

# Talk It Over

The Certainty  
Week 5  
Certainty and Mystery!

## SMALL TALK

1. For the married: When did you know that the person you married was “the one”? For the unmarried: What is the sign you are looking for as the decisive signal?

## VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Luke 7:18-23.** Why can't John get information from Jesus firsthand? (See Luke 3:20) Why is John now doubting?
3. What is John's probably expectation of the way a Messiah ought to act? (See Luke 3:16-17)?
4. How does Jesus answer John's question and how does this help?
5. What mysteries did Jesus speak immediately after declaring something with certainty? (see Luke 4:16-30; Luke 9:18-26)
6. We tend to think in terms of “believing it” before “living it” but how does Jesus advocate “living it” before “knowing it” (See Luke 7:16-17)?

## GETTING PERSONAL

7. Have you ever experienced how “living it” preceded your “knowing it with certainty”?
8. What does Luke 9:23 look like in your life?

February 28, 2021

## **Certainty and Mystery**

Series: The Certainty

**READ Story (part 1):** From Adrian Rogers, *The Power of His Presence*, p. 145f.

“The honest doubter doesn't know, but he wants to know. The dishonest doubter doesn't know because he doesn't want to know. He can't find God for the same reason a thief can't find a policeman. Which kind of doubter are you?”

*Adrian Rogers, The Power of His Presence, p. 146*

Luke's purpose for writing is to help believers and honest doubters.

*[not on screen] Luke 1:4 (CSB) ...so that you may know the certainty...*

Let's dive in:

### **I. Many certainties are MYSTERIOUS**

- Only “certainties” for those “in the know” Germs, Lightening, Wind...
- God's people learned over time that many prophetic certainties were mysterious.
- CERTAINTY: Jesus declared himself as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies.

*Luke 4:16–17 (CSB) He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written...*

**[READ FROM A SCROLL...]**

*[not on screen ] <sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

Jesus stopped mid-sentence as he is quoting Isaiah 61:1-2! What he says is a certainty he is proclaiming. What he did not say was the great MYSTERY!!! What he doesn't say but is prophesied comes at his SECOND COMING. This was the MYSTERY... still shrouded at this time. Then...

*Luke 4:20–21 (CSB) He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."*

There were 2 REACTIONS.

*Luke 4:22 (CSB) They were all speaking well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"*

There was familiarity there. I believe there may have also been a shadow of scandal vaguely remembered.

*Luke 4:24 (CSB) ... [Jesus said] "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown.*

He proclaimed CERTAINTY, but intentionally followed that up with MYSTERY.

*Luke 4:25–27 (CSB) ... there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, ... <sup>26</sup> Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>27</sup> And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."*

These were Gentiles! This was NOT what they were looking for in a MESSIAH! Jesus put "gasoline" on a smoldering fire.

**Luke 4:28–30 (CSB)** *When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. <sup>29</sup> They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.*

It was not yet time for this, but it is a foreshadowing of things to come.

## II. **MYSTERY: Jesus did not fit POLITICAL expectations.**

- This affects people in our day.
- This EVEN affected John the Baptist in his day.

**Luke 7:18–19 (CSB)** *...So John summoned two of his disciples <sup>19</sup> and sent them to the Lord, asking, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”...*

Why didn't John go himself? Herod imprisoned him back in Luke 3:20. It is a period of darkness for John. Things are not going as expected. So he summoned his disciples to ask Jesus some questions.

**Luke 7:22-23 (CSB)** *He replied to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, <sup>23</sup> and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me.” ...*

Why did John doubt? Because of what he had prophesied and expected.

**Luke 3:16–17 (CSB)** *John answered them all, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing shovel is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out.”*

Doubts grow when you focus on what God is NOT doing.

John focused on what Jesus was not doing yet. He had not baptized with the Holy Spirit yet. He had not brought the fire yet. He had not brought fiery judgment as he expected it yet.

Jesus pointed John to what he WAS doing. It was the only answer Jesus gave, and for John it was enough. [Is that enough for you?](#)

### III. Many certainties are **CONFUSING**

***Luke 9:18–21 (CSB)** ...[Jesus] asked them [his disciples], “Who do the crowds say that I am?”<sup>19</sup> They answered, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, that one of the ancient prophets has come back.”<sup>20</sup> “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”*

In Matthew 16, Jesus affirmed Peter’s answer. Then as here in Luke, Jesus promptly confuses Peter with what he says next.

***Luke 9:21–22 (CSB)** But he strictly warned and instructed them to tell this to no one,<sup>22</sup> saying, “It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.”*

Again Jesus took the declaration of **Certainty and immediately shrouded it with a mystery!**

For the disciples, it gets worse! Imagine their expectation and hearing this for the first time.

***Luke 9:23–26 (CSB)** Then he said to them all, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.<sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will save it.<sup>25</sup> For what does it benefit someone if he gains the whole world, and yet loses or forfeits himself?<sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and that of the Father and the holy angels.*

- **This is a strange strategy for revolution.** They are confused. How can this be?
- **Was this when Judas veered off the way?** *I didn't sign up for this! Take up a cross!?* *That can't be right can it!*
- The way of the cross, **not just initially**, but the way of death to self, and resurrection life in the Spirit is the way to victory. This way is STILL a mystery to many believers today!

To be clear Jesus repeated himself. Here is an example.

*Luke 9:43–45 (CSB) ...While everyone was amazed at all the things he was doing, he told his disciples, <sup>44</sup> “Let these words sink in: The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.” <sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this statement; it was concealed from them so that they could not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.*

Many certainties are confusing! And doubts often thrive in confusion. **How are you doing in these confusing times? Did confusion feed your doubts?**

**Story (part 2): (Adrian Rogers)**

“Did you know that there is a promise to the honest doubter in God's word?”

*John 7:16–17 (CSB) Jesus answered them, “My teaching isn’t mine but is from the one who sent me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.*

We tend to think in terms of “believing” it before “living” it but here Jesus advocates if you want to “know it” you have to “live it” first.

HEARING → BELIEVING → LIVING → KNOWING

Then Adrian Rogers said to the doubter,

“Would you be willing to sign a statement like this: “God I don't know whether you exist or not, but I want to know and because I want to

know, I will make an honest investigation. And because it is an honest investigation, I will follow the results of that investigation wherever they lead me, regardless of the cost.”

After a time of soul searching, he responded, “Yes, I would be willing to sign a statement like that. I'll do it. How do I go about making such an investigation?”