

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

373

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the fact that Jesus **“went around doing good” (Acts 10:38)**. These descriptive words were spoken by the Apostle Peter to the household of Cornelius. Cornelius, as you know, was a Roman Centurion who was the first gentile to become a Christian without first becoming a Jew. Please consider: **“Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:34-38).**

These inspired words were written by Luke, the beloved physician and traveling companion of Paul. While Luke only wrote two books of the Bible (Luke and Acts), they are big books. In fact, Luke was responsible for writing 37,932 inspired Greek words which is 27% of the entire N.T. Scriptures. Both of Luke's books were addressed to “Theophilus” (Lk. 1:3; Acts 1:1). Since Luke called him: **“most excellent Theophilus”** it is assumed that he was a Roman official and that Luke was writing an accurate history of Christianity to defend the Apostle Paul who was a prisoner of Rome.

Luke was careful to point out that Jesus was not a terrorist or a threat to the Roman government: **“Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see he has done nothing to deserve death’” (Lk. 23:13-15)**. Jesus was not a threat to Rome and neither was Paul. Both Pilate and Herod found Jesus innocent of the charge of rebellion. Paul was innocent too! Sadly, Jesus and Paul were both executed by the authority of Rome. It is significant that Peter reminded a “Roman Centurion” that all Jesus did was go about doing good.

Many have offered just criticism of the church, but virtually no one can successfully criticize Jesus. All Jesus did was go about doing good! William E. H. Lecky was an Irish philosopher who sought to deify rationalism. His *History of European Morals* was one of Mark Twain's favorite books. On pages 8 and 9 of that book Lecky wrote: *“It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but also the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists”*. Touche! All Jesus did was to go about doing good! Furthermore, Jesus never committed a sin! (1Pet. 2:22)

Luke said that he had **“carefully investigated everything from the beginning”**. Thus Theophilus could be certain of what happened (Lk. 1:1-3). Luke, as a medical doctor, paid careful attention to details. This passage in Luke 3:1-3 is typical of Luke's attention to specific details: **“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod**

tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the desert”. Liars avoid being specific for it makes it too easy to prove them wrong.

Luke’s claim to accuracy attracted the attention of Sir William Ramsay. He was a skeptic and also a professor at the University of Edinburgh. Ramsay journeyed to the Bible lands for the specific purpose of proving Luke to be wrong. Ramsay discovered, however, that every one of Luke’s “facts” were “true”. Consequently he returned to England as a believer. Ramsay discovered that Luke was specific and accurate about everything. This included geography, politics, and religion. For example Luke said there were proconsuls in senatorial provinces, asiarchs in Ephesus, and politarchs in Thessalonica. The reference to politarchs in (Acts 17:6) was assumed by the experts to be an error. No archeologist or historian could find this word anywhere but in the book of Acts. Ramsay, however, went to Thessalonica and discovered that Luke was right. He found the term “*politarch*” five different times inscribed in stone in the ruins of that ancient city. Ramsay also checked out 95 geographical details in the book of Acts and found that Luke was again accurate in every instance. Luke’s history is accurate and we can say without fear of contradiction that Jesus went about doing good!

Remember in the garden when Peter tried to protect Jesus and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus said: **“No more of this’, and he touched the man’s ear and healed him” (Lk. 22:50-51).** Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels to defend him, but he didn’t. Jesus could have ordered his followers to defend him, but he didn’t! Peter later wrote: **“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly” (1 Pet. 2:22-23).** Rome had nothing to fear from Jesus for all he did was go about doing good!

Sadly, even though Jesus only did good, he was still hated by his enemies. Jesus stated it correctly **“They hated me without reason” (Jn. 15:25).** A lamb need not be evil in order to be eaten by wolves! Jesus knew this and said: **“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (Jn. 15:20).** Sadly, Pilate ordered the death of Jesus and Nero killed thousands of innocent Christians including Peter and Paul. Imperial persecutions continued until A.D. 313 when the Edict of Milan provided religious toleration. Peter wrote this to persecuted Christians: **“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Pet. 4:12-16).**

Please remember that God rewarded Jesus for doing good, and He will also reward you for doing good. Let us therefore determine to be like Jesus and go about doing good!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce

