



Enlisted - Part 1

Luke: God's Diligent Student

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Luke 1:1-4

Well here's something I assume I'll be saying for quite some time. Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke. That I hope you'll hear many times and I hope that you'll actually do it many times. Pick up your Bibles, it's not just good for you to listen what I'm saying, to look at the text yourself. So, grab your Bibles and turn to Luke chapter 1 and as you're turning there let me remind you of something we see often throughout the scripture. Not just in Luke but everywhere, it seems that God doesn't tend to nor even enjoy picking the best of the best on planet earth to get his job done. Have you noticed that? I mean he's always picking the runt or you know the underdog and he's doing his thing in a perfect way even through some very unexpected people. Some less than perfect, very ordinary people and that's what we find as we begin our study in the Gospel of Luke in chapter 1 we'll meet all kinds of people that you'll be tempted to think are spectacular people because of the roles that they play and because they're right there in scripture. I mean clearly these are just extraordinary people, well they're not, I mean really if you look at them you'll see in this very band of folks that God uses and enlists to set the stage, perfectly set the stage for his son Jesus Christ in chapter 2. This whole band of people in chapter 1 are ordinary people but God has enlisted them and is using them and is empowering them to do extraordinary things and we should be used to that by now, if we've studied the Bible at all. (02:00)

That's how God works, I mean they're less than perfect. Think of we're getting ahead of ourselves here. We'll meet an elderly priest who, believe it or not, frankly is struggling with his faith in God. We'll meet a gal who was, you know, really struggling with the cultural derision and even the personal and emotional pain of living her whole life, adult life, with infertility and just the pain of that and watching God utilize and enlist her. We'll see what I think is fair to describe a very humble pheasant teenage girl that God enlists in the most amazing way to play one of the most significant roles in setting the stage for the coming of Christ. We'll meet a rough and tumble little boy at this stage in chapter 1, who grows up with some odd proclivities that certainly has a strong spirit, stronger than, you know, any we've seen in the New Testament, one of the strongest at least that we've ever seen in the New Testament. (02:55)

But today let us focus on the first person that we encounter the words that come from the quill, if you will, of a man who is known to us in the New Testament through the writings of the Apostle Paul. His name of course is Luke, he's the one that God enlists to write the book itself and we learn from Colossians 4 that he's a physician by profession and by training, he's a doctor, that's probably a good thing for Paul, he's getting beat up a lot, needs a lot of medical attention it seems and has his own personal ailments that he struggles with. We find out that being a friend of Doctor Luke is probably a good thing. We learn from 2 Timothy chapter 4 that he is a loyal friend and co-minister with Paul. He wasn't just there to take care of medical needs, I mean he was doing ministry. Philemon, the 24th verse we learn about his concern for others. I mean he is a person that pops up from time to time in the writings of the Apostle Paul which is no surprise in his letters because as we read through the book of Acts we find out that he's in the action. That we see him there but we don't see him there by name, we see him by the pronouns. All of a sudden, we start seeing the book of Acts kick into first person plural pronouns and then when we read the introduction to Acts it's just like the Gospel of Luke, it ends up that really what we're studying here in Luke is just volume one of a two volume set that Doctor Luke writes to a single person. (04:21)

Obviously, God has a much wider audience involved but he writes this letter to Theophilus. That explains the life, death, resurrection of Christ and then he writes this companion volume called the Acts of the Apostles, all the ministry of the Apostles, and he ends up in just doing that, being enlisted to do that, to do the most significant and voluminous thing that any writer of the New Testament has done. And that is to write most of the New Testament. I mean maybe you don't realize this but even though Matthew has 28 chapters and Luke only 24, I mean we'll learn this quickly in chapter 1, there are 80 verses in chapter 1 of Luke. I mean when it comes to just sheer words, if you were to take the Greek New Testament you'll find that we have over 19 thousand Greek words in this and by that I mean the length of this gospel, it's longer than any other. The second longest book in the New Testament is the book of Acts. You put those two together you've got 38 thousand words in the Greek New Testament that Doctor Luke writes. That's 28% of the New Testament. He writes more of the New Testament in terms of volume than any other



writer, including the Apostle Paul who wrote 13 epistles. I mean Luke is a major player. I mean talk about an impact, a far reaching impact, he's going to impact our lives here. Our plan is to study this book in detail and we're going to be impacted by this person who submitted his life and his mind and his time to be utilized to minister to others, in particular as we'll read here in just a moment a singular person that was on his heart as he dedicates this work that he's done to a man named, Theophilus. (06:03)

Now we don't know anything about this guy really. We know his name which was common. Some people have suggested it's a Christian name and clearly he's a Christian. Well, we don't know that. As a matter of fact, the word Theophilus, which if you've been around church for awhile you understand some of these Greek components. Theos means God. Phileo that means love. It means one that is loved by God or dear to God. And you may think well that's a Christian name, well it is a Greco-Roman name but it is a very common one. It goes all the way back we find in papyri all the way back to 13th century BC. It's very common. So this is a guy we don't know his spiritual state. All we know is that he heard about the message of Christ and Luke now is going to employ his effort and his skills to clearly present the message in an orderly way, going back to the beginning, consulting eyewitnesses and giving a very clear and orderly account of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what we're doing here today and what has happened for generations before us, is that we're gleaned one of the best and clearest, most succinct in terms of each account that we run into, records of the life of Christ, and it is one that I'm sure far exceeds any impact Luke ever thought he would have when he sat down under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to write this gospel, the Gospel of Luke. (07:21)

This gospel by the way we find comes to an abrupt end, not the gospel itself, I should say part 2 of the message and that is the book of Acts with Paul's imprisonment there in Rome, Acts 28 he's under house arrest for two years, some of you know that story. And Luke is from the second missionary journey in Acts 16 all the way to the end of the book we hear Luke talking in the first person plural pronouns so he's a part of this with a little exception in the middle of all that but he finds his way all the way to the journey to Rome with the Apostle Paul and we never find out what happens. So, we know this, that the second installment of this work ended there around 62 AD, there's not much debate on that, 61 to 62 AD when Paul was in prison. And because it comes to such an abrupt end we don't hear how the story concludes. We know that's when that was, we assume obviously that first volume was written before the second volume, that puts the construction of this probably around 59 to 60 AD. It's a pretty early gospel and he starts out by describing the fact that many people have already taken up the task of writing about Christ and he's going to add his voice to it, of course under the direction of God's Spirit to give us a fantastic book that you and I are going to study. (08:37)

