

Luke 1:1-4 A Firm Foundation for Faith

Do you deal with doubt? Do the uncertainties of life arouse uncertainty in your mind about your faith? How can we deal with doubt in order to keep our faith in Christ?

God has given us a firm foundation for faith in Christ. We will look at three attributes of the Gospel of Luke that God has given to shore up our faith against doubts: 1) Divine fulfillment of promise; 2) Apostolic preservation of the truth; and 3) Apostolic transmission of the truth.

1) Divine fulfillment of promise

- a) “a narrative of the things”—historical events; The center of the gospel is not a way of life or an ethereal, philosophical concept, but certain redemptive acts of God within human history.
- b) “that have been accomplished”
 - i) Passive Voice “been accomplished”—Divine Passive—God is the implied doer. Luke and his predecessors wrote about God’s doings in history.
 - ii) Contextual Usage—compound word with sense of fulfillment of a plan: with regard to God, the fulfillment of an eternal purpose; with regard to God’s covenant of grace, the fulfillment of promise (the infancy narratives emphasize the promises made to the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to the remnant of Israel, and to King David—promises of a salvation/redemption and peace)
 - iii) Perfect tense—completed action results of which continue into the present; the acts of God in Christ have continuing effects in the present—indeed, for eternity!
- c) “among us”—Who are the “us”? Luke was not there when these things were accomplished, yet he speaks of these things being accomplished among “us.” He is included in the “us.” Theophilus is included in the “us.” In one sense, the “us” may include all humanity, since the marvel of the incarnation is that God entered human history as one of “us” humans. In another sense, the “us” may be narrowed to those who believe “the things that have been accomplished.”
- d) The certainty of faith—“Certainty exists when the spirit finds complete rest in its object of knowledge” (Herman Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith*). The Christian’s certainty begins with the objective acts of God in time and space which both redeem and reveal. This “accomplished” redemption/revelation powerfully impacts us in the present, hence the title of John Murray’s book on salvation, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.

2) Apostolic preservation of the truth

- a) “those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses”—cf. Acts 1:21-22—early followers of Jesus, especially the Apostles who were officially commissioned as Christ’s ambassadors
 - i) Historical Veracity:
 - (1) Acts 4:20 “For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”
 - (2) 2 Pet. 1:16 “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”
 - (3) 1 John 1:1-3 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you.”

- (4) 1 Cor. 15:5-8 “He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me.”
- ii) God-given Insight:
- (1) Luke 8:9-10 “And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant, He said, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that *seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*’”
- (2) Luke 10:21-24 “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. . . . Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.”
- (3) Luke 24:13-48 “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. . . . You are witnesses of these things.”
- (4) Inspired interpretation of the events. Example: Event—Christ died. Interpretation of Event—Christ died for our sins.
- b) “ministers of the Word”—“minister” is a good translation since this word denotes a free “servant” who assists a superior by executing his superior’s will; in a monarchy, the minister does not carry out his own designs, but those of his king; referring to the apostles as “ministers of the Word” says that they were not innovators, advancing their own agendas, but subjects of Christ; cf. 1 Cor. 4:1; Luke 24:48
- c) “delivered them to us”—messengers, not innovative religious geniuses (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; Gal. 1:11-12)
- d) The apostolic writings together with the Old Testament are a firm foundation for your life.
- 3) Apostolic transmission of the truth
- a) “just as those . . . it seemed good to me also”—Luke is an apostolic assistant, like Mark, Timothy, Titus, Barnabas; Luke delivers what was delivered to him
- b) “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative”—Unlike many ancient historians, who disparaged earlier histories in order to justify their own work, Luke appreciates the work of his predecessors. “Undertaken” connotes the difficulty of the task.
- c) Character of Luke’s Gospel:
- i) Devotionally Thorough—“having followed all things from the beginning”—“followed” particularly as an authority; “all things from the beginning,” hence, thorough
- ii) Accurate—“closely”
- iii) Intentionally Persuasive— “Orderly account” is not as concerned with strict chronology as with a logical presentation of the facts so as to set Christ forth as Savior and Lord. (cf. Acts 11:4)
- iv) Philip Graham Ryken said, “Like everything else in the Bible, it is not merely a human book about God, but a divine book to humanity.”

- v) B. B. Warfield wrote, “The whole of Scripture is the product of divine activities which enter it, however, not by superseding the activities of the human authors, but confluently with them; so that the Scriptures are the joint product of divine and human activities, both of which penetrate them at every point, working harmoniously together to the production of a writing which is not divine here and human there, but at once divine and human in every part, every word, every particular.”
- d) Luke can be trusted to tell the truth. If you read/hear Luke with devotional humility you will also find that Luke can be trusted to foster your love of Christ. He will also encourage your faith in Christ as Savior and your obedience to Him as Lord.

Luke wrote this Gospel so that you “may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.”
What you and I need is certain knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.