

It's all about Jesus!

Welcome/ Acts/ Next week's verses

Read: Acts 1:1–11

Theophilus, means friend of God, he is probably a Roman official whom Luke is writing for. Luke begins this book by making it clear, it is all about Jesus.

1. The Identity of Christ. 1-4

Explain: Is Jesus the son of God? Luke understands, his life, his future, everything he is going to write in this book, all that happened in the early church, and all that is to come depends on our answer to this question. **Who is Jesus?** It reminds me of **Matthew 16**, where Jesus asked His disciples, **"Who do you say I am?"** Your answer to that question, changes everything. Luke begins this letter with three subtle but powerful ideas:

- **Consider the Life of Jesus (Vs 1):** "In my first book (the gospel of Luke) I wrote about *everything Jesus did and all that Jesus taught.*" We spent all last year studying what Luke describes here. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. Even at His trial, they could not find anyone of anything to accuse Him of except, He claimed to be God, which was the true but the Jews did not believe Him so it was considered blasphemy. **The life of Jesus and the life you and I live, is a powerful testimony.** Throughout history, even those who do not believe Jesus was God are inspired, challenged and respect the way he lived and what He taught. Even if you believe he was just a good man, history says he was the best man, the most influential man who ever lived which is a great reason for following Him. Of course, let me remind you, Jesus claimed to be God. That is why He was crucified which forces us to decide, was he lying, was He crazy, or is He God. **How do we decide?**
- **Consider the Death of Jesus (Vs 3):** "Jesus suffered and died" When you study history, there has never been a man with so much power and influence who willingly laid down his life to serve all mankind.

Illustrate: "Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. It is easy for the weak to be gentle. Most people can bear adversity. But if you wish to know what a man really is, give him power. This is the supreme test." Robert G. Ingersoll

Powerful, influential men have been assassinated but Jesus chose the cross. He offered no defense. He willingly died so that we could live!

Argue: **2 Corinthians 5:21**, He caused Him, who knew no sin to become sin, that we might become the righteousness of God."

Apply: Would you die? **John 3:16**

Argue: **Romans 5:8**, "God demonstrated His love for us in this, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!"

- **Consider the Resurrection of Jesus (Vs. 3):** "He proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive." I have preached on the evidence for the resurrection many times so today I'll just ask you a question. What would it take, if you witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus for you to be convinced; He was alive, He rose from the dead, and was the son of God. So convinced, that you would be willing to follow Him in death?

Luke is writing to someone who can verify every claim he is making. Theophilus can check on the reputation of Jesus. He can interview people who watched or even carried out his

execution. He can interview hundreds of people who claim, they saw Jesus crucified and later saw Him alive. You cannot make these claims in the very city and to the very people where this took place unless they are true.

Apply: Luke begins his history of the church by clarifying the identity of Jesus. **If the greatest man who ever lived, chose to die on a cross, to pay for your sin, overcame death in order to give us eternal life then the only reasonable response is to crown Him King of our hearts and to give our lives for what He gave His life for.**

2. The Mission of Christ. Verse 5-8

Explain: The disciples ask, "Has the time come for you to free Israel, and restore our kingdom?" This was a reasonable question. **First**, Jesus has power over death; like Wolverine. **Second**, when Jesus was arrested, he said he has the authority to call down an army of angels. **Third**, Jesus mentioned the kingdom of God more than **80 times** in the gospels. When you put all this together it sounds like Jesus is ready to lead an angelic army to overthrow Rome, free the Jews, and establish his earthly kingdom. "Is this the time?"

Yes, but not the way you believe or hope.

- **Permanent Union with Christ.** Baptized, means to be immersed. The Holy Spirit will come upon you. This was a brand-new concept. Jesus mentioned it previously but this would be the first time they have experienced it. Why is this so important?

- o **Companionship**- friend. **1 Corinthians 16:9, Romans 6:5**
- o **Healing**- Counselor, teacher. **John 14:26**
- o **Help**- Ephesians 5:22, Romans 8
- o **Freedom.** Addiction to Jesus frees us from the world. Role of desire. **John 8:32, 36. Galatians 5:16.**

Ephesians 5:18, Quote: Charles Spurgeon, "why do I need to keep being filled. We leak."

- **The Kingdom of Israel**- This is an important question today!

- o **Galatians 3:29:** "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise".
- o **Romans 2:28-29:** "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter."
- o **Romans 9:6-8:** "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.' This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring".
- o **Romans 3:1-2,** "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." The Jews played a special role in God's redemptive story. However, being Jewish was never a matter of genetics but a matter of the heart, on the basis of faith. Abraham believed God and it was credited to Him as righteousness. God revealed himself to the world, through the Jews, throughout history and today does that through the church. and

- **How does God relate to modern day Israel?** God wants the Jews to come to faith in Jesus. We have ministry among the Jewish people. During the tribulation there will be a great end time harvest among the Jews, the 144k. In regard to the Nation of Israel, "God is sovereign over the kingdom of men and gives them to whoever he pleases." Daniel 4
- **The Kingdom of Jesus. Acts 7:56, Hebrews 10:12-14, Ephesians 1:19-23**
 - **Jesus did come to build a Kingdom**, an eternal kingdom, a kingdom of Priest, a holy nation, Sons and Daughters of God through faith in His Son Jesus to the praise and honor of His great name and the blessing of all people. However, it is not an earthly kingdom, yet!
 - **The Kingdom of Jesus supersedes every other kingdom.** Meaning, Jesus did not come to destroy Rome or any country for that matter but to redeem it through the power of the gospel. Through believers who are growing up to look like Jesus and transform culture.
 - **God's Kingdom values people.** Every person has value, every person because we are created in the image of God.
 - **God's Kingdom values Freedom-** Love and Freedom are inseparable. God loves everyone and gives everyone freedom. God never attempts to control anyone. God allows us to choose and live with the consequences of our choices.
 - **God's Kingdom values Generosity-** History is the story of God's generosity. God created paradise, gave it to us, and commissioned us to spread paradise around the world. We rebelled and brought Hell into God's paradise and often blame God for the Hell we created.
 - **God's Kingdom is eternal.** Our suffering is temporary. Our reward, our citizenship, our inheritance is eternal. **Acts 1:9-11**
 - **God's Kingdom values Truth.** John 14:6, John 8:32, 1 Timothy 3:16
 - **A kingdom of Witnesses.** You shall be my witnesses. What comes to mind when you hear that. For most people they think about winning debates with unbelievers convincing them to become a Christian. **What does it mean to be a witness?**
 - **Become Like Him-** this is what Acts and the church age is all about.
Quote: Preach the gospel and if necessary, use words. St. Francis of Assisi
Apply: My life must give credibility to my message. That does not mean we can or should make everyone happy all the time. However, it does mean we should be different from the world, the fruit of the Spirit should be growing in our lives, we should be living for the glory of God.
 - **Be with Jesus.** This is not something we work up. **7-days, community groups- group leaders**, Daily Defining Moments.
 - **Do what Jesus did!** Tell people about the difference Jesus is making in your life. That is how his kingdom grows.