

**“JESUS IS”**  
*“The Investigation” Luke 1:1-4*  
September 14, 2025

**INTRO.:** Welcome to our new sermon series, **JESUS IS**, from the gospel of Luke!! Over the past several weeks I have been reading and rereading the gospel from different translations: NIV, NASB, ESV, and NKJV. Thank you to Pastors Paul, John, and Luke for preaching, thus providing me with more time to prepare for this series. I am grateful for the team we have here at First Baptist.

I believe the key question of the day would be “Who is Jesus?” This has been never more apparent with the events of the past week in our country. The right answer to this question changes everything. The answer to this question has eternal consequences. It makes a difference in how we live today and where we end up for eternity. I can’t think of any question that has more importance. I am going to challenge each of us to investigate what this gospel has to say about Jesus. If you look closely and carefully at the graphic that Pastor John came up with for this series, you will notice several descriptive words. Words such as: Holy, Savior, King of Kings, Eternal, Guide, Friend, God, Messiah, Perfect, Teacher, Lamb, and Blameless to name some of them. In reading through the gospel there are many different reactions to Jesus. Some were angry with what He said and did. Some were furious to the point of wanting Him killed. Others responded in fear and amazement at His miracles. Some delighted to see all the wonderful things He was doing but maybe not willing to call Him Savior and Lord. Many came to hear Him and others who came to trap Him with questions were left speechless when He answered their question with a question. Some declared Him to be the Messiah while others accused Him of driving out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the devil. There is a choice to be made when it comes to Jesus. Even not making a decision is a decision. This gospel will challenge you to investigate who Jesus is. Will you come on the journey and even invite others on the journey?

I’m going to challenge each one of us to some things as we begin this series. This morning, we want to answer the following three questions by looking at the first four verses in the first chapter. This sets the tenor and direction of the whole series, particularly, why it was written.

**Who wrote the gospel of Luke?**

**When was it written?**

**Why was it written?**

So, if you are able, please stand, and we’ll read these four verses together.

**Luke 1:1-4** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. **3** Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4** so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

**WHO WROTE LUKE**

Both external evidence (church tradition) and internal evidence confirm that both the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were both written by Luke. The verses we just read tell us the author was not an eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry. We would refer to him as a second-generation believer. This also tells us that he was not an apostle since he wasn’t an eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry. We see this when the apostles had to choose a replacement for Judas.

**Acts 1:21–22** Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **22** beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

Based upon the “we” sections in the book of Acts we can conclude he was a companion of Paul, and participated in the events described (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16).

From Colossians 4 we are told he was a physician and can conclude by the context that he was a Gentile.

**Colossians 4:10–11** My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11** Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews (“from the circumcision” in other translations) among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.

It seems from that place forward all the ones listed are Gentiles (Colossians 4:12-17) including Luke. Paul describes Luke in Colossians 4:14 as being “our dear friend, Luke, the doctor,” (NIV) or “Luke, the beloved physician” (NASB).

From John MacArthur:

Two different classes of physicians serving two different groups of patients:

- 1) The aristocrats had physicians as servants or as private employees in their own establishments, or had access to them despite their high fees and lofty reputations
- 2) There were also many illiterate doctors, quacks, charlatans, exploiters of the gullible and needy public.

It is clear from the Scriptures that Paul had a deep respect and love for Luke. We also note from the gospel of Luke that he was an excellent historian, providing many exact details. When you combine Luke and Acts, he wrote over one fourth of the New Testament.

### **WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN**

There is some debate as to when it was written. Those who suggest that it was written before 65 AD make this conclusion because Luke makes no mention of Paul's martyrdom (somewhere around 65 AD) or of the intense persecution of Christians by Nero after the city of Rome burned in 64 AD.

The gospel of Luke was written slightly before the book of Acts since Luke ends the gospel with the ascension and Acts begins with Jesus being taken up into heaven. Acts mention neither the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD) or the martyrdom of Paul, pointing to it being written prior to both those events. Also, the end of Acts speaks of a great time of fruitfulness in ministry by the Apostle Paul.

**Acts 28:28–31** “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” **30** For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31** Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **WHY WAS IT WRITTEN**

This is where we want to spend the bulk of our time this morning. Each of the gospels has a different emphasis. Matthew presents Christ as King of the Jews, Mark presents Him as Servant of Jehovah, John presents Him as God the Son, and Luke presents Him as the Son of Man, perfect as such. He is the God-man. In the first four verses Luke explains who he is writing to and why he is writing. So, let's take this verse by verse.

**Luke 1:1** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

What Luke is going to do has been undertaken by many others. Apparently, there was a tremendous interest in information about the life of Jesus and His ministry. His undertaking is not a critique of the others but is meant to be a comprehensive narrative of the life of Christ.

“undertaken:” often used in connection with literary endeavors

“draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us:”

MacArthur: “an intensive compound word that indicates the complete fulfillment of something, in this case the redemptive plan of God. Luke’s gospel, like the other three canonical gospels, emphasizes the theme of divine accomplishment.”

William Hendriksen: It is clear from Luke’s entire gospel that he regards history not as the sum total of chance occurrences, or as the result of a series of fortuitous circumstances, but as the fulfillment of the divine plan, hence also of prophecy.

**Luke 22:22** The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.”

**Acts 2:22–24** “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. **23** This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. **24** But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Walter L. Liefeld: “*fulfilled*:” can be translated “full assurance” or “assurance”. With reference to things rather than people, the idea of accomplishment or completion is foremost.

So, you may ask, “how does Luke, the doctor and historian, propose to do this since he was not someone who walked with Jesus?” He did not see firsthand what Jesus did or said.