Now here's the thing, I'd like us at the end of the morning to at least be able to say, I'd like to be like Luke. Okay? You're not going to be used to write scripture. If you think you are, we need to talk after the service about that a little bit. God is not going to enlist you to write anymore Bible books. But I do hope that you sense and just being inspired by the hard work of research and the risk, the perilous risk that was involved in proclaiming boldly the truth about Christ. I hope that you and I are inspired to be enlisted by God in our sphere of influence to do a little of what Luke is doing here. And that is becoming a good student of the life of Christ and a willing evangelist of the message of Christ and that we would say, "God, here am I, send me." I'm willing to do that. It's the right righteous thing to do and let's learn a little bit about his heart just by reading the prologue which is in Greek one sentence verses 1 through 4. (09:28)

Which I should mention this so you may never, you'll hear this I'm sure coming through, Luke is a very well crafted, skillfully crafted book. I mean you clearly see that he's a highly educated professional in the kind of Greek that he uses. If you take Greek as I did at university, the classics department, you never start any assignments in year 1 in Luke, you're just not going to touch it, it's too complicated, it's too difficult or in this seminary where I also took Greek, you're not going to have assignments there in the beginning. You get to Luke later in your studies because it is very difficult. Matter of fact this is a 21-word sentence in Greek, very complex, it takes 74 words in the ESV to translate it and I thought was interesting, it doesn't always happen this way, the ESV translators kept it one sentence. So, as you look at your Bibles there, this isn't one long sentence in English because it's one long sentence in Greek. And it's filled with some rich vocabulary words as we'll see throughout the book of Luke. And this beautiful sentence, this opening discussion and the purpose of his writing is all bound up here. Let's look at it as we read it carefully. You follow along as I read it for you. (10:33)

It starts this way, verse number 1, Luke chapter 1 verse 1. In as much, as many have undertaken to compile a

narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also having followed all things closely for some time past to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught. I want to start there with that last verse, verse 4, here's the purpose clause, you can see that there in English, it's very clear. That you, here's the purpose, why are you doing this? That you may have certainly. That's a great Greek word there. Firmness a kind of confidence that you may see the tightness the fact that this is true, the voracity of the things, literally logos, the words that you've been taught about Christ. I want you to know that the things that you've heard are certain. I want to deal with that in your own mind. I want to talk about it objectively and look at how he discusses it. I know there's a lot of narrative that's been written and I know that there are people from the beginning who are eyewitnesses and ministers of the word. They've written these things and handed them down, and I followed everything closely and I'm going to write an orderly account for you. So that, I'm going to get to all that and do all that homework and all that research and lay it all out clearly and systematically so that you can be certain. So that you can literally know the certainty of the words that you've been taught, right? This is not just about subjective, how you feel about it, this is I want you to acknowledge that these words are firm, they're sure, you can trust them, they're actual truths about Christ. (12:20)

Now I just want to underscore verse 4 and I want to start there in your worksheet. Hopefully you've found that and we can jot this down because it may sound like a simple sentence but what he's just done in verse number 4 is give us something of his epistemology, his understanding of truth. What he has done is really define truth in a way that is not really common anymore so I want to go back to a very basic statement here. Number 1 on your outlines and just have you put it down this way, number 1, we need to realize that religious claims are either true or false. (12:47)

1. Realize Religious Claims are True or False

Let's start there. Religious claims are either true or false. Now this is a book about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, religious leader, right? He's the founder of Christianity. This is a book about Jesus Christ, his life, what he taught, what he did, what he said, how he died and how he apparently was resurrected from the dead, what happened after that. That's what we're going to read and study, that's what we're going to get into. But what he does in the way that he describes the purpose of the book is he reveals to us his view of truth. And that is that this is something that you can be certain about. This is a kind of claim that you can really either establish or dismiss. That it's something that either as the dictionary would say regarding the word truth. It either corresponds with reality or it doesn't. And I'm telling you, I know it's in your dictionary. I know that's how truth is defined but that's not the way truth is defined any more on the street, particularly when we're talking about religion. Think that through, some of you are already seeing that as you think through how people talk about religion. Dictionary defines it this way, truth is something in accordance with fact or reality. Truth is something that is in accordance with fact or reality. It is something that is actual or real. The philosophy department at Oxford says this in their opening discussions and definitions of truth. To say something is true is to assert a correspondence with reality. What we're saying is if it's going to be true, it matches reality. Okay? Duh. No, no, no, it's not a "Duh" statement. This is something that is not how religion is discussed. We have created a special word, really a special, you know, we've taken the word "truth" and we've stretched it over a whole new category definition, put it that way. Truth has now been, it's okay to talk about truth that's objectively true and then we'll call it truth but we know it's not really truth, it's not really truth. But we'll call it religious truth and if you think that's what non-Christians are saying, or non-religious people are saying, you're wrong. (14:50)

Here's the religious editor for the religious column in Newsweek, who I assume is looking for a job these days, if you know about Newsweek demise. I guess they're still online so maybe she'll still have a job, I don't know. Here's what she writes, this is the person that writes on religion in Newsweek which you know is no bastion of insight but here it comes. Sorry. She writes this. Reason, reason, it defines one kind of reality. In other words, you use your mind and you logically think through and you assert whether something has correspondence with reality. That defines reason, defines one kind of reality. And then she says this, that what we know, faith, religion, that defines another. Right? It's another kind of reality. What we don't know, now think that one through. So, what we're saying is, there are things that we know, and that's a kind of truth. That's a kind of reality and our brain is involved in that. And then there's this other thing over here we call religion or faith and that doesn't involve reality, that's something we can't know, we can't verify, that's different. We'll still call it truth, right? But it's not that kind of truth. It's not truth that corresponds with stuff that real that we could ever verify. So, if you want to talk about religion now we're in a whole different mode of truth. What we've done is taken truth we've created two buckets. (16:13)

Francis Schaffer was really, was celebrated as one who helped us clarify this in our own thinking. The disaster in our modern understanding of things by saying, "Listen you can have truth that's objectively true, you can have truth that is, you know, something that can be verified, something your mind can engage in, something you can say is universally so. But then there's another kind of truth and that's kind of a truth that's more subjective. It's more values based, it's more based on preference and it's non-provable and it's not something that we're ever concerned about trying to show a correspondence with reality." In other words, there's a real kind of truth and then there's a religious kind of truth. And those are two separate things. And you need to understand that. (16:57)

Now here's the problem, we never use to call that truth, right? Now we're calling it truth. Kind of making us feel better that we're dealing with truth but in reality, we're not because that's not how it's discussed. For instance, if I say to you, Carlynn my wife's eyes are brown, you'd say that's an objective statement, it's a truth claim that can be verified it's something that we can say is universally true if we research it and look at it and find out that her eyes are really brown and it matches our definition of brown. Yes, her eyes are brown. But if then I went on to say, brown eyes are the prettiest. Which I better say. And you say, no, my wife has blue eyes, blue eyes are the prettiest. No, no, no, brown eyes are. See what I'm saying here is I'm not making a truth statement, I'm sharing with you maybe truly sharing with you my preference and my value but I'm not talking about truth in the classic definition of truth. I shouldn't be using that and trying to put it on par with the objectivity of it. In other words, I could say something like, you can get yogurt at Yogurtland. Yogurt is on my mind. Yogurtland, okay? That's either a true statement or a false statement. You can go research it and verify whether you can get yogurt at Yogurtland. You would think so, maybe you figure it out, you can empirically say it's true. But if now we go there and I tell you this, "Listen, here's the deal, Nutter Butter yogurt is the best yogurt ever, it is so much better than any of that fru-fru other stuff they got in that in thing. You know the best yogurt is Nutter Butter." You say, "Oh no, it's kiwi-strawberry, now that's the best yogurt". I say, "You're crazy man, that is not true. See, that is not true, kiwi-strawberry that can't hold a candle to Nutter Butter, that is the best. And it makes me cry when they don't have it there, I wouldn't even taste, I wouldn't even sample your kiwi-strawberry, I would be embarrassed to try it, I don't even want that. It's not good. I'm telling you the truth, it's not good." (18:49)

What am I saying? The only truth part of that is, that that what I truly affirm as my preference, right? Not a truth statement, it's a value statement. Now here's the thing about religion, when it comes to religion see, we want to take every statement about religion, Christ, Budda, Mohammed and we want to say that is a value statement. That is a statement about preference, that's a statement about what you like. And then we started using this phrase, it gets kicked around all the time, that then is true for you. So, when it comes to Christ, and you say I believe Christ died, rose again and now forgives my sin. They'll say, "That's great, that's true for you." I don't believe that see because the Muslim over here will say, no Christ was not crucified and did not rise from the dead, it did not happen. Right? And they'll say that's great too and that's true for you. See? Now Christ either died on a cross by Roman soldiers and was resurrected or he wasn't, that's a truth claim. But what they're now saying is that in any discussion about religion at work in the workroom you're right and you're right because that's true for you and that's true for you. It doesn't matter if the statements logically conflict, see? And somehow people get away with that. I'm just saying Luke writes his gospel like every other writer of the New Testament and does not work on that presupposition. He does not reason from that platform. Everything he says is predicated on this simple statement. Religious claims are either true or they're false. They either correspond with reality and actuality and fact or they're wrong and they don't. (20:22)

You see, and it seems like somehow, we get lost in being impressed by the world trying to convince is that that's the way it is and we ought to be comfortable with that. As a matter of fact, people go further, people go further in saying this, forget the conflicting statements about Christ and what he did. Let's just say this, everything that religion says is false but it can be true for you and if it's helpful that's fine. When this kind of hit the main stream or at least was codified and people walked around like they were quoting the Bible when the DaVinci Code came out. Do you remember DaVinci Code? I know you haven't thought about the DaVinci Code for a long time. My favorite quote from page 341, I'm embarrassed that I know that, is when Langdon is talking to Sophia and he says this about religion. Every faith in the world, every religion in the world, is based on fabrication. Here's the point and certainly this is the philosophy that was trying to be, you know, proffered through this book. Every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith. The acceptance of what we imagine, think that through now, to be true that which we cannot prove. Now, that's gone so far in our culture that you can now participate in religion with an intellectual confidence that what you're doing is not true, has no correspondence with reality but I still participate

because in some level in my life it's true for me. And if you think that's stupid, here's the "smartest" people on the planet that are saying it and putting it in print. And I say smartest in quotes. As Paul said, where's the scholar of our age. Well here's the scholar, Dr. Peter Lipton, he was the chairman of the philosophy department at Cambridge. That's pretty smart, you don't get that if you're stupid, right? So, he's super important guy, he's dead now, he's a lot smarter now than when he was when he wrote this. But here's what Dr. Lipton wrote, he was involved with Judaism. He said, "I stand in my synagogue – listen carefully – and I pray to God and I have an intense relationship with God. Yet I do not believe in God." Okay, no I read that right. "I stand in my synagogue and I pray to God. I have an intense relationship with God and yet I do not believe in God. Religion," he says, "is like reading a novel. You can get pleasure and meaning from the experience though you know it is not literally true." I don't believe it. I don't even believe there is a God but I pray and have an intense relationship with God. (22:49)

Let's analyze that biblically, turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Here's the news flash Dr. Lipton, the Bible doesn't want you to have an intense relationship with a God that doesn't exist, right? I'd love to have a relationship with God certainly the Bible would certainly promote having a relationship with God, even an intense relationship with God. But here's the deal. The Bible is presenting truth to us assuming that we can't have an intense relationship with someone that doesn't exist. That makes no sense, see? But we have so gotten to a place where that is intellectually accepted in the echelons of the ivory towers of scholarship in universities today that even the common person on the TV can talk about not believing it as fact but certainly believing it as true for me. And that's okay, I can live with that distinction in my own thinking. Nonsense. Here's what Paul says. Are you with me on this? (23:42)

1 Corinthians 15 verse 14, the book, at least for Christians, the New Testament on which this is based and we can track this in the Old Testament as well, it's the same definition of truth. Here it comes, verse 14, 1 Corinthians 15 verse 14, if Christ has not been raised, let's just think that one through, that's where Luke is going, Matthew, Mark and John are all going. Christ got raised from the dead. If it didn't happen then our preaching is in vain. It's all for nothing. And your faith, your experience with it, your intense faith in it, that great thing you get out of it, is in vain, it's for nothing. And we have been found even to be misrepresenting God because we have testified, we're talking like this happened and it's true and we've said that God has raised Christ from the dead, whom he did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised. And if the dead are not raised – verse 16 says – then not even Christ has been raised and if Christ has not been raised then your faith is futile. It's a joke, it's ridiculous and by the way all the things we hope in regarding the promises of that faith, not happening, you're not forgiven, the Creator does not take your sins and nail them to a cross and he does not forgive them based on the acceptable sacrifice of Christ. You're still in your sins, and by the way the people that you know that died clinging to Christ in faith – verse 18 – those who have fallen asleep in Christ, they've perished. There's no hope for them. If in Christ we have hoped in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. Check that verse out again. If in Christ we have hoped in this life only, then we are of all people most to be pitied. Now that's what Dr. Lipton did. Peter Lipton took his religion and said what it's really all about is not a God that pre-existed before our time and not a future salvation or damnation this is about my experience in life. (25:26)

