

Lion and Lamb Week 1 - Message Outline

MAIN IDEA: Both prophecy and history point to the divine identity of Jesus.

TEACHING TEXT: ¹ **Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,** ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were **eyewitnesses** and **servants of the word.** ³ 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,** ⁴ **so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.** Luke 1:1-4 NIV

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW? We don't just believe Jesus is the Son of God and Savior King because the Bible says it, our parents told us, or because we like the way it sounds. We believe it because it's true. And, there is a lot of good evidence found in Old Testament prophecies and in world history to support that He really lived, He really died, and He really rose again.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO FEEL? Confident that there are good reasons to believe Jesus is who He said He was and He did what He said He would do. Hopeful that Jesus can and will change their life by the power of His grace.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO? For the Christians, be like Luke. For the Non Christians, be like Theophilus.

THE OUTLINE

TENSION: Have you ever wanted to know if all this Jesus stuff is really true? Like, was He really real? Did He really say and do the stuff the Bible says He said? If you've ever wondered things like that, do me a favor and raise your hand. As you can see, you are definitely not alone. All of us at some point or another will have questions and doubts. And listen, those things don't make you a bad christian! They make you human. What really matters is what you do with those doubts and questions.

TRUTH: Which is why I want to tell you about Theophilus. He's a guy who had questions. He wanted to know if this Jesus stuff was true. So, he asked another guy named Luke to help him find the answers. And, because of Theophilus's questions, Luke went on a journey to find and write down the answers. What he wrote down eventually made its way into the Bible as the Gospel according to Luke. So, what we're going to do in this message is look at the opening lines of Luke's Gospel to help us see a few really good reasons to believe Christianity is true.

¹ **Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,** ² **just as** they were handed down to us by those who from the first were **eyewitnesses** and **servants of the word.** Luke 1:2 NIV

He starts with the word "**many**". Which means, a lot more than one. Whatever the things that were fulfilled were so significant that many, a whole bunch, of people set out to write about it!

And, this is a really big deal, because back then, writing something down was expensive and took a whole lot of work. You couldn't just type a tweet on your phone or record a video and upload it to Tik Tok. All of these people were writing **"an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,"** What does that mean? He's talking about the stuff that Jesus did, and more specifically, how He fulfilled the prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures. Hundreds of things, written down hundreds of years earlier, that described what the Messiah, the Savior King and Son of God, would do. And those were the very things Jesus did do.

"just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word." Luke wants to make it clear that everything he wrote in his gospel is the same stuff that the original eyewitnesses saw. He's telling us the facts haven't changed. The story is the same even. How is that possible? Because they weren't making this stuff up.

³ 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,** ⁴ **so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.** Luke 1:3-4 NIV

Luke did a deep dive into all of it. He carefully investigated everything. Why? So that Theophilus could know that the stuff He was taught about Jesus was actually true. And, what Luke put together for Theophilus is something we have access to. So that we can trust and believe in Jesus knowing that our faith isn't something we hold to because it feels good, or we like the way it sounds, or even because we grew up believing it. We believe because it's true. He is who He claimed to be: the Savior King and Son of God who died and rose again to rescue us from sin.

So, as we kick off this message series, The Lion and the Lamb, and as we prepare to celebrate the greatest event in history, Easter Sunday, the day Jesus walked out of His own tomb and left death in the grave, we are going to look at two categories of evidence, mentioned by Luke, that will help you know the truth of what you've been taught. If you're taking notes, here's the main idea of this message: **Both prophecy and history point to the divine identity of Jesus.**
Image: A Timeline. (Prophecy on the left, history on the right. Jesus at the center.)

Prophecy, this is all the stuff that was written down in the Old Testament pointing to the Messiah, what He would be like, and what He would do. History, this is all the stuff that has happened since the birth of Jesus that points to Him being more than just a man. First, let's look at some of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in His life.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS:

1. Genesis 12:3 (God would bless the whole world through a descendant of Abraham)
2. Psalm 22:16-18 (His killers would cast lots to decide who gets his clothes.)
3. Micah 5:2 (He would be born in the city of Bethlehem.)
4. Zechariah 9:9 (He would ride into Jerusalem riding the back of a donkey.)
5. Isaiah 53.

