was sinless and was testified as such be friend, family, and foe. Those that that observed His earthly life witnessed the perfect balance of a person who was the ideal Man and the Son of God. That witnessed His Work and His words and saw that there was no difference between them. His work was not ended at His death but instead magnified by His death as witnessed in His resurrection. There is no other figure in all of human history be that religious or otherwise that can measure up to the PERSON OF CHRIST. There is no other Name given among men then the name of Jesus and at that Name every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He alone is Lord and savior.

II. Vs. 1-2 Why do we have four gospels?

Vs. 1-2 In the preface of this gospel (the first four verses) we discover some very interesting facts about the gospel itself. The first is realized when we understand that it is the aim of every preface to introduce the reader to the book they are about to read. But what you may not be aware of is that the fact that a “Preface” is **never written at the beginning of the book even though it is placed at the beginning of the book. Instead it is written at the end of the book then place in the front.** Luke’s preface to this gospel is the same as the tenses in the first four verse proves this. Luke says in verse 3 that, “**it seemed good to me also....to write to you.**” The words “**to write to you**” are past tense which suggests that **he had already written this gospel before he had written the preface.** The second thing I note about this preface is in verse 1 as it **eludes to other gospels.** Luke says that “Inasmuch as **MANY HAVE TAKEN IN HAND TO SET IN ORDER A NARRATIVE**”, which means that Matthew and Mark were already written by the time that Luke takes up pen and parchment. The question that this brings up is: “***Why did God see fit to give us four very different accounts?***” And a follow up question, “***What does reading the gospel according to Luke provide the reader that they couldn’t achieve by reading a different account.***” **Before we start digging into this account we will briefly address four reasons these four gospel records benefit the reader.**

1. By giving us four different records by four different men we have a stronger foundation for our faith especially as it relates to Jesus’, birth, life, death, and resurrection. In Matt. 18:16 we are told that “***By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established***”. And here in the four gospels God has given witness by the Holy Spirit not by two or three witness but instead by four.

2. Another reason why God has given us four gospels is that it is impossible to present Jesus as Lord apart from four different aspects.
 - A. Matthew was chosen to present Jesus as the promised Messiah, the King of Israel.
 - B. Mark presents Jesus as God's perfect, faithful Servant both towards the Father and towards humanity.
 - C. John presents Jesus as the Manifestation of Deity, the Eternal Son of the Father, who became Man to bring salvation to man and end the curse from the fall of Adam. We read of that in the very first chapter where John declares Jesus as the Word made flesh that dwelt among us and that the disciples beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - D. Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man in all of His perfection as that is one of Luke's favorite expression concerning Jesus in this account. This is clearly seen in Luke's presentation of Jesus' prayer life where He is connected to humanity and never makes a move apart from first seeking the Father.
3. Another aspect of four gospels appears to be a fulfillment of prophecy as Ezekiel saw four faces of one of the cherubin: The Lion which is the majesty of Matthew. The ox which is patience in service of Mark's account. The eagle which is John's view of Jesus from the heavenly flight of the eagles' eyes. And lastly Luke's view which reveals Jesus in His earthly perfection as the Perfect Man who alone would be the sacrifice or redemption sinful humanity.
4. Yet another reason for the four different accounts of Jesus may have to do with the four different offerings found in Leviticus chapters 1-5. A careful reading of these chapters

with the four different gospels reveals a very interesting parallel that Jesus need to fulfill all four of these sin offerings:

- A. Matthew presents Jesus as fulfilling the trespass offering as man at trespassed against God's holiness. The trespass offering sets forth the death of Christ because of the sins actually committed against God and man.
- B. Mark presents Jesus as fulfilling the sin offering as man's sin had separated him from a relationship with the Living God. The sin offering speaks of Christ dying for what we are, (sinners), not only for what we have done, (sin).
- C. John presents Jesus as the burnt offering totally consumed on the altar as a tribute to God for man's sin. The burnt offering speaks of Christ dying to glorify God.
- D. Luke presents Jesus as the great peace offering as Jesus has made peace between god and man by the shedding of His blood on the cross. The peace offering speaks of peace made by the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

It is my view that no one view in the gospel records will ever be enough to completely view Jesus. Understanding our Lord and Savior can never be a secondhand activity, a carried over story or a repeated tale. It is these that aid in our personal experience and discovery. As such God's revelation of His only Son does not come to the person who sits with their hands folded and a lazy mind and only waits but instead it comes to the person who's mind is actively engaged in as they think, seek, and search out each of these gospel records. God's revealed inspiration comes when the mind of a person meets the revealing Spirit of God.

I will conclude or talk this morning by noting the differences in the Gospel of Luke when compared to the other gospel accounts before we take up the remainder of these four verses next week where we will examine two things:

1. Vs. 3a A little bit about the author
 2. Vs. 3b-4 The subject, sources of information, method, and purpose of writing
- Luke's account is the only of the four gospels that gives us the wonderful account of the "virgin birth" of Jesus, though it is corroborated in Matthew's account. The reality of this perspective is evident from the fact that Luke said that he had exact knowledge of everything he wrote and had probably interviewed Mary the mother of Jesus personally, where he would have learned of the miracle of the incarnation from her own lips. Furthermore it is also the only gospel record that

brings out truths from a medical perspective, which makes since seen that elsewhere in the bible is called a physician. Luke alone tells us of the visit of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias and Mary. He is the only one that records the song of Mary as well as the prophecy of Zacharias. He is the only one that records the birth of Jesus in a stable as well as the angel's announcement to the shepherds. He alone records for us the presentation of the child Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem and the welcoming given Jesus by Anna and Simeon. Luke alone gives us the first meeting in Nazareth in the 4th chapter along with the great gathering of fishes. Also Luke mentions the meeting with the women in the house of Simon the Pharisee found in the 7th chapter. In the 10th chapter Luke records the beautiful story of Mary at Jesus' feet as well as the mission of the 70 disciples. Much of the material found in chapters 11-18 are exclusive to Luke's account, like the story of Zacchaeus. Luke alone mentions the coming of an angel to Jesus to strengthen Him in the garden of Gethsemane. If not for Luke's account we would not have known of the repentant thief on the cross next to Jesus. Neither would we have known of the risen Jesus visit with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Then looking at the parables in the Bible Luke alone records for us the story of the Good Samaritan, the rich fool, the barren fig tree, the great super, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the story of Lazarus and rich man, the unjust judge and widow, the Pharisee and the publican, and the parable of the pounds.

I think that this brief start in Luke will whet your appetite for more as will take up the rest of the first 4 verses next week.