Watch modern discussions of religion when it's truncated into what does it do for you now. That's why they say if Christianity works for you that's fine it's true for you. What do they mean? They mean does it do something for you now in this life. Paul says this, listen if all of this is about this life, right? You have to feel really bad for us that we're clinging to our little, you know, Linus is clinging to his little blanket, saying, "Oh, this feels good, I like this." If that's the picture of Christianity that it just makes us feel better, helps us cope, gives us hope, but it's not true, it's not based on historic fact and it doesn't in fact change my future after I die. The he says it's ridiculous. That's what the conduits and the writers of the Bible are trying convince us of, that the definition of truth is everything if it's true, it has meaning. If it has a correspondence to reality it has meaning, if it doesn't it has no meaning. Oh, I guess you could say you're holding on to it to feel something. But if that's what religion is, it's a waste of time, you better be doing something else with your time than doing this. If we've hoped in this life only in Christ, then hey we are of all people most to be pitied. You ought to feel bad for us. (26:41)

That's not the point. Think of it this way, it's like us sitting around on the deck of a sinking ship, in the icy waters of the Northern Atlantic Ocean. Sitting around talking about our beliefs and you've got a belief that makes you feel good and you've got a belief that makes you feel good. See but I come on the scene and say, hey this ship is sinking, you might have noticed it's listing here, and here's the good news, there's lifeboat right over here, over the edge of the deck and you can get in it and I can get in it and it can save us from a sure and certain death in the icy waters of



the Atlantic. So, come and get in it. Now we won't know whether that should give us any hope as we stand there on the deck of the listing ship unless of course we have confidence that that message is true that there is in fact a lifeboat that it actually is buoyant and will float and that it will really get me to safety. That's really what Christianity is all about. It's not about this life, matters of fact Paul testifies it's made his life a lot more complicated. It has caused him a lot of trouble. But when it comes to the end of his life he says I know whom I believe. I know to the one I've entrusted my faith and I understand this, at the end of this life I'm going to be, to live is Christ, I'll work for him, but to die is gain. Christianity any religion really should be about the next life. Does it get me prepared to meet my maker? If you don't believe in a maker then I don't understand what you're doing. But if you understand we have a God that is holy that created us, we are not holy and he is, I need salvation from the penalty of my sins. I need a mechanism by which to trust to get that problem off of my account, to be forgiven and embraced and to hear enter into the kingdom at the end of my life, not depart from me I never knew you. I need something that will work. That's why Christian claims must either be true and it's going to work when we die or it's false and it's not going to work. That is the claim and the predicated foundational assumption of everything that we read in the Bible. It's either true or it's false. And Paul says as clearly as it can be said. If it's false, what are we doing? We're wasting our time. Religious claims including everything Luke is about to write is all predicated on the understanding that whatever I'm going to say it is either accurate and true and relates to reality, it's factual and historic, or it's not. And of course as we can see elsewhere, if it's not, don't waste your time with it. If it is, it has huge urgent and lasting implications. (29:08)

Let's go back and look at how he's going to establish that for Theophilus. Verses 1 through 3, if you look at the first couple of verses and the first part of the third verse you can see how he's going to go about convincing Theophilus of the certainty of the words that he's heard. How's he going to do that? Verse 1, in as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, and just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me to also having followed all things closely for some time passing to write an orderly account for you. Now that right there is his means by which he's going to go about producing confidence in the heart of Theophilus about the surety and the firmness of the message he's heard. I want you to know, the thing that we talk about in terms of Christ being able to forgive you and save you and as Christ said even when you die yet shall you live, that promise is going to, we're going to try to make the claims that all of these things are true by looking at all the narratives. Looking at eyewitness accounts by listening to those who minister the word with Christ, and now he says I'm going to in an orderly way having followed everything for some time past, put it in an orderly account, I'm going to here give you this information and I'm going to have you look at it objectively reasonably analyze it so that you can come away with a confidence that this stuff is true. And if it's true then the promises that are made upon it, the spiritual benefit predicated on historical events is going to work. And so, we need to do some investigation as the first word of the second point puts it, it involves study. Let's put it this way, number 2, we need to study the unique claims of Christianity. (30:56)

2. Study the Unique Claims of Christianity

The unique claims and I say that because though other religions may give lip service to saying, well we'll have you investigate our religion and check it out historically, it's not quite the same as Christianity, because Christianity has this approach to discovering truth. Oh, I know it's predicated on the fact that God has to work in your heart, I get all that. But it is always calling the person who is considering the claims of Christianity to investigate, to study. And as they study and investigate there are things available to us that other religions don't give us. Let's just start with the basics of the word study. Not all religions you understand, want you to study to come to a conclusion as to whether their religion is true or not. Did you follow that? As a matter of fact, most religions have degenerated in place in modern conversations about religion that really if you want to know if it's true, they're going to have you search your heart to figure out whether or not you feel that it's true. I mean you want to talk about subjectivity, if the discussion is basic, let's find out if it's true for you, I'm going to know that by looking internally. I mean Mormonism has just codified that right into the Book of Mormon, you know that, right? Smile at me if you understand enough about Mormonism to know that. I mean I've sat there and discussed the issues as to how what is claimed in the Book of Mormon in no way squares with the New and the Old Testament say. And when I get to a place where I absolutely won the discussion in terms of, listen that doesn't fit, it is conflicting. These A and B cannot be both true and I'm telling you, how can you explain that. The arm goes up and they actually quote the Book of Mormon which says this, that when it comes to discovering whether this is true or not, what you must do is you must pray to God and if it is true, God is going to give you a warm feeling in your belly. That's the Mike



Fabarez paraphrase. The Book of Mormon puts it this way, you will have a burning in the bosom. Which I really think needs to be updated in terms of the translation of that. (32:44)

