

*Robyn's Grandmother (Nanny) is 102, and a few people have said to me, "Wow, she would've seen some changes in her life-time." ...*

*But as I think of the changes that Nanny would've seen, I reckon the biggest **social** transformation (globally) (apart from Jesus) has taken place in my life-time, and it's continuing to unfold today.*

*It was the 1990's, when the internet first entered into the public domain. And I remember at the time, it was being touted as "The information super-highway" ... Seriously... At that point, about the only information one could get from the internet, was self-publicity of major corporations who had one of these new fandangle websites...*

*But that has changed so much now. It now really **is** the information super-highway. The trouble is, 90% of the traffic on that highway – it belongs in the junkyard.*

*It may be an information super-highway, but is the information true; twisted; polluting; outright lies?*

*Anyone can:*

- *set themselves up as a "news" website;*
- *can publish "authoritative" articles;*
- *present "the facts" as they know them...*

*And so "fake news", although it's not a new phrase (used in 1800's) – But the use of that phrase – "fake news", has increased exponentially... And of course, our take on whether something is "fake news" or not, depends on whether it agrees with what I want to believe.*

*And so we find people with **opposing** views, will accuse each other of believing “fake news” ...*

*Everyone has a soapbox; Everyone has their pet cause... And the information is spread and repeated so fast, our global society is being moulded (sometimes) in a matter of hours, in ways that it would've once taken a decade for information to disseminate across the community and be tested & digested & critiqued & debunked (not so anymore)...*

*And so society is now being shaped like never before, by less than a 12hour cycle of new and apparently “impelling” information – information that isn't always true...*

Where today, can we find certainty? We have certainty in our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have certainty in what He has achieved.

Today we begin our new series, on the Gospel of Luke.

Who is Luke?

Well, Luke is a Gentile Christian (not a Jew), and I think he was the only Gentile to write a book in the New Testament. He wrote the Gospel of Luke and he also wrote Acts, which are the two longest books in the New Testament, and so Luke wrote about 28% of the New Testament (significant).

BTW, I'm glad I don't have to read Luke's handwriting, because Luke was a doctor. In Colossians 4, Paul refers to

him as “**the beloved physician**”. And we might see this coming through in his writings. He’s quite descriptive of the healing miracles (as you would expect a doctor to be).

You might be surprised to hear: Luke isn’t recognised an Apostle. Why not? Because he wasn’t an eyewitness to Jesus, but his faith was strong, and we know that he was active in mission. He accompanied Paul on some of his missionary journeys.

Now, the Book of Luke, is the first of a 2-part series, written by Luke. It’s a Gospel. A Gospel is a book of the Bible that records what Jesus said; what He did; and what He taught. The **2<sup>nd</sup>** part of the series, is what Jesus continued to do through the early church, and that’s the book of Acts.

Righto:

Let’s come back to finding certainty.

Where today, can we find certainty? We have certainty in our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have certainty in what He has achieved. And as I read the introduction to Luke, I am so thankful, that Luke took the time and the effort, to do what he did.

You see, if Jesus had come today, His whole ministry would be documented on YouTube (or whatever). Everywhere He went, the crowds would be holding their phones up, recording everything He said and did... The Pharisees would be recording it to post on their discussion sites “Can you believe

the rubbish that this bloke says?”... And others would be chasing “likes” on their Facebook page “See this miracle”...

But of course, that didn’t exist back then....

The first generation of Christians, were living in what we call, an “oral culture”. What Jesus said, and what He did, was told and retold and retold again. And eventually, individual stories and individual segments of Jesus’ ministry, were written down... But how could they be trusted???

How could we know:

- that what we were hearing was true;
- it hadn’t been made up; and
- that the stories weren’t being embellished; or
- that we weren’t just listening to “legends”; or
- “old wives-tales”???

Well, this is where Luke steps in:

Luke is writing to a bloke named “Theophilus”, in fact he calls him: **most excellent Theophilus**. He sounds very important. Who is he? Well, we don’t know. In fact, it mightn’t even be a specific person. The name “Theophilus” means “loved by God”. Alright, so he **could** be writing to a particular bloke, or he could be writing to Christians – To those who are loved by God, this is for you. — We don’t know.

But what we **do** know, is why Luke set out to do what he did: “It seemed good to me to do it”....

He did actually say more than that...

The eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word (Who’s he talking about? The Apostles and the original disciples of Jesus) had passed down the teachings of Jesus, and they’ve retold the accounts of **everything** that Jesus had done” (Some of it had been passed on by word of mouth. Undoubtedly, by then, some of it had been **written** down).

And Luke had carefully followed this. And he set out to compile an orderly account of what Jesus had done... He didn’t just go on dis-jointed stories. He compiled it. And we get the impression here, that the eyewitnesses played a key part in helping him to do that...

He had the narratives that some had told and some had written, and he got testimony from the Apostles (Ministers of the Word) and other eyewitnesses. And he collated all of these testimonies, so that Theophilus (the one whom God loves) might **have certainty concerning the things** that he had **been taught**...

Aren’t you glad that Luke did that? He did it for Theophilus, but Christians throughout the centuries and millennia, have benefited greatly because it seemed good to Luke to do it...

So, some see Luke as a historian – someone who’s very careful to get the facts right, as much as he can. And I appreciate that.

He’s often referred to as “the Evangelist” – the spreader of Good news. And yes, he is that.

But something we have to realise, is Luke and Acts, are 2 parts of the one story. The Gospel of **Luke** begins, by telling us that it is a **narrative** (account) of the things **that have been accomplished** among us .

He begins the book of Acts by saying:

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus **began** to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up

So, has it been accomplished? or Is it only beginning? Well, it’s both. Jesus accomplished His work (at his first coming), and then He was taken up into heaven... And then we get to Acts 2, and Jesus pours out His Holy Spirit upon the church, and He **continues** to do his work through the Christian church...

**BUT**, this is only possible, because of what He has already **accomplished** at his first coming.

What **did** Jesus accomplish? Well, right from chapter 1, the theme that is firmly set for this Gospel, is a theme of salvation. It’s about the fulfillment of God’s promises that He made long ago, that He would save.

That's what Jesus accomplished. He fulfilled God's promises, and He brought salvation. He brought salvation to the Jew, and He brought salvation to the Gentile.

My prayer, is that as we study this book of Luke, that we will gain a certainty in what we've been taught. And that any of us, who have any doubts, will receive this Gospel for what it is – carefully compiled eyewitness testimony, passed down from ministers of the Word – the ones who actually:

- walked with Jesus
- heard His teaching
- lived with Him and ate with Him
- witnessed the miracles
- encountered Him after He'd been raised from the dead...

Luke compiled this so that we can have certainty – it's not just hearsay – it's carefully collated testimony that gives certainty. And its major theme, is salvation...

Who here, is looking forward to digging in to the Gospel of Luke?

Well, that's the introduction, but it'll be 3 weeks before we get into it. It's the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday next Sunday, and so I'm preaching at Cecil Plains; And then we've got 2 weeks holiday at the coast; And then we'll get into it.

And I've got more good news for you, because it's such a long Gospel, the chances are that Jesus might return before we

finish, because it'll take us more than a year for us to work our way through it.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father,  
we want to thank You,  
for all Your faithful disciples,  
who passed on the faith to the next generation.

We thank You for those who passed on the accounts  
of Jesus (teachings/said/did).

And we thank You for those who wrote it down.

Lord, as we study this Gospel of Luke,  
We pray that You would increase our Faith;  
That You would give us certainty concerning  
the things that we have been taught.

And we praise You for everything that  
Jesus has accomplished,  
and for everything that He is  
continuing to do in His church,  
through His Holy Spirit.

We praise You for our Lord Jesus Christ,  
amen.



