

Little Words

Rick Railston

Recorded April 22, 2017

Let's turn to 2 Timothy 3 and verse 16, a very familiar scripture. It is the foundation of what we're going to talk about today. We know this by heart. When we came into the church, this foundational scripture caused us to study God's word. It says:

2 Timothy 3:16. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (KJV)*

Now, "inspiration of God," this the only time in the Bible this phrase occurs. The Greek word for "inspiration" is Strong's #2315. It's the Greek word *Theópneustos*. It's spelled "T-h-e-o," which we know stands for God; "T-h-e-o-p-n-e-u" and "*pneu*" is a form of *pneuma*, which can mean wind, or to breathe or to blow hard; and then "u- s-t-o-s."

So, the parts of this word in Greek tell us why the NIV translated this verse as *All scripture is God breathed*, coming from the very mouth of God. All of understand this. It isn't anything new for any of us. The entire Bible, we know is divinely inspired, but how often do we consider that every single word is divinely inspired? How often do we think about that?

So many little words occur in the Bible that we easily read over quickly. I'll have to admit I've done so for decades. You just read right over them. Then, you come back ten years later, look at the same verse and say, "How could I have missed that?" These little words that we read over are often considered unnecessary to the story flow. We ask, "Why are they there? What did God have in mind?" Yet, God inspired them and they are there for a reason. So, what we're going to do today is look at a few of these little words, exclusively in the book of Acts. We're going to go through some of the book of Acts today to look at some of these little words. We will see that each one of these little words glorifies God, and further, that these little words actually prove that the Bible is true. As a result, we can have absolute certainty that every word we read in the Bible is true. As we look in the book of Acts today, we will see that in every case these little words are accurate. Everything the New Testaments writers recorded is accurate and one hundred percent true. And, we can stake our lives, not only on these little words, but also on the whole of the Bible.

So, today we'll do two things. First, we'll look at a brief view of the book of Acts from two different viewpoints. We'll cover what the Church of God historically has believed and believes now about the book of Acts. Then, we'll look at a view of Acts by those who try to tear down the book of Acts. These people are religious. They teach in seminaries. First, we'll look at these two viewpoints. Secondly, we'll look in detail at twelve scriptures to see what these little words reveal to each one of us. So, the title of the sermon is:

Little Words

... because that is the focus of this sermon. And, although, on the surface little words appear irrelevant, God recorded them for a reason and we're going to see what that reason is. So, we will spend the majority of our time today in the book of Acts. First, let's look at the two versions, the two views, of the history of the book of Acts.

The church has always taught and we firmly believe that Acts was written by Luke in the mid 60s AD. approximately thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ and certainly before the death of the apostle Paul, who was killed in the late 60s AD. We believe that Luke was Paul's traveling companion and for the second half of the book of Acts, Luke traveled with Paul. Therefore, everything recorded in the second half of the book of Acts is an eyewitness report from Luke. We believe that.

However, not everyone thinks that way. Let me quote from a book; the title of the book is Paul and Jesus: How the Apostle Transformed Christianity. It's written by a man named James D. Tabor. Let me just read from the introduction. Don't waste your time reading the book, but let me read from the introduction to show you the approach of this book.

Scholars have usually dated Luke and Acts to the 90s AD, but a number of scholars have convincingly argued more recently for a date well into the second century AD.

He's promoting the idea that the book of Acts was written a hundred years after the events actually occurred. A footnote to the introduction cited in the book, says:

... which convincingly demonstrates that the author of Acts is writing in the early second century. The anonymous work ...

He's claiming Acts is written by an anonymous author.

The anonymous work is not written by Paul's otherwise obscure traveling companion...

This obviously refers to Luke. I don't see how anybody that can read can say that Luke is somehow "obscure" in the New Testament.

The anonymous work is not written by Paul's otherwise obscure traveling companion, but shows every evidence of being a pseudonymous literary production typical of the times.

Meaning whoever wrote the book of Acts used the name "Luke" as a pseudonym and that was common during the second century AD. This author claims that the book of Acts is a fraud. It was written a hundred years after the fact—not by Luke—and it was made up.

Now, there is another group of people called The Acts Seminar. They are very similar to The Jesus Seminar. The Jesus Seminar deconstructs the Bible and minimizes Christ's life. The Acts Seminar does the same thing about the book of Acts. They had a meeting in 2013 and this is the summary of their meeting. I'm quoting from their writings.

Acts was written in the early decades of the second century. The author of Acts used the letters of Paul as a source to create a believable itinerary for Paul's journeys throughout the Mediterranean.

The anonymous author used Paul's letters to create something that was believable but not true. Going on:

Except for the letters of Paul, no other historically reliable source can be identified for Acts.

What about the author? What about the eyewitness Luke? They dismiss Luke. Going on:

Acts can no longer be considered an independent source for the life and mission of Paul.

This is another point they made:

Contrary to Acts chapters 1 through 7, Jerusalem was not the birthplace of Christianity.