But what are they saying? I'm going to pray to God and ask him. Is it true? And God is going to then give me an emotional feeling in my "heart". My bosom, make me feel whether or not that's true. I don't know how many times I've been there with Mormons in sharing the gospel, that's where we get. You figure out whether or not you feel that it's true. Now all you've got to do is open the Bible and find out that's not the way this works. While there's a spiritual component to this there's no doubt about that. It's very different even starting with Jesus. Let me give you one example, John chapter 10. In John chapter 10 it is almost unthinkable that Jesus would make the statement that he's about to make, and that is don't even listen to what I say. But he does, in the middle of this argument he's going to get to that place in this discussion with the Jews. Take a look at what he does in deferring to external evidence not internal feelings about what I say. Check this out, John chapter 10 let's start in verse 24. The unique claims of Christianity are always doing this, they're concerned about orderly accounts, eyewitness, evidence going back to the beginning, following all things closely. This is the way the Bible works, even Jesus shows us that. (33:55)

Look at this, verse 24, so the Jews gathered around him and said to him, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Now you know this much, Christ just translates to the word Messiah. Messiah was the thing that all the Old Testament prophets and the Torah looked forward to. The Messiah was coming, are you the guy that the Old Testament spoke of? Are you him? Tell us, make it clear. Tell us plainly. Verse 25, Jesus answered and said, "I told you but you do not believe." Look at where the conversation immediately goes. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. Now I did tell you but telling you, you see, is not what I want you to rest. He didn't say, now go search your heart and see how you felt when I told you this. Figure out whether or not those words really sink and fit with you. He says I want you to look at the external evidence. Look at what I've done. Look how he puts it, the work that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. Now by the way, these are Sabbath School Graduates that understand something about the promises of the prophets and the Torah and they understood that there was a long line of things that had to be fulfilled if Christ was going to be the Christ. If Jesus was the Messiah the check boxes had to be checked. So, he's saying, listen don't listen to what I say, right? I want you to look at what I've done. I want you to see if this all fits. (35:12)

Drop down to verse 37 just to inverse the argument. If I am not doing the works of my Father, right? Then do not believe me, but I do do them even though you do not believe me. He's almost giving them a pass on this, believe the works that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. Even if you don't believe anything I said, right? You better look at what I'm doing and see if it matches what was prophesied and what is there. Do the facts, does the evidence of what you've seen, does it match, does it fit? There's nothing new with that, we see it everywhere. Turn to Acts 26 one more example, I'll just give you two. But I want to show you that subjectivity is not a part of this. That is not the avenue, that is not the mechanism, that is not the template, that's not the instruction to go subjectively figure this out. It is to objectively, I'm not saying there isn't a subjective component to it, I'm saying there is obviously, right? But what I'm saying is, for the skeptic, for the doubter, for the one with incomplete knowledge about this, check it out, that's what we see in the scripture. External evidence, check it out. (36:18)

Acts 26:22, Paul is there before Herod's great grandson, King Agrippa II. I may not make that connection because he doesn't use the word Herod here. But this is the one we learn in Matthew 2, you know, killed the babies there and all that. This is his great grandson, King Agrippa II, he's there on trial in the beautiful coastal city of Ceseria. Unfortunately, he's not laying out on the beach, he's in prison there, he gets dragged out of prison to the governor, Festus is there, they say fine, make your case and he says he's making his case. Verse 22, to this day, I've had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying to both small and great saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass. That by the way is the enduring imprimatur of God. And by that I mean you'd say, I would love to see him raise someone from the dead, I'd love to see him make the lame walk and the blind see but I can't see that, I can't go back in time. You want me to believe Luke, Matthew and John and all these guys, but you know I'm not there. Well here's the one thing that is objective and continually perpetually always true. Open to investigation and that is do the things that were promised, centuries before they happened, do they fit the historic record of what happened. And we'll talk about this in a second, but are those reasonably, reliably true statements and testimonies about what happened. (37:30)

Now look at the prophesy and he's saying, I'm just telling you that what took place is all that the prophets said



would take place. That the Christ would suffer and that being the first to rise from the dead, now that's an amazing claim because I've seen a lot of dead people and they don't come back to life. That doesn't seem to fit, and so I'm going to say I don't believe that. But he's saying that's what the Old Testament said would happen and that is what happened and that he would proclaim light both to our people, the Jews and to the Gentiles. And as he was saying these things, in his defense, Festus heard that whole thing about rising from the dead, and he said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind, your great learning is driving you out of your mind." What's the point? You're making a claim about something that doesn't fit my naturalist explanation of the world, I don't think people rise from the dead. I don't think people walk on water, I don't think that miracles can take place. It's not possible because I've not seen them, I don't believe can happen even though he may stand there Festus believing in a god who supersedes natural law, he's basically saying I don't believe that he can suspend natural law, that's an argument in itself we can analyze at another time. But he says I think you're crazy. Paul says this, I'm not wanting you to believe it just because I'm saying it, I not even wanting you to believe it because it was written and predicted in the Bible. Here's what he says, I'm speaking true and rational words you can see they correspond to reality, you can check it out, they're reasonable, rational, go back and interview eyewitnesses there are things that you can do to figure this out for the King knows about these things. You've heard about them, the news was there, this was clear and I'm speaking boldly and I'm persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice. You could do the work and you could figure out whether this is true or false for this has not been done in a corner. This is not a secret mystery religion that took place behind a curtain somewhere no one knows about. You've got a few people that you know, only know and that's it. This was done in the open. (39:16)

When Christ rose from the dead, there's a lot better things he could be doing but he's out there appearing to all kinds of people who saw him publicly crucified in a tomb long enough to know this guy is really dead, not to mention the fact that professionals actually killed him. And he's out there appearing, 1 Corinthians 15 says at one time to more than 500 people, and not to mention all the individual and small group appearances he had. He wants to make this clear and in making it clear he says, you can check this out and figure out whether this is true or not. King Agrippa let's go back to the other thing I started with, do you believe the prophets? Now you know these things were written before Christ came. Hey, look at how they were fulfilled. I know you believe. And Agrippa I don't know what his motivation was here, maybe he's feeling a little pang of conviction because he says, in a short time, verse 28 would you persuade me to be a Christian? You're trying to convert me here, what's happening? This is a defense about your crimes. Paul said whether short or long I would to God not only you but all who hear me this day might become such as I am, right? One who trusts in Christ and has their sins forgiven. Although it would be great if I didn't have these handcuffs on. Right, except for these chains. Would you let me out of jail? What's the point? This pointing back to objective truth and the call to investigate. Not to go in a corner and pray about it but to see that the truth and the evidence is out of the corner and it's out there for people to investigate. (40:34)

