

# Know for Certain!

By Mark Mayberry  
3/2/2008

## Introduction

Though modern man is beset by uncertainty and doubt, Holy Scripture empowers us to an accurate and exact understanding of Heaven's Will (Luke 1:1-4).

*Luke 1:1-4 ... 1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (KJV)*

*Luke 1:1-4 ... 1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 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; 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (NASB95)*

Confirming his covenant promise unto Abram, God said, “**Know for certain** that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions” (Gen. 15:12-16, esp. vs. 13).

*Genesis 15:12-16 ... 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, “**Know for certain** that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 “But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 “As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 “Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.” (NASB95)*

Addressing his waffling magicians, Nebuchadnezzar said, “**I know for certain** that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you” (Dan. 2:4-11, esp. vs. 8).

*Daniel 2:4-11 ... 4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: “O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.” 5 The*

king replied to the Chaldeans, “The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. 6 “But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation.” 7 They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.” 8 The king replied, “**I know for certain** that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, 9 that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.” 10 The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. 11 “Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.” (NASB95)

Concluding his message on Pentecost, Peter said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel **know for certain** that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:29-36, esp. vs. 36).

*Acts 2:29-36 ... 29 “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. 32 “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, 35 Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” ’ 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel **know for certain** that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.” (NASB95)*

Let us consider the realities of life and death, and the promises of the resurrection and recompense, regarding which we can have sure and certain knowledge.

## **The Reality of Death**

God created man as a creature of choice, imposing physical death as the penalty of transgression (Gen. 2:15-17).

*Genesis 2:15-17 ... 15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” (NASB95)*

After the fall, God said to Adam, “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:17-19).

*Genesis 3:17-19 ... 17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” (NASB95)*

When driven from the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24), Adam began the inexorable march to the grave (Gen. 5:1-5).

*Genesis 3:22-24 ... 22 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. (NASB95)*

*Genesis 5:1-5 ... 1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. 4 Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. 5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. (NASB95)*

In like manner, death spread to all men, because all have sinned (Rom. 5:12-14).

*Romans 5:12-14 ... 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (NASB95)*

Even those blessed with length of days must eventually confront the certainty of death (Ps. 90:1-12).

*Psalms 90:1-12 ... 1 A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. 3 You turn man back into dust And say, “Return, O children of men.” 4 For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night. 5 You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; In the morning they are like grass which*

sprouts anew. 6 In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; Toward evening it fades and withers away. 7 For we have been consumed by Your anger And by Your wrath we have been dismayed. 8 You have placed our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your presence. 9 For all our days have declined in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh. 10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away. 11 Who understands the power of Your anger And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? 12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom. (NASB95)

## **The Reality of the Resurrection**

Jesus affirms the reality of the resurrection, both for the righteous and the wicked (John 5:25-29).

*John 5:25-29 ... 25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 28 “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. (NASB95)*

This doctrinal truth is foundational to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-5).

*1 Corinthians 15:1-5 ... 1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (NASB95)*

If there is no resurrection, faith becomes futile, and discipleship is folly (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

*1 Corinthians 15:12-19 ... 12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. (NASB95)*

Nevertheless, the inspired apostle affirms the certainty of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-26, 50-58).

*1 Corinthians 15:20-26 ... 20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (NASB95)*

*1 Corinthians 15:50-58 ... 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (NASB95)*

## **The Reality of Recompense**

The reality of recompense should constrain the conduct of all, both young and old (Eccl. 11:9-12:8, 13-14).

*Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8 ... 9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. 10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting. 1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them"; 2 before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain; 3 in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim; 4 and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly. 5 Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street. 6 Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; 7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will*

*return to God who gave it. 8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "all is vanity!" (NASB95)*

*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ... 13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (NASB95)*

Urging a path of self-denial and service, Jesus affirmed that every man will be repaid according to his deeds (Matt. 16:24-27).

*Matthew 16:24-27 ... 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. (NASB95)*

The apostolic message is likewise consistent (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; Rom. 2:4-11; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

*Acts 10:42 ... 42 "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. (NASB95)*

*Acts 17:30-31 ... 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (NASB95)*

*Romans 2:4-11 ... 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each person according to his deeds: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God. (NASB95)*

*2 Corinthians 5:10-11 ... 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. (NASB95)*

## **Conclusion**

Death is a sad but inescapable reality: It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27-28). Heeding the word of the Lord as spoken through Haggai, let us consider our ways, and – if necessary – reorder our priorities (Hag. 1:1-15). Let us live so that the blessing of Balaam can rightfully and equally apply to us: “Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:7-10).

*Hebrews 9:27-28 ... 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (NASB95)*

*Haggai 1:1-15 ... 1 In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘This people says, “The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.” ’ ” 3 Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?” 5 Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways! 6 “You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.” 7 Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways! 8 “Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the Lord. 9 “You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the Lord of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. 10 “Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. 11 “I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.” 12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the Lord. 13 Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, “ ‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.” 14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king. (NASB95)*

*Numbers 23:7-10 ... 7 He took up his discourse and said, “From Aram Balak has brought me, Moab’s king from the mountains of the East, ‘Come curse Jacob for me, And come, denounce Israel!’ 8 “How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how can I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced? 9 “As I see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people who dwells apart, And will not be*

*reckoned among the nations. 10 “Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, And let my end be like his!” (NASB95)*