**Luke 1:2** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

“**handed down:**” this stresses the reliability of the sources. This was a technical term for passing on oral tradition. (Trent C. Butler) Also, it was the technical term for the passing on of authoritative truth. (MacArthur)

“**from the first:**” the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry. You can begin to catch the depth of Luke’s research. Look where he starts in his account: he goes back to the prediction and birth of John the Baptist, before the birth of Jesus Christ.

So, to whom does he go?

“**eyewitnesses:**” these were the most significant of his sources and would have included some of the other apostles.

“**servants of the word:**” the word “servants” has also been translated “ministers.”

“servants of **the word:**” “the word” refers to the gospel.

These eyewitnesses used saw and observed Jesus’ ministry firsthand and used that to faithfully preach the good news of the gospel.

Luke is building his case for why his audience should believe what he is writing. His conclusion is as follows.

**Luke 1:3-4** Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus

“carefully **investigated** everything from the beginning:” Once again we note the thoroughness of his research and how he carefully came up with his conclusions. His research was not something that was thrown together.

What did Luke investigate?

“carefully investigated **everything** from the beginning:” He didn’t leave out anything that would be pertinent. Many people take bits and pieces of the truth, but Luke investigated everything. Many times, the enemy uses some truth mixed in with error to deceive people. We’ll see later in this gospel that Satan quotes Scripture in tempting Jesus.

How far back does Luke go? This is a repetition of what he said earlier.

“carefully investigated everything **from the beginning:**” he went back to the beginning of the ministry of Christ. He had the whole story!

Luke made sure he went back to the beginning of the ministry of Christ.

His conclusion:

“it seemed good also to me to write an **orderly account** for you, most excellent Theophilus”

“**orderly account:**” Luke’s presentation was not haphazard or disorganized. He had a systematic approach. It doesn’t mean that everything is in chronological order in the gospel, although much of it is in that order. It is presented in a way that can be followed and understood. When you compare this gospel to Matthew and Mark, over 50% is unique to this gospel.

To whom is Luke writing? He is writing to the same person in Luke and Acts.

“it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, **most excellent Theophilus**”

We don’t know for certain the identity of Theophilus. His name means, “friend of God.” Some believe that he was probably a man of wealth and social standing and *most* excellent served as a respectful form of address. Like Luke, he was also a Gentile. It isn’t clear if he was a believer or an unbeliever, although he had obviously received some teaching concerning Christian doctrine. This also shows the pastoral heart of Luke, that he would take such care and concern to investigate and present this truth concerning Jesus Christ to one person. Luke had no idea that this material would teach so many others. Luke had a goal in communicating this to Theophilus.

“so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught:” Luke wanted Theophilus to know the exact truth, that he wouldn’t be tossed about by doubt or false teaching or doctrine. Theophilus needed some assurance and a more thorough grounding of the truth of Jesus. Maybe he was struggling with whether the gift of salvation was for both Jews and Gentiles.

In Ephesians 4 the Apostle Paul speaks of the purpose Jesus gave gifts such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (apostles no longer exist since there are no more eyewitnesses of Christ; and with the completion of Scripture prophets no longer are present):

**Ephesians 4:12–16** to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**John 8:32** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

This tells me that there is support for the truth in the Word of God. Luke wanted Theophilus to know with certainty the things he had been taught. You don't throw your mind away when you come to faith in Christ. This isn't just some myth that people are hoping is true. The Scriptures reveal truth about God and about us.

## SO WHAT???

I told you that as I began this message, I was going to throw out a challenge to all of us. Actually, I'm going to give two challenges.

1) Will you and I take up the challenge to thoroughly investigate what Luke says about the person and work of Jesus Christ? As we investigate the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit allows us to grasp and comprehend the truth that is written.

This will take some work on our part. We won't learn the deep truths of the Word of God by reading a few verses a day and praying a little. Can we take up the challenge to be students of the Word of God and seek to understand what it is saying? Are we willing to not be content with just checking the box that I read some verses or maybe a chapter from the Bible?

I will always remember what Dan Marr said, regarding Scripture reading, as Fight Club was kicked off this past spring. He and Pastor John had been a part of Fight Club through another ministry before they brought it to First Baptist. Part of the guidelines was to read a chapter a day and be accountable to another man. Early on he was checking off the boxes of a chapter a day until he was challenged to explain what the passage was saying and what it meant to him.

Let's not just check the boxes when it comes to investigating the gospel of Luke. I encourage you to first ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you open this book. Get a Bible that has cross references in it so you can explore more deeply and maybe some study notes. Get a notebook and write down what you're learning. Look to answer the question, "Who is Jesus?"

There is so much confusion out there when it comes to Jesus, but the Word of God clearly communicates who He is. The following statements are just a sample of what some say:

Jesus never claims to be God

Jesus is a good teacher, but not God

Jesus is a good man, but not God

None of these statements are true. Are you willing to go on the journey? How about doing it with another believer? If you're married, how about studying it with your spouse. If you have children, how about doing it as a family? Young people, you could do this with your parents, siblings, or another young person. How many are willing to take the challenge?

2) My second challenge is: are you and I willing to ask someone who doesn't know Jesus, "Who is Jesus?" Are we willing to engage relatives, neighbors, co-workers, or fellow students with this question? Do I truly believe what someone thinks about Jesus makes a difference?

Luke certainly believed that it mattered. We had an awesome river baptism last week, and it was so encouraging to hear how each one came to faith in Christ and their desire to publicly proclaim their faith.

Jesus changes everything. Who will I ask this question and start a conversation? I go back to what I said at the beginning of this message. I believe the key question of the day would be "Who is Jesus?" The right answer to this question changes everything. The answer to this question has eternal consequences. It makes a difference in how we live today and where we end up for eternity.