Now I understand we have to be historians because now this hasn't happened in our generation, but we need to examine historical evidence. We need to think through the historical evidence. Almost everything you hear you have to investigate it historically even though it was yesterday. Let's talk about yesterday, yesterday let's make a claim here. Mike had a burrito for lunch. Do you believe it? I'm not saying it's true. Could have happened, maybe it didn't happen. What do you think? Did I have a burrito for lunch? You think so, maybe? I'm not saying I did. Let's say now, your life depended on the answer, your correct answer. Now someone here, the ushers are coming down with a revolver, they put it next to your temple, now we're going to pull the trigger if you get the wrong answer. Now did Mike have a burrito for lunch? That's a historical question. It's a historical truth claim, right? Either the claim is true or the claim is false. Even my wife doesn't know if I had a burrito for lunch yesterday, so this is knowledge that I have but it is researchable. Now if the stainless-steel barrel is against your temple as the usher holds it there to see if you get the right answer or the wrong answer. This is a morbid illustration, but back to it though. There you are, if you really want to have the right answer, you're going to have to investigate. Let's put it this way, you cannot weigh in on a historical truth claim without investigating it, right? Now you couldn't go back and run the clock back and there's no video tape on me as far as I know. So, you're going to have to go and do some investigation, which frankly with that proposition it wouldn't be hard. All you have to do is all my local drive-thru Del Taco, Taco Bell, Carl's Jr, did the guy have a burrito here, let's check, you know, your receipts, was Mike here, you know who he is, he's here all the time. What did he have yesterday? You could figure this out and you could make a reasonable conclusion based on that claim. But you'd have to do the homework. Oh, you could sit back if you think nothing is at stake, yeah he had one, nah I don't think so, I don't believe it. I believe it, he's the kind of guy who would have a burrito. But if your life depended on it and the Bible is saying your life really does, your eternal life depends on it. You and I need to investigate the claims and the claims are figure out whether these historical claims regarding



Christ are true. Let's just take it face value just for discussion a little bit about Luke is saying. (42:48)

Look at Luke chapter 1 verse number 1 again. In verse 1 he says, "In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of things that have been accomplished among us." A couple things in that one verse. Let's think this one through. Number 1, he's saying many people have undertaken, done the hard work, picked up pen and papyrus to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us. Those who are eyewitnesses, ministers of the word, so we've got a lot of information out there. Now go back in the introductory statements I made about Paul in prison in 62 AD, if that's when the book of Acts ended and that's when volume 2 obviously had to be penned around that time at least the end of volume 2. Volume 1 was written before that, we're probably in, you know, to 59 or 60 AD I said for the writing date of Luke. Now what do we hear especially since Dan Brown wrote his big book and it's become almost gospel truth for you know the average skeptic and secular person today that the Bible that you have, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all, you know, post-Constantinian 4th century compiled by him because he was trying to consolidate power in the Roman empire. So that was all just later but here's the deal, of course. There's so much circumstantial and literary evidence that's not the case. Clearly these things were written before that, but even if you were going to say that and we'd say, well maybe Luke did write that, but he sat there - When did Christ die? Either 30 or 33 AD, let's just say either one of them, I don't care. You've got less than 30 years time that he is now writing and he's making a claim in this document that we can prove if he wanted to take the time that this was written. There is discussions of this book going on in the second century, so we know this document was widely circulated by then. He's saying there's a lot of writing already about this guy. What's the point? Everybody tells me this when it comes to the Bible. Well, who knows what really happened because it was kind of like the telephone game, everybody talked in oral tradition, oral tradition, oral tradition, it was all kind of morphing into finally now the guy is walking on water after a while. That's how they tell you this took place. All I'm telling you is we have written documented stuff about Christ by the time Luke picks up his quill to write on his papyrus about what Christ did and lays it all out, he doesn't throw these under the bus, he doesn't say they were terrible, he doesn't even say they're incomplete. He just says it seems good to me, verse 3, also having followed all things closely for some time past, and I'm looking at all the evidence here to write an orderly account for you. (45:12)

That is a picture of stuff even in the time of Luke that is ubiquitous there's so much material for him to analyze and to work through. And if you think well all of this supernatural stuff, you know, was just a hoax. These guys knew they were lying and they hid Christ's body or whatever it might be. You do understand that you have to come to the conclusion that these men who, and it's without any question, were crucified, crucified upside down, fileted, put on a stake, burned at the stake, whatever it might be, these guys were all persecuted and martyred for their claim that Christ was who he said he was and that he did what they said he did. That they were going and willfully dying for something they knew was not true. I'm just saying that was enough for a little smarty pants like Chuck Colson who gets put in jail during the whole Watergate scandal, remember him? He recently died. One of the reasons he became a Christian is he said, if we in the White House, in the upper echelons of the powerful, you know, elite in America cannot keep a lie together even at the threat of prison where they feed us three square meals a day, how in the world was the evidence, undeniable evidence, that these documents go back to the first century that these people are claiming a resurrection from the dead in a generation where it could be disputed and passed off as fraud and they're dying for it. How in the world can we say that this is a fraud? You've got that many people, maybe one crazy person would do that but you've got scads, a cadre, of men and women that are dying for the truth that they're claiming. It's a big deal. (46:42)