So contrary to what was said in those first seven chapters, Jerusalem isn't where the church began. Going on; now we come to the nitty-gritty.

Acts constructs its story on the model of epic literature [meaning Greek mythology]. The author of Acts created names for characters as story-telling devices and constructs its story to fit ideological goals.

These are religious people or claim to be religious people, claim to be religious scholars, and they're saying the whole book is a fraud. One of the authors of The Acts Seminar Report, a man named Tyson, said:

Acts succeeded in creating a charter myth for the young Jesus Movement.

Acts is all a myth, an invented myth. Another one of the authors, a man named Smith, added—and I'm quoting him now:

Acts is a narrative so powerful, so effective that Luke benefits from following this model. It is good storytelling.

So, we have to ask ourselves: Which is it? Is it God inspired and God-breathed? Or is it a fable of men?

We have two options as far as the author of the book of Acts:

1. It was written by Luke, an eyewitness to much of what happened, and God divinely inspired every word that Luke wrote down, including the following events:

- The account of the resurrected Christ; remember Christ came back, promised the disciples that they would receive the holy spirit, and then, He ascended up into the sky.
- While the apostles watched Christ ascend up into the sky, two angels were there saying, "Christ will return the same way He went up."
- And, there is the account of Pentecost where flames of fire came on the tops of the apostles' heads.
- The account of the incredible early growth of the church.
- The miraculous conversion of Saul—the church's greatest persecutor.
- The fact that salvation was offered to the Gentiles and not just to the Jews.

We believe that God inspired every word Luke wrote down so that we can believe every word in the New Testament, every word in the book of Acts, and every word in the book of Luke.

2. The other option is that some "Church Father," who maybe had access to some of Paul's letters, fabricated a firsthand account, purported it to be true, and wrote it a hundred years after the actual events occurred hoping to win converts for Christianity by writing a good story, making Paul a hero.

It's one or the other. Which is it? We have to decide.

How can we know, as God's people? Should we just blindly believe and then hope it's true? Is that what God wants us to do? Or, did God leave clues in supposedly unnecessary small words that prove His word is true? Those clues are there for us to dig out. They have been there since they were written.

So, what we're going to do now is look at twelve scriptures in the book of Acts to see what these little tiny words reveal and to see if these little tiny words are there for a reason. And, do these little tiny words prove the authenticity of the book of Acts and prove the fact that Luke was the author indeed?

We know from the Bible that Luke was a physician, a doctor. Paul calls Luke "the beloved physician" in Colossians 4:14. As we're going to see, Luke was probably a better historian than he was even a doctor. We're about to see Luke has an eye for incredible detail. In recounting the events that he personally saw or that he was told directly by the apostles, Luke includes little details that could only be recounted from an

eyewitness and these could not be made up. They had to be from an eyewitness who experienced these things firsthand.

We're also going to see that each one of these nuanced little details are recorded in the book of Acts seemingly for no reason because they have no bearing on the story, no bearing on the immediate report Luke gives. They don't affect the underlying story at all. Yet, we're going to see that God in His wisdom put these little words there for a specific reason—so that we can go back and prove that everything that is said is one hundred percent accurate. Luke was the author to the book of Acts, as well as an eyewitness to many of the events he recorded. We can stake our lives on that—our very lives—that everything Luke wrote is absolutely true.

Let's look at these twelve scriptures. As we go through them, please ask yourself, : Is what I'm reading recorded by an eyewitness? Or, is what I'm reading recorded by someone who made this up one hundred years down the road after the fact? Ask those questions as we go through these twelve scriptures.

1. Acts 14, verse 8.

Paul and Luke are in Lystra. I'm going to read this out of the New King James Version.

Acts 14:8. *And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked.*

9) This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

10) said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

11) Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" (NKJV)

We see here that Paul performed an incredible miracle and Luke tells, "I was right there. I saw it with my own eyes. Yet, notice the author throws something in there that is not necessary to the account. That is, they spoke "in the Lycaonian language." Luke says that the citizens of Lystra spoke Lycaonian—not Latin, not Greek, not Aramaic. They spoke in the language of the Lycaonians. Why would Luke put that there? Or, conversely, why would somebody writing a hundred years after the fact even think about putting it there?

We know from archaeological findings, archaeological evidence that Lystra, despite being Hellenized (meaning being taken over by the Greeks and adopting Greek culture) and despite being a cosmopolitan city, they kept their own language, not Greek and later not Roman. They spoke in Lycaonian. They didn't speak Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. We know that from archaeological evidence.

How would the author of Acts know that fact in the first place unless he was actually there? And why would somebody a hundred years later even bother to make that statement? Why would he or she do that? They wouldn't. That's the point.

2. Acts 16:11.

Here, Paul and Luke are sailing from Troas to Philippi.

Acts 16:11. *Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;
12) And from [there] to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. (KJV)*

There are two points to this verse that we need to consider.

The first is Luke gives the exact sailing route from Troas to Philippi. That is the common