

# Talk It Over

The Certainty  
(Week 1)  
It's Reliable!

## SMALL TALK

1. Have you ever written up an account of some event that actually happened to you or someone else? Why did you write it? How did that go?

## VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Luke 1:1-4.** From this paragraph, what do you learn about Luke? About the reason he wrote this gospel? About where he got his sources?
3. What phrases and words jump out at you most?
4. What other account in the New Testament did Luke write? (Hint: Read Acts 1:1-2)

## GETTING PERSONAL

5. On the reliability of the Bible: Where are you on the scale of 1 to 10 if "Skeptic" is 1 and "Certain" is 10? In the last few years have you been trending up or down that scale? Any guesses as to why?
6. If you have ever trended up the scale, what helped you trend up?
7. What do you hope will be your experience in the next 11 weeks as we ponder "the certainty"?

## PRACTICE!

- a. What are you grateful for?
- b. What is something God has been showing you this week (in His Word or some other way)?
- c. About the people you are interacting with who do not yet follow Jesus, how can we join you in prayer?
- d. What is keeping you from having a better answer to questions a - c?

January 31, 2021

## The Certainty

### *week 1- It's Reliable*

Lately everything feels uncertain. It seems like everything familiar went through upheaval in unexpected ways.

- How do you feel about the future?
- How do you feel about the kind of world our children and grandchildren will live in?
- Has your sense of security, confidence, and peace changed since a year ago?
- Has the length of your fuse become a little shorter?

How many of you know who first penned this quote:  
“Nothing is certain except death and taxes”?

Answer: Benjamin Franklin in a letter to a French scientist, Jean-Baptiste Leroy, during the chaos of the French revolution.

The letter discussed Franklin’s concern about how enduring would be our own newly adopted constitution.

Because of the frenzy of executions in France at this time, Franklin, who had not heard from his friend for a year, opened his letter with “Are you still living?” His friend was alive, but Franklin died just 5 months later; almost as if to put an exclamation point on his enduring quote, a quote that really is no joke. “Nothing is certain except death and taxes”?

But what if we could know with certainty what lays beyond death in the hereafter? If we could know this with certainty would you want to know?

That's what this series is all about. This has massive ramifications. I want this series to help you "know the certainty" and FEEL more certain, more confident, and more at peace with God, yourself, and how things are going in your life even when it feels chaotic.

How could we possibly know this kind of certainty you ask? Well, the Gospel of Luke was written for this purpose.

**WHO WAS LUKE?** Luke was a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, a highly educated Greek Scholar, a physician, and a historian that was familiar with the research methodology of the great Greek historians.

***Luke 1:1–4 (CSB)** Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. <sup>3</sup> So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know **the certainty** of the things about which you have been instructed.*

## I. Your ROADMAP to deep certainty

- A. HEARING
- B. BELIEVING
- C. LIVING
- D. KNOWING

These are steps in this order. Our purpose as a church is to help people take steps from wherever they are to where God wants them to be. Where are you on the roadmap to certainty?

Where was Theophilus on this roadmap?

Theophilus held a distinguished government office in either Greece or Rome. It appears that Luke knew him personally, and he addressed both

of his documents (Luke and Acts) to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). The name Theophilus, means “lover of God”.

It is clear that Theophilus has already “*Heard*” and been instructed. It could be that “Theophilus” was his baptismal name, given to him when he was baptized as a follower of Christ.

Theophilus had *heard, believed*, was instructed, and was *living* out the faith to some measure. However, it seems that something was still missing; certainty.

This kind of “Knowing” is deeper than knowing about stuff.

My friends, are you like Theophilus? Do you also think of yourselves as “lovers of God” and yet at the same time you are struggling with certainty?

If so, the good news is that we have a roadmap to certainty.

**Do you think it is actually possible to know with certainty that there is life after death?** And if so, do you think you can personally know with certainty that you yourself will live with God forever?

These are all very important questions, but some people still think you cannot possibly know this for certain. The Apostle John, and Luke, the other Apostles and Jesus say you can know.

*1 John 5:12–13 (CSB) The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup> I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Please notice it doesn’t merely say you can know that someday in the future after you die, you will go to heaven. It says more than that. It says you can know now that you already have eternal life! That is saying something we need to understand.

But how can I **know** that? John's answer: *If you have the Son of God you have eternal life! (5:12)*

**What does that mean?** How can I have the Son of God? I know how to have a possession. I have a car. I have a house. I have clothes. What does it mean to say "I have Jesus the Son of God"? It means I have a relationship with him. He is my saviour, and I am his and he is mine. I have Jesus.

Let me say a nonsensical statement by contrast. "I have a stranger." You cannot have a stranger. Nobody has a relationship with a stranger. You cannot even really say, "I know a stranger." If you do, that person is not a stranger. It is a nonsensical statement. You can know *about* a stranger. You can see a stranger. You can speak to a stranger. But you cannot *have* a stranger. Yes, but how can you have Jesus? By knowing him in a particular kind of relationship, a covenant relationship.

In a covenant relationship, I can say, I have a wife.

And yet this particular covenant relationship with Jesus is one of a kind; it is a saving relationship that makes your eternal life an experienced deep certainty in the here and now. There is nothing nonsensical about John's statement even if it sounds mysterious to you.

Luke is going to take us on a road trip. A roadmap to certainty. Before we begin it will be helpful to know where you are. Where are you?

**A lot of people *camp out* in the place of doubt, skepticism, and uncertainty. And they think they must remain there, but must they? I don't think so.**

Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939) was an archaeologist, and professor at University of Edinburgh, and biblical skeptic who thought the bible was nothing but made up facts and stories, until he set out to prove it.

The evidence proved the opposite of his assumptions. He eventually wrote:

“Luke’s history is unsurpassed in regard to its trustworthiness”.

--Sir William Ramsay

## II. Ancient LEGENDS just don’t read like this

- *“events that have been fulfilled among us”*
- *“handed down by eyewitnesses”*
- *“I have carefully investigated everything”*
- *“to write an orderly sequence”*

"I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this. [With] the gospel texts, there are only two possible views. Either this is historical reportage, or else some unknown ancient writer without known predecessors or successors suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic, realistic narrative. The reader who doesn't see this has simply not learned how to read."

--C.S. Lewis

God wants you to be in a saving relationship with Jesus who showed you how to live by faith; who died to forgive your sins, and was raised to make it possible to give you His Spirit for a better life now and forever! Do you want this too?

Let me invite you to read it again for the first time to take steps from wherever you are to where God wants you to be.