



Introduction and background to Luke 3-6

“That you may be certain”

We live in a society where absolute truth is an outdated concept. “What’s true for you isn’t true for me” is often what we hear isn’t it?

As Christians, as much as we want to be generous with those who may hold different beliefs or opinions that we do, we also need to be willing to admit that our faith hinges on absolute truth. What we believe isn’t a random assortment of ideas that feel nice, what we believe is based on fact.

Enter Luke’s gospel. The title for our series is “That you may be certain” which comes from chapter one of the book.

“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. 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, so that *you may know the certainty* of the things you have been taught.” (1:1-4)

Luke himself is not an eyewitness, but a careful investigator and historian. He writes to Theophilus (a name which means ‘lover of God’) to make him more certain of what he’s already heard.

Luke wrote his gospel, as well as the book of Acts. They go together as a sweeping journey. Luke is the account of Jesus’ life and work, which is essentially a journey to the cross in Jerusalem. Acts is the account of the early church, which is essentially a journey of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Our series begins after Luke’s nativity account, which we will have dipped in and out of over the Christmas period. It’s fitting for us as we think through our journey through God’s word together this academic year: we began in Colossians with the reminder to remain rooted to the basic tenants of the Christian faith, and to ‘grow in what we know.’ We have now spent a couple of months plumbing the depths of God’s rich plan of salvation for his people in Isaiah 1-12.

And now we study the work of God incarnate, the fulfilment of Isaiah’s hope. I had the privilege of preaching on Christmas day the first ever Christmas number one, Mary’s song from Luke 1. This is the carol of the consistent God: Mary praises God for keeping his promises of old, that love came down at Christmas in the incarnation of the God-man, the wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting father and prince of peace. Blind eyes are opened!

So we join Luke’s journey to Easter beginning at chapter 3, and we will head towards chapter 6, where Luke records the sermon on the mount taking place on a level place. This ‘sermon on the plain’ isn’t contradicting Matthew – it seems Jesus preached this same sermon more than once-preachers can do that you know!

We will then as we head towards Easter jump ahead into Luke’s narrative of the events of Holy Week, as we look forward to the glorious news that Jesus, friend of sinners, invites into paradise those who deserve condemnation. My hope and prayer for us all as we meet in home groups, is that we would all be made more certain of what we believe.

Studies Outline (Luke 3-6)

1. **Luke 3:1-28:** Prepare for Jesus
2. **Luke 4:1-13:** Temptation of Jesus
3. **Luke 4:14-42:** Rejection of Jesus
4. **Luke 5:1-16:** Authority of Jesus
5. **Luke 5:17-26:** Forgiveness is only through Jesus
6. **Luke 5:27-38:** Repentance and Feasting with Jesus
7. **Luke 6:1-16:** The Lordship of Jesus
8. **Luke 6:17-26:** Living like Jesus...blessing and woe
9. **Luke 6:27-46:** Living like Jesus...good fruit

Easter series (HG optional)

1. Luke 23:44-56: Forgiven Sinners
2. Luke 24:1-12: Risen Saviour
3. Luke 24:13-35: Bible Overview