



**Lecture # 8 Part 4**

# INTRODUCTION TO LUKE

## Luke 1:1 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup>“**Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile** an account of the things accomplished among us.”

The preaching concerned a Person, the narrative must exhibit a Person. Who the “many” were Luke does not say. Nor does he pronounce upon the merits or demerits of his predecessors. That was not his calling. There was a better judge than he of the genuine and the spurious. We may safely affirm that he was not afraid if the experiments to produce a life of our Lord were ever so numerous; if some of them were ever so confused and erroneous. He could not believe the word which he preached unless he had confidence that what was true would live, that what was false would be, sooner or later, divided from it.

## Luke 1:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup>“**Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.**”

**III.** The next clause of the introduction has perplexed many, perhaps has given pain to some. **WHAT! ARE WE NOT ABOUT TO READ THE STORY OF AN EYEWITNESS?** Luke does not claim that character. He has received these records from those who were eyewitnesses. He has examined their reports carefully. He does not say that he ever saw Christ whilst He was walking in Galilee or Judaea. He seems to imply the contrary.

Now here is a difference between him and some of the other evangelists, perhaps between him and all the other three. Is it a difference which puts him below them? According to their own judgment and confession, assuredly it is not. They tell us that they did not understand the words and acts of Jesus while they were walking with Him, while they were eyewitnesses of what He did. They misapprehended the particular words and acts. They misapprehended their relation to each other. They misapprehended the Person who was the Speaker of the words and the Doer of the acts.

What they all say—what no one says so frequently as the beloved disciple—is, that the things which they could not understand at first came to them with full power and revelation when they saw Him no more. No doubt to be eyewitnesses of a fact or a person is an honorable distinction, but an eyewitness may glorify himself on that distinction, and attribute a worth to it which no careful student of evidence will concede. There are qualities necessary in an eyewitness besides his eyes. One who possesses these qualities may tell us what they do not tell, may open to us the very sense and purpose of what they do tell. It is so in all cases: if we believe the evangelists—those of them who were eyewitnesses—it is preeminently so in this case.



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### Luke 1:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup>“Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the **word.**”

**IV. WHAT DOES LUKE MEAN BY THE WORD?** If the expression occurred in John’s Gospel it would cause no perplexity. We should assume at once that he was speaking of the Word which was in the beginning and was made flesh. But it has been customary to assume that no other of the evangelists ever fell into this kind of language. I cannot doubt that the apostle who survived to the end of the age was specially appointed to remove confusions which had haunted the readers of the earlier Gospels.

But every Jew could read, as well as John, that the Word of God had come to Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. Every Jew who read their prophecies believed they had conversed with this Word as with a living person. The thought, “He with whom we have conversed is that same Person—He has in human flesh revealed Himself to us,” was not a strange speculation, the refinement of a later age. It was the simplest way of connecting the old world with their day. It was the great escape from the rabbinical traditions which buried the Divine Person under the mere letter of the books.

Formally to assert the force of the prophetic phrase—to make it prominent before all others—was not Luke’s calling. The King, the Christ, is his subject. If we admit any direction of the minds of those who wrote these books—indeed, any special callings of men in this world at all—we can perceive why the tasks of the different evangelists should be different. We can perceive also why each should inevitably at times adopt forms of speech which appear more characteristic of another.

### Luke 1:3 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup>“**It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent **Theophilus.**”**

**V. “IT SEEMED FITTING FOR ME AS WELL.”** Some may cry, “Was he not then taught by the Spirit of God?” I imagine that he who described the Day of Pentecost, and referred the whole existence and work of the Church to the Spirit of God, had quite as awful a feeling of His government over himself as any of us can have. The freedom of his language shows me how strong his feeling was; our sensitiveness and unwillingness to connect the Spirit with the operations of the human intellect indicate the weakness of ours. We ask for distinctions about the degrees and measures in which the Spirit has been or will be vouchsafed. The Evangelists make no such distinctions. I think they dared not.