Ask Lance Armstrong if you can keep a conspiracy undercover. I'm sorry that's a sore spot for some of you Lance Armstrong fans. But think about that, I thought about that, I said it a couple times to the TV, how did he think he'd get away with this assuming all that's true and it's all going to come out. But what's the point? A little bit of pressure turns these people and the truth comes out. And my point is this. There's so much we don't even have time to look at, I said that's a historical investigation, but I said one thing that's always perpetual and always current is looking at scripture. Scripture that was written before these things took place. I know I've said this a lot, that you may be new, but let me say it again really really quick and I'm already saying everything really really quick but let me say this even quicker. There was a time when people looked at the Bible and wanted to say it cannot be a supernatural as it seems to be. That God is calling things before they take place, putting it in black and white and later these things take place exactly as predicted. I cannot believe the predictive prophecies are true. Therefore, it became a big speculative game particularly of late and end of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century that people even began to teach this. The Old Testament was written after the New Testament. Think about that. That

makes sense if you're a big skeptic because you're saying how in the world could Micah 5:2 predict exactly where Christ would be born. Now if I can't dispute that Christ was born in Bethlehem and if there's reasonable evidence to believe that he did these things or at least there were claims that he did all these things and he was born here and he was of that tribe and he did that and he had this decent then I'm telling you let's just put all the predictions after the fact. And I've often shared this especially when I lead tours to Israel, they stand there in the Qumran Caves a place where God said, fine I'll stick away a third to first century BC library in an arid place in the desert, I won't let anybody touch it for 2000 years so that when everybody starts to say in the intellectual elite of religious society that these promises were made after the fact, we'll pop it out of the cave, right when a Bedouin throws a rock in the cave at Qumran, and he'll pull out, the first one pulled out that John Trevor took pictures of. John just happened to be there, happened to be there, taking pictures in a dissertation about the flora and fauna of the Judean landscape. He's on call at what is now the Albright Institute sitting there when a knock on the door comes when they have this manuscript from St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem and they say look at what the Bedouin they weren't truthful about it at first but they laid out the very first scroll, John Treavor starts taking pictures of and what is the scroll, do you know what the first scroll photographed from the Dead Sea Scrolls? Isaiah Scroll, the Great Isaiah Scroll. (49:14)

You want to talk about a book that had taken a beating in higher theological liberal scholarship? It was the Book of Isaiah. We had an Isaiah scroll predating the time of Christ in one piece with very little missing except some on the bottom layers of the bottom lines on that scroll that had deteriorated and the bottom of that pot. And then we started pulling out, it took a series of years but an entire library. Now a lot of stuff had disintegrated but we had identifiable copies of every book of the Old Testament except for one and multiple copies at that to prove to a skeptical world who's started to say I'm really having a hard time with this predictive prophesy thing to make it real clear. Not to mention that God stopped and was silent for 400 years just to give a pause to make sure everybody knew Old Testament came before New Testament. Right? And it wasn't just that. I mean you want to look at intertestamentally in the Old Testament. You've got Leviticus talking about the exile before they were even a nation. They didn't even have a king. Talk about how the king would be held and taken off and the events of Ezekiel and Daniel would come true. That was 1000 years before it even happened. You have things like Daniel writing down the numerical equation for how many years it would be until the coming of Messiah. That was 480 years before it took place. Jeremiah 29 predicts the length of the exile down to the year, how long they would be captives in Babylon. You may say that's a short one, it was 94 years before it happened. Isaiah 44 predicting 150 years before Cyrus ever took the throne, naming him by name, as the one here who would play a pivotal role in God's plan in even bringing them back to the land. The Persians weren't even the world empire at that point the Babylonians were. And we can go on and on and on. Now again you can say that was written after the fact, eventually you have to establish the chronology of the writing of the Bible and then you start to see as we have been reading in our Daily Bible Reading. Have you been...smile at me if you've been reading our Daily Bible Reading. (51:09)

Did you just finish Isaiah with me? Reading from about chapter 40 on he starts kicking back into the same theme about you guys trusting in your idols, how stupid is that? They're just pieces of bark and wood off the tree. You use part of it to warm your house and the other part you put gold over it and you bow down to it. And then he says this, I'm God, I'm the only God. And one of the things he pulls out on his resume is this. I'm the only one who can tell you the end from the beginning. Who can predict what's going to happen, let one of your idols predict things long in the future. And these are not Nostradamus kinds of prophesy. This is not Jean Dixon with her weird language about stuff that anything could fulfill. I mean this is stuff that is exacting. What's going to happen, who the leader would be, where he would be born, how he would die, that he would rise from the dead, that's a pretty unlikely thing to predict. These things all over the Bible predicting the voracity and truthfulness of what's happening all you got to do is go after that one aspect of this to figure out whether or not there is truth in this. If there's truth in this then we've got a God that has spoken to us, who gives us his authoritative word, calls our attention to Christ and says this is the Christ that will forgive your sins. I mean that's the whole basis of the book of Luke. And it's something that begins with a guy who says you need to investigate the claims Theophilus. (52:24)

Let's flip it around now, bottom of verse 3. Let's read the whole verse to give us some context. It seemed good to me having followed all things closely for some time past to write an orderly account for you most excellent Theophilus. For you most excellent Theophilus. For you. Now God had a bigger plan for the book than Theophilus. And maybe even you could argue Luke had a bigger plan than Theophilus, by the way he writes. But clearly this book and Acts was written to Theophilus, who was a real person, who needed certainty about the things he'd been taught. And here was Luke willing to do the work, humanly speaking, to investigate the facts and then give an



orderly account of these things so that his confidence in the veracity and truthfulness of the gospel would be bolstered. He could substantiate the truth. Let's kind of at least parallel a little bit with that virtue for a second. And let's just say listen I'd like to be used by God and enlisted by God to be that in someone's life. You're not going to write scripture, you may not be the best apologist that ever walked the planet, you may not be the smartest person in Orange County. Don't worry about that. Can you just tell God I'm willing to do some homework, do the hard work of some homework to make sure I understand the truthfulness of these claims? And then I'm willing to defend it. I'm willing to go out there and speak up for it. Number 3 on your outline let's put it that way, to thoughtfully defend the truth. (53:46)

3. Thoughtfully Defend the Truth

And this is not about burning in your gut. This is not about a good feeling this is not "Try God" and "Try Jesus and see if it works." I'm talking about giving people reasons for the hope that is in you. And I'm quoting now, right 1 Peter chapter 3, you know that passage? Let's write it down if you're taking notes, 1 Peter chapter 3 verses 14 through 16 to get the whole context. I'm supposed to have reasons and I'm supposed to give those reasons particularly when someone asks questions about them and that's assuming I'm making claims about Christ. Theophilus had heard about Christ, he'd been taught about Christ. Now Luke is going to come in and give him some certainty about those things. I mean come on, if this is true, let's think about this and really heaven and hell is the claim here. And the avenue through which this came, it came through guys who said if it's not true forget about it, if it is true it makes a big difference, a priority difference in your life and it ought to be important. Then can you not care about your neighbor enough or your coworker or someone in your extended family who sits on the sideline as the skeptic or the doubter, to do a little bit of homework this week and say I want to be better at understanding the truthfulness and reasonableness of this? I want to think about the evidence for this and I'm willing to give it. (54:55)

Now here's the problem, the reason everybody wants to think religion is all about preferences is they don't want anybody shoving their religion down our throat. How many times have we heard that? I want to say it's true for you so that you don't try to talk me into it. Jot this down 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 you can start in verse 10 all the way to the end of the chapter. In that passage, let me quote a very familiar section of it for you, he says this. Knowing therefore the fear of God we persuade men. Note that word, persuade. That's not a bad thing, right? The world will say don't try to talk me into anything, don't persuade me. But you need to care enough about what's at stake, the ship is starting to list and sink. There's a lifeboat available, I think you'd care enough even about a stranger in the cabin next to you to try to persuade him, he ought to get out of bed, follow you down the hall and get in the lifeboat, and that's just for temporal life and death issues. Eternal life and eternal death should be important enough for us to persuade a few people. We ought to be willing to persuade them. He goes on to say we're ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal to us, we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. The word there I want to underscore is implore. Implore you, you know I can translate that word, to beg you. Would you beg a lackadaisical passive neighbor across the hall in the cabin across the hall to come with you to get saved from a sinking ship in the Atlantic Ocean? I think you would, you'd probably implore them, beg them to come, right? (56:24)

We've got a message that is not about preference, value and tastes. It's about making claims about truth, about fact, about realities both historical and future. We need to be willing to implore people. Now here's I don't like the picture, trying to jam my religion down everyone's throat. Let me soften this or at least mitigate it with this statement. Jesus often said things like this, when people reject you and reject your message he said remember they're not rejecting you they're rejecting me and the one who sent me. And then he said this, if they really don't want to have what you're offering then knock the dust off your feet and move on. Now that's not because we're cold, that's not hey just go back to your cabin and get your things together and don't worry about the guy across the hall. Really the emphasis of that really goes back to Matthew 9 and that is the harvest is white, there are people out there that do want to listen to this. He doesn't say knock the dust off your feet and come home, he says knock the dust off your feet and move onto the next village. Move onto the next conversation. Move onto the next person. I'm not asking you to sit there and deal with someone in a way that jams religion down their throat, what I am saying is that if the person that you're dealing with doesn't want to hear the facts on this, they don't want to verify any of this, they don't want to have you talking about what you learned in book you wrote this week about the truthfulness of the gospel move on to someone else, someone else will. Jesus even went so far to put it this way, don't cast your pearl before the swine, remember that? In the classic text that a I quoted for you from 1 Peter chapter 3 which we have no time to turn to, one of the things he says is when you do make these answers for the hope that's in you do it



with gentleness and respect. Remember that? Here's the other thing, even when you are engaged with someone that is listening and has some concerns or questions or comeback just make sure you never let this degenerate into some foolish kind of argument. Please don't do that. That doesn't help the cause, that is not what Christ wants us to do. We need to do this with gentleness and respect. (58:24)

Now I'm so sick of debates because they're not real debates, you know what I'm saying? There's nobody open to changing, I mean what we're watching here in the political debates, it's a show, it's a game, it's a one liner, it's an opportunity for gotcha moments, that's all this is, right? Let's show the upper echelon of our political aristocracy, I hate to use those big words but, I mean let's let these guys and their \$3000 suits, let's let them learn how to debate from us. And that means we engage in real dialog with gentleness and respect, trying to get at the truth. That's all I want. The Mormons and JW's come to your door, hey I want to become a JW, I want to become one today if that's the truth. I want to dialog about truth. This is not about I'm wearing my jersey you're wearing yours. This is about we want to figure out what's true and you and I want to dialog together with gentleness and respect and we want to try to get to the truth because if the ship is going down, which a lot of religions will claim, I want to know which lifeboat floats. And according to the one that we are advocating, Christ put it this way, the rest of them don't. There is no other name given among men by which men must be saved or to put it in the words of Christ, I'm the way, I'm the truth and I'm the life and no one comes to the Father except through me. So I'm concerned to urgently implore you with some sense of persuasion in my voice to research with me excellent Theophilus so that you might have certainty about the things you've heard about Christ and I want to do that with gentleness, respect, I want to do it properly. (1:00:02)

Now you're saying this I realize. I'm not Josh McDowell man. I can't...I'm not that...I can't...I'm not good with words. I've said this many times but you want to know how effectively God can take imperfect tools and enlist them to do some pretty powerful things? Talk to Balaam about the mechanisms through which God can speak truth. It doesn't take much mouth, teeth, a tongue. God can get it done. You know what he's looking for? A donkey that's willing, okay? You and I need to be willing. Do your homework. I don't do this very often, pull my, you know, pastor card out and exercise pastoral authority but I do if you do the questions on the back, by the time you get to question number 5, I don't say think about or maybe you would consider or pray about, I say pick one of the resources below and start reading it this week. And I wimped out even still because I even said or you can pick one of the sermons here to listen to. Forget that, that's for toddlers, get a book, right? It maybe I'm struggling over the miracle thing, I'm Festus I can't believe people rise from the dead, great, read one of the books on God breaking natural law, on miracles. Is there a case for that, does that even make any sense? Maybe it's the reliability of the text of the Bible, books on that. Maybe it's just philosophically thinking through the ideas of truth, Nancy Percy, Francis Schaffer, Ravi Zachariah. Read a book this week, right, about the issues so that by the end of the week when God brings someone across your path maybe someone you're praying for and thinking of, you can like Luke say I want to care enough about you to have done my homework and be able and willing to give you an orderly discussion about why these things are either true or false and if they're true, we need to respond with all of our heart. Pray with me. (1:01:52)

God, thanks so much for our start here in Luke, so much to say we couldn't even get it all in in our time but we pray Lord, please, that we would emulate this great man who I know we want to hail as the greatest but I'm sure he was just a normal guy, obviously he had skills and he was smart but he was willing to submit his mind, his talent, his time to you, to be utilized in the life of Theophilus and a myriad of other people through the ages to get his persuasive account of Christ down, based on fact, based on history, based on research. You utilized that man under the direction of your Holy Spirit to give us the Gospel of Luke, we're so happy and blessed to have it, now God we want to do the same. We can't write scripture, we're not out there trying to make ex cathedra statements from heaven but we are trying to say, here's the truth of the gospel, we want to reiterate that as clearly and logically and cogently as we can to our friends and neighbors and coworkers. So, open up our mouths as we fuel up our minds to think clearly about the matters of Christ, the claims of Christ, in Jesus Name, Amen. (1:02:52)