³ **He was despised and rejected by mankind,** (when asked who should be set free, the crowd called for a murderer to live and for Jesus to die...) **a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.** Like one from whom people hide their faces **he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.** (In the ancient world, crucifixion was the most shameful and embarrassing death imaginable.) ⁴ **Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God,** (because of the nature of his death, everybody would have assumed that he was cursed by God. Specifically, there is a verse that says anyone who is hung from a tree, or a cross, must be cursed by God.) **stricken by him, and afflicted.** ⁵ **But he was pierced for our transgressions,** (nails pierced his hands and feet and spear pierced his side.) **he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.** (forgiveness came through His sacrifice.) Isaiah 53:3-5 NIV

⁹ **He was assigned a grave with the wicked,** **and with the rich in his death,** (victims of crucifixion would be thrown into a pit together, but Jesus was buried in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea.) **though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.** Isaiah 53:9 NIV

After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied... (after He has suffered, He will live again!) Isaiah 53:11 NIV

These are just a few prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, out of hundreds! The odds of a single person fulfilling all these prophecies are so mind breaking that it is almost impossible to wrap our heads around. But, this is just one branch of evidence. This is just the stuff that came before. In His grace, God has continued to supply evidence over the last 2000 years that all point to the reality that Jesus is more than just a man... Lets take a look...

HISTORY THAT POINTS TO JESUS:

1. Tomb found empty. AD 30-33
2. Apostles killed for their faith in Jesus. AD 40-80
3. Rome became Christian. 380 AD
4. Scientific Revolution. AD 1540-1690
5. My Salvation. February 1, 2014

On February 1, 2014, Jesus saved me. Before that, I was a sinner, a scoundrel, and a scumbag. I was living almost entirely for myself. My romantic relationships were all about me. My friendships were all about me. My family relationships were all about me. But God, on a snowy Saturday evening at Life Church Midtown Tulsa, while attending a church service just like this one, I heard the Gospel of Jesus being shared, and for whatever reason, it hit like it never had before. So, when the pastor asked if anyone wants to become a follower of Jesus I raised my hand and committed my life to Jesus. That was eleven years ago. And now, I am different. Jesus is transforming me into the person I was created to be. He is making me more loving, joyful, patient and kind. He is showing me the parts of me that need to die and the old ways of thinking that need to be left behind. I'm a husband to an amazing wife, father to two incredible kids, a pastor at a Church I love, and a better son and brother than my family ever thought I

would be. Why? Because the power of Jesus is still active in the world to change sinners like me into wanna be saints.

Jesus isn't done with me and I'm certainly not done with Him. From now until eternity, I want to keep growing in my love for Him and being changed into someone who genuinely loves others. Why do I believe in Jesus? Because He changed history and He changed my story.

APPLICATION: So, what do you do with all of that? Well, if you're a Christian, I want you to be like Luke. That means you do the work to know what you believe, why you believe it, and if someone asks, you're ready to share it.

¹⁵ ... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have... 1 Peter 3:15 NIV

To help you do that, in our small groups, we are going to work on writing out our testimonies, so that we can, confidently and effectively, share with another person how Jesus has changed our lives. **I was... But God... and now...** And, with Easter weekend around the corner, I want you to start praying for God to show you who He wants you to share your testimony with, and who He wants you to bring to Switch and to church with you for Easter.

For those of you who aren't following Jesus, maybe you're skeptical and you have questions, I want you to be like Theophilus. That means you sincerely look for answers to your questions. Investigate Jesus to figure out if He really is who He claimed to be. And please, don't tell me you don't have time. I know how much time some of y'all spend creeping on your crush. Take just a fraction of that time to open up the Bible and read one chapter of Luke's Gospel everyday.

CONCLUSION: Why? Because if Christianity is true that changes everything. It means there really is a God in heaven who created you with a purpose. That all of us have sinned and broken our relationship with God. But, by trusting in Jesus and choosing to follow Him, we can be rescued from sin, have our relationships repaired, and our purpose restored. One last bit of evidence before we close: a prophecy, spoken by Jesus, that history has proven true.

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Matthew 16:18 NIV

Over the last 2000 years, Christians have been persecuted, mocked, and in many parts of the world, killed for their faith in Jesus. And yet, the Church has continued to grow, the Gospel has continued to advance, and peoples' lives have continued to be changed. This year, there will be more than 2.6 billion Christians around the globe celebrating Easter, the greatest event in history, because we believe Jesus really lived, He really died, and He really rose again.

Why do we believe? **Both prophecy and history point to the divine identity of Jesus.** And, for many of us, we believe because Jesus has changed our stories. *He can do the same for you.*