

FULL OF IT
FOR THE HOLIDAYS

TAKING CHRISTMAS CHEER TO A NEW LEVEL

In the United States, 3,500
people walk away from
faith everyday.

Nine churches permanently
close their doors
every single day.

Why?

Doubt

Faith and Wonder

The Christmas Story

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled **among us**, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were **eyewitnesses** and servants of the word.

Luke 1:1-2 NIV

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,

Luke 1:3 NIV

so that you may know the **certainty** of
the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:4 NIV

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

Luke 1:26 NIV

to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:27 NIV

The angel went to her and said,
“Greetings, you who are highly
favored! The Lord is **with you.**”

Luke 1:28 NIV

Mary was greatly **troubled** at his words and **wondered** what kind of greeting this might be.

Luke 1:29 NIV

But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have **found** favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

Luke 1:30-31 NIV

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Luke 1:32-33 NIV

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

Luke 1:34 NIV

What we see is that the Bible's view of doubt is wonderfully nuanced. In many circles, skepticism and doubt are considered an absolute, unmitigated good. On the other hand, in a lot of conservative and religious circles, any and all questioning or doubting is thought to be bad.

If you are in a church youth group and you have questions about the Bible, the pastor may bark at you, "You shouldn't doubt! You have to have faith." What you have in the Bible is neither view. there is a kind of doubt that is the sign of a closed mind, and there is a kind of doubt that is the sign of an open mind.

Some doubt seeks answers, and some doubts is a defense against the possibility of answers.

There are people like Mary who are open to the truth and are willing to relinquish sovereignty over their lives if they can be shown that the truth is other than what they thought. And there are those like Zechariah who use doubts as a way of staying in control of their lives and keeping their minds closed.

Which kind of doubt do you have?

Tim Keller

A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic.

A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection.

Tim Keller

The angel answered, “**The Holy Spirit** will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the **Son of God**.”

Luke 1:35 NIV

For no word from God will ever **fail.**”

Luke 1:37 NIV

“I am the Lord’s **servant**,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be **fulfilled**.” Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:38 NIV

Faith is what keeps you
walking when you are not sure
where you are going.

Blessed is she who has **believed** that
the Lord would fulfill his promises to
her!”

Luke 1:45 NIV

If you want this season to be
truly wonderful...be faith-full.

Happiness is found in a faith
that doesn't fail to believe
that God won't fail