

# Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

## Overview

This sermon marks the beginning of a new series on the Gospel of Luke. The pastor sets the stage for a careful, orderly study of Luke, emphasizing its unique perspective and purpose among the four Gospels. The message is both an introduction to the book and an encouragement to approach it with expectation, humility, and a desire for deeper understanding and discipleship.

## Core Scripture

### Luke 1:1–4 (NKJV):

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”

## Key Themes and Insights

- **Purpose of Luke’s Gospel:**
  - Luke writes as an investigative journalist, compiling a comprehensive and orderly account based on eyewitness testimony.
  - The goal is to provide certainty and clarity to believers, especially those growing in faith.
  - Luke’s Gospel is particularly valuable for putting the life and ministry of Jesus into a clear, chronological framework.
- **Authorship and Perspective:**
  - Luke, a physician and companion of Paul, is not an eyewitness to all events but carefully gathers information from those who were.
  - The humility of the Gospel writers is highlighted—none sought to make themselves the heroes of the story.
  - Luke’s detailed, methodical approach is contrasted with the other Gospels (Matthew’s genealogy, John’s theological prologue, Mark’s focus on action).
- **Reliability of Scripture:**
  - The Bible’s honesty about its heroes’ flaws is evidence of its authenticity.
  - The Gospel writers’ willingness to include their own weaknesses and failures points to divine inspiration rather than self-promotion.
- **Theophilus and Intended Audience:**
  - “Theophilus” may be a real person or a symbolic name meaning “lover of God,” suggesting the Gospel is addressed to all believers seeking to grow in understanding.
  - Luke’s Gospel is especially useful as a teaching tool for discipleship and spiritual formation.
- **Historical and Religious Context:**
  - The sermon provides an overview of the intertestamental period, including the rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Maccabean revolt, and the transition from Persian to Greek to Roman rule.
  - This background helps explain the religious and political climate at the time of Jesus’ birth and ministry.

## Structure and Approach of This Study

- The teaching style will be detailed and educational, akin to a Bible college class, aiming to equip believers for ministry.
- The pastor’s goal is not only to share insights but to model how to study Scripture so that others can do the same.
- Emphasis is placed on observation, interpretation, and practical application.

## Application and Encouragement

- **For the Church:**
  - Every believer is called to be a disciple-maker; the church exists for ongoing education, equipping, and mutual encouragement.
  - The study of Luke is intended to strengthen faith, provide a solid foundation for belief, and empower believers to share and teach others.
- **For Individuals:**
  - Approach this study with openness and a willingness to learn, knowing that God desires to speak to each person through His Word.

- Recognize the value of both devotion and education in spiritual growth.

## **Historical and Religious Framework**

- **Temple and Synagogue:**
  - Explains the evolution from the tabernacle to the temple, the role of synagogues, and the significance of the priesthood.
- **Rise of Religious Groups:**
  - Pharisees: Emerged from a grassroots movement focused on obedience to the law.
  - Sadducees: Temple-based, more aristocratic, and limited to the Torah.
- **Intertestamental Period:**
  - Four hundred years of silence from God before the events of Luke, ending with God's direct intervention in the lives of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

## **Closing Prayer Highlights**

- Gratitude for the Gospel of Luke and anticipation for what God will teach through it.
- A request for God's blessing on the study, the fellowship, and the application of His Word in daily life.
- A call to be established in faith and equipped for the work of ministry.

### **In summary:**

This message serves as a thoughtful, thorough introduction to the Gospel of Luke, inviting the congregation into a season of deeper study, understanding, and active discipleship. The pastor's heart is for the church to be well-equipped, confident in the truth, and ready to share the good news with others.