

A Historical Study On The Book Of Luke
Teaching #3: The Reason Luke Wrote, His Research, and Reliability – PART TWO
Luke 1:1-4

Luke 1:1-4,

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account [written historically documents that would have included Mark and Matthew] of the things that have been fulfilled among us [the prophecies of the Christ in the Jewish Scriptures fulfilled by Jesus among those who were living during that time], **2**just as they [the many documented accounts of Jesus] were handed down to us by those who from the first [the life of Jesus] were eyewitnesses [of Jesus] and servants of the word [the message about Jesus]. **3**With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything [written by others about Jesus – the things fulfilled among us and handed down to us] from the beginning [of the life of Jesus], I too decided to write an orderly account [documented account of Jesus] for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4**so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught [about Jesus]. (Luke 1:1-4).*

In our previous study we examined 9 questions. Question #9 was:

Question #9: Who are the us the prophecies were fulfilled among, and who were the eyewitnesses and servants of the word? (Luke 1:1-2)

In PART ONE, we examined who the eyewitnesses were. Many of these would have been the eyewitnesses Luke interviewed in writing the book of Luke.

Some of the eyewitnesses, as noted in PART ONE, were the original disciples of Jesus.

It was these disciples who were the servants of the word.

Luke writes in **Acts 6:2-3,**

*So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3**Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them **4**and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”*

Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

In **Luke 1:2** and **Acts 6:2-7** we see that:

- The Twelve Apostles were servants of the word. Apostles means sent ones – they were sent out by Jesus just prior to his ascension with what is called the Great Commission.

- The word spread widely and disciples increased rapidly. Disciples are those who began learning about Jesus, his work on the cross, and the new testament he established in his blood. A large number of Jewish priests became obedient to the faith, meaning the priests stopped sacrificing animals for temporal forgiveness of sins and trusted in the sacrifice of Jesus for the permanent forgiveness of sins.

This leads us to **Question #10**.

Question #10: What is the word the eyewitnesses – the apostles – were servants of? (Luke 1:2; Acts 6:2-7)

NOTE: Whenever we see *the word of God, the word of truth, or the word of the Lord* in the Bible, it is **not** a reference to the Bible. The Bible contains the word of God, word of truth, and the word of the Lord; but when we see these phrases in the Bible, we must know they are not referring to the Bible specifically. Rather, they are referring to a specific message (word means message) from God or the Lord for that specific person or group during a specific time.

In the Bible, *the word of the Lord* or *the word of God* means a specific message to a specific person for a specific group of people at specific time in God’s communication with people.

For example, starting in Genesis 15:1 *the word of the Lord* came to Abram (Abraham). This doesn’t mean the Bible came to Abram. What it means is a specific message from the Lord came to Abram. This is consistent throughout the Bible, such as when *the word of the Lord* came to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:1-11) and to Jonah (Jonah 1:1 and 3:1).

We see the phrase ***the word of the Lord came to*** throughout the scriptures. The final ***the word of the Lord*** to come to someone was to John, when he received the final prophecy about the return of Jesus and the establishment of Jesus’ kingdom on the earth, and ultimately the establish of the new earth. John records the final prophecy in Revelation (see Revelation 1:1-3).

The writer of Hebrews writes in Hebrews 1:1-3 that God previously spoke through the prophets but now he has spoken through Jesus. This means that *the word of the Lord* or *the word of God* coming to someone to deliver a message through to another person or group is no longer in operation. The prophetic word of God to people and through people has ceased.

If someone comes to you saying, “I have a word from the Lord for you,” this person does not have a word directly from the Lord for you. Much abuse has happened in the lives of people who have been involved in churches and ministries that say, “I have a word from the Lord for you.”

Prophecies, or words of the Lord directly to individuals, have ended. Paul writes about his in 2 Corinthians 13:8-12 when he states that when the fullness comes, that prophecies would cease. The fullness came when John received the final prophecy,

If you would like to listen to Brad’s teaching on this topic, [CLICK HERE](#), and see Tongues #6: Tongues Will Cease...But When?

In the Bible, *the word of the Lord* or *the word of God* means a specific message to a specific person for a specific group of people at specific time in God’s communication with people.

We also see in the Bible that *the word of God* or *the word of the Lord* means the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy, Isaiah 1:10; Psalm 119), and other times it means the message of grace that Jesus gave Paul (Acts 20:24; 32).

The context of the phrase will always tell us the meaning.

So, when the Bible uses the phrase *the word of God* or *the word of the Lord*, it isn't referring to the Bible; however, the Bible **does** contain the word of God and the word of the Lord. We must examine the context to determine what the specific word or message is and if that word/message applies to us today.

If you would like to explore on the Blue Letter Bible website the use of the phrase *word of the Lord* or *word of God*, [CLICK HERE](#).

We are examining what the word or message the apostles were servants of that spread rapidly following the ascension of Jesus. **What is this word?**

- The word is the message about Jesus.
- The word is the message about Jesus being the Christ/Messiah.
- The word is the message about the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- The word is message about Jesus being the Word become flesh to bring light and life to the world (John 1:1-14).
- The word is the message about the miracles and healings Jesus did. For example, see **John 12:17**.

Now ***the crowd*** that was with him [Jesus] when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead ***continued to spread the word***. (John 12:17).

Luke highlights in Acts what the word is that was spread by those who were eyewitnesses of Jesus and by those who heard the eyewitnesses testify to the validity of the life, miracles, healings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus as well as his eventually return.

The term ***word*** is used about **41** times in Acts (see the NKJV-the NIV sometimes uses ***word*** and other times ***message*** yet it is the same Greek word, logos) to refer to the message about Jesus: his life, death, burial, resurrection, and return, and that salvation and forgiveness is in his name – belief in Jesus.

Below is the link to Blue Letter Bible to see the 41 times the term ***word*** is used in Acts in the NKJV. [CLICK HERE](#)

In Acts 2, we see the ***word*** first communicated by the apostles of Jesus in Jerusalem to all those who came from the surrounding countries to celebrate Pentecost. We see the ***word*** go as far as Rome with Paul when the book of Acts closes.

In **Acts 13:15-49**, Paul used the word ***word*** 6 times to refer to Jesus being the Christ, his death on the cross, and his resurrection. Paul calls it ***the word of salvation*** in **Acts 13:26**.

In **Acts 13:38-39**, Paul included in his use of the **word** that forgiveness is received by believing in Jesus and through belief one is justified (declared righteous – innocent of all sins-not guilty-clean-pure), a righteousness that could not happen under the law.

This is the message Jesus gave Paul to declare (Acts 20:24; 26:15-18; Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:1-6). It is **the word of grace** where forgiveness is received by believing or by faith.

We see **the word of grace** begin to be the **dominant** message in Acts starting in Acts 13:15 with Paul.

Acts 13:43 and 44 says,

*When the congregation was dismissed [those in the synagogue where Paul communicated the word – message – about Jesus], many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to **continue in the grace of God** [forgiveness and righteousness is received by faith in Jesus not by following the law. There would be much pressure exerted on these believers to return to the Law, which did eventually happen-prompting Paul's letter to the Galatians.]*

Look what happened following **the word of grace** that Paul communicated in the synagogue.

Acts 13:44 says,

*On the next Sabbath **almost the whole city gathered to hear THE WORD OF THE LORD.***

Do you see it?

The **word of the Lord**, which was the message Jesus personally gave Paul about Jesus being the Christ (his life, death, burial, and resurrection) and through faith in him forgiveness and righteousness (justification) is received (Acts 16:15-18). This was the message proclaimed by Paul. The message of grace had such an impact on those who heard Paul speak that they invited family and friends so that **almost the whole city** of Pisidian, Antioch (a city in Galatia) gathered to hear **the word of the Lord** at the synagogue on the next Sabbath.

In **Acts 14:1-3**, Luke calls the message of Paul and Barnabas **the word of his grace**. The *word of his grace* and the *word of the Lord* or synonymous.

Acts 14:1-3

*Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. **2**But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. **3**Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to **THE WORD OF HIS GRACE**, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

Paul himself uses the phrase **the word of His grace** in **Acts 20:32** when he exhorts the leaders of the church in Ephesus to build up the church in Ephesus with the truths of grace so they will not be ripped apart by the savage wolves, the legalists trying to pressure believers to depend upon the law of Moses for righteousness rather than Jesus.

Paul says in **Acts 20:32** (NKJV),

*So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to **THE WORD OF HIS GRACE**, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

Why did Luke consider it important to highlight **the word of His (God's) grace** in Acts?

- God used Luke to **record** the **transition** from law to grace in Acts.
- God used Paul to **pioneer** this **transition** from law to grace in the world. Who better to be chosen by God to pioneer this transition than Paul, the one the most passionate about the law.

Paul pioneering the transition and Luke recording the transition is why we see Paul and Luke traveling together on two missionary journeys in Acts. In Acts, we see Paul take center stage as he communicates *the word of grace*.

The word of grace is God's word for us today.

God's word for us today is not the word of the law that came through Moses; rather it is the word or message of grace about all that God has done for us in Jesus to forgive our sins, make us righteous, make us alive with Christ, and give us eternal life. Through faith in Jesus, we receive forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life.

Remember, we are looking at what is the **word** and who are the servants of the word in Luke 1:2.

Initially, the word was about Jesus being the Christ and his resurrection from the dead. In Acts, we see the word take on additional meaning through Paul as **given to him by the ascended Jesus**...the word becomes the word of the Lord and the word of grace...the word of grace was the word of the Lord to Paul (see Acts 20:24; Acts 26:15-18; Galatians 1:10-12; Ephesians 3:1-6).

Let's look at how Paul uses **the word** in his letters.

In Romans 10:17 (New Heart English Bible; NKJV), the phrase **the word** is used by Paul to refer to the spoken message about righteousness by faith apart from the law.

*So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by **the word of Christ**.*

In **2 Corinthians 5:19** (NKJV), Paul calls the message about Jesus **the word of reconciliation** where God is not counting our sins against us and where Jesus took our sinfulness and gives his righteousness to those who trust in him. The word of reconciliation is the message of the new testament of grace established in the blood of Jesus held in contrast to the Law of Moses (2 Corinthians 3:1-6:2).

The old has gone [old testament of the law of Moses, which is a ministry of condemnation and death – see 2 Corinthians 3], *the new is here* [the new testament of grace, which is ministry of eternal forgiveness, righteous and life]! **18***All this is from God* [the new testament of grace, starting in 2 Corinthians 3], *who reconciled us to himself* [removed the barrier of sins] *through Christ* [Jesus took our sin upon himself] *and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19**that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us* **the message [word in the NKJV – logos in the Greek language] of reconciliation. 20***We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21**God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

We are examining Paul's use of the word **word** in his letters

In **Ephesians 1:13 (The Berean Standard Bible)**, the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus is called the **word of truth**.

*And in Him, having heard and believed **the word of truth**—the gospel of your salvation—you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

The word of truth about the gospel of grace is **the sword of the Spirit**. In the context of Ephesians, the sword of the Spirit is *the word of God* about grace (Ephesians 6:17).

*Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word of God**.*

The Spirit of God takes the word of God, which are the truths of grace in Ephesians and defends us against Satanic lies. We take up the sword of the Spirit by believing the truths about all that God has freely and fully done for us in Jesus – see Ephesians #31 on the Gracereach website.

In **Colossians 1:5-6**, Paul states **the word of truth** is the truth of the gospel of grace.

Paul writes,

*...**the word of the truth of the gospel**, **6***which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since **the day you heard and knew THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH.****

It was the word of grace that was to dwell richly in the believers in Colossae (Colossians 3:16).

Colossians 3:16

Let **the word of Christ** (righteousness through faith not by the law – see Romans 10; forgiven of all sins and made alive with Christ – Colossians 1:13-14 and 2:13-14; Jesus is fully God – Colossians 2:2-4; Christ in you – Colossians 1:26-27) *dwell in you richly.*

In **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7** (New Heart English Bible), we see the Thessalonians received the message of grace during times of great suffering. When they received the message, the Holy Spirit produced joy in their hearts about all Jesus had done for them by his grace. This message (word) would have been the same message Paul shared during his missionary journey to Galatia (see Acts 13-14) and the message of grace he communicated in Ephesus (see Acts 20 and Ephesians 1:1-3). The word of the Lord was the message of grace the ascended Jesus revealed to Paul to communicate to others (Acts 26:15-18; Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:1-6).

Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7**,

*You became imitators of us, and of the Lord, **having received the word** [the message of grace Jesus gave to Paul] in much affliction [see 2:14], with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all who believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. **For from you the word of the Lord has been declared,** not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out; so that we do not need to say anything.*

Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 2:13** how the message of the Lord's grace was at work in the Thessalonians.

*For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when **you received from us the word of the message of God,** you accepted it not as a human word, but, as it is in truth, **the word of God,** which also **works in you who believe.***

The grace of God is the message or word that Paul communicated on his missionary journeys. It was the ascended Jesus who gave Paul the full understanding of this message (Acts 20:24; Acts 26:15-18; Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:1-6). Paul explains the Lord's grace message more fully in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. We also see this message of grace in Acts 13.

Let's continue to examine the use of the word **word** in Paul's letters.

We are not sure who wrote Hebrews, it could have been Paul. ([CLICK HERE](#) for Brad's teaching on who wrote Hebrews – see Hebrews #64.)

In Hebrews 4:12-13, the writer uses **the word of God** to refer to the Law of Moses.

*For **the word of God** is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. **13**Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

The law exposes the sinful condition of everyone, revealing our need for God's grace.

For a teaching about Hebrews 4:12-13, [CLICK HERE](#). The teaching is Hebrews #13: Two Reasons To Enter God's Rest – Part 2.

In **Hebrews 13:7**, the writer refers to **the word of God** the leaders taught the assembly of those receiving the book of Hebrews. This reference to the word of God is referring to Jesus being the Christ and the establishment of the new testament (full forgiveness of sins and cleansing from sins through the blood of Jesus) in the blood of Jesus, which is the word of God in Hebrews.

For a teaching about Hebrews 13:7, [CLICK HERE](#). The teachings are Hebrews #47 and #59.

Hebrews #47: Do Not Forsake The Assembling Of Yourselves - Part Two

Hebrews #59: Do I Have To Submit To My Church Leaders?

If you would like to listen to a teaching on Sword of the Spirit being the word of God, [CLICK HERE](#), and look for Ephesians #31: The Sword of the Spirit.

You may also [CLICK HERE](#) to access the all the teachings on one page on the Gracereach website.

So let's return to Question #10.

Question #10: What is the word the eyewitnesses were servants of? (Luke 1:2)

- The word is the message about Jesus the eyewitnesses communicated.
- The word is the message about Jesus being the Christ/Messiah.
- The word is the message about the life, death, burial, resurrection, and return of Jesus.
- The word is message about Jesus being the Word become flesh to bring light and life to the world (John 1:1-14).
- The message is that by calling upon the name of the Lord -Jesus- one can be saved (Acts 2:21-47). Peter explains to the crowd that the name of the Lord is Jesus.
- The message or the word about Jesus is highlighted by Luke in Acts.
- Luke also highlights the message of the word of grace the ascended Jesus revealed to Paul and sent him to proclaim all over the world.
- Paul, in his letters, expounds upon the word based upon what he learned from the ascended Jesus about receiving forgiveness and righteousness by faith in Jesus.

Question #11: What is the reason Luke wrote his book?

Let's read Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3

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**With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided 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.*

Acts 1:1-3

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach **2**until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. **3**After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

The reason Luke wrote was to provide eyewitness information and excellent investigation about Jesus so Theophilus would be established in the truthfulness of what he was previously taught.

It is possible Theophilus was doubting the reliability of what he had been taught about Jesus, and, therefore, needed additional information to assure the accuracy of what he was taught. Consequently, Luke provides a carefully investigated account of the eyewitness testimonies about Jesus.

As we read the book of Luke, keep in mind, Luke is writing about people he personally interviewed. He is also writing about people who those he interviewed possessed firsthand knowledge about. For example, Luke would not have interview Zechariah and Elizabeth, because they would have died by the time Luke was conducting his investigation. Yet, by interviewing Mary, the mother of Jesus (she would have been around the age of 75-80 years old), he was interviewing someone who had a firsthand account of the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, which would explain the amazing details written about them by Luke.

Question #12: Who did Luke interview? – Most likely, Luke personally interviewed many of the people below, or he interviewed those who knew them firsthand.

- Mary the mother of Jesus (Mary would have been around the age of 75 or 80) (Luke 1)
- People who knew Simeon and Anna (possibly Simeon's children and Anna's children) (Luke 2)
- People from Jesus' home town synagogue (Luke 4)
- People who Jesus cast demons out of and who Jesus healed (or people who knew them personally)
- Simon Peter (Luke 5)
- The man with Leprosy (Luke 5)
- The paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof, his friends, and those who witnessed this miracle (Luke 5)
- Matthew (Levi) (Luke 5)
- The people who heard Jesus deliver the sermon on the mount (Luke 6)

- The Centurion and his servant who Jesus healed (Luke 7)
- The widow and her dead son who Jesus brought to life (Luke 7)
- The disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 7)
- The sinful woman at the Pharisee's house...this is Mary, the sister of Martha – John 11:2 (Luke 7)
- Jesus' brothers, including James (Luke 8)
- The demon possessed man who lived in the tombs or members of his family (Luke 8)
- Jarius' and his daughter who Jesus raised from the dead (Luke 8)
- Those who were part of the 5000 that Jesus fed (Luke 9)
- The dad and demon possessed boy who Jesus cast out a demon (Luke 9)
- The expert in the law who Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10)
- The sister's Mary and Martha (Luke 10)
- The woman crippled for 18 years (Luke 13)
- The man healed at the Pharisees' house of abnormal swelling of his body (Luke 14)
- The one man of the ten who were healed of leprosy and returned to thank Jesus (Luke 17)
- The rich ruler (Luke 18)
- The blind beggar (Luke 18)
- Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
- Those in the Temple courts when Jesus drove people out (Luke 19)
- Those who heard Jesus teach in the Temple courts (Luke 20)
- The servant of the High Priest whose right ear was cut off and Jesus healed it (Luke 22)
- Those who were around Jesus when he was questioned by Pilate and Herod (Luke 23)
- The soldiers who mocked and beat Jesus (Luke 23)
- People in the crowd who called for the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23)
- Simon from Cyrene of carried the cross of Jesus (Luke 23)
- Those who were at the crucifixion of Jesus (23)
- Joseph of Aramatheia and the women who followed him to the tomb (Luke 23)
- Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James who talked to the risen Jesus at the empty tomb (Luke 24)
- The two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24)
- The disciples, chief priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees

The people in the above list are real people. They are as real as our own family members, our neighbors, those we go to church with and work with, and our friends. Luke conducted real interviews with real people in his investigative interviews. Therefore, when we read Luke, we are reading real, reliable historical information from firsthand eyewitnesses, or from those who personally knew the firsthand eyewitnesses.

Question #13: When did Luke conduct his investigation and interviews?

Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years (Acts 23-26). Caesarea is about 60 miles from Jerusalem. This would have given Luke ample time to investigate the people who encountered Jesus, and it would have given him time to investigate if what they were saying was true. The date of this time would have been around AD 55-57.

In the next study, we will begin our study as we meet the people Luke interviewed and investigated. As we study, we will keep in the forefront of our minds the reason Luke is writing and who he is writing to,

Theophilus. We will also keep in mind that Luke either personally interviewed those he writes about, or he interviewed people who personally knew them. Based upon Luke's writings, we will ultimately arrive at our own individual conclusions about Jesus, the people Jesus encountered, and the events Jesus experienced, as did Theophilus.

This study will lead us to one final question:

Question #14: Has what we have previously been taught about Jesus, his, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension been strengthened with greater assurance because of the interviews and investigations that Luke wrote about?

It is possible there is someone reading these notes who has never trusted in Jesus for salvation. If you have never trusted in Jesus or are not sure, today you can trust in Jesus. Below is a simple prayer to God to express your faith in Jesus.

Jesus, today I am trusting in you for salvation. I believe you lived, died, and rose from the dead. I believe you died to pay my sin debt in full. I believe you rose from the dead and defeated death and now give eternal life to all who believe in you. Through this prayer, I express my belief in you.

All verses are NIV unless otherwise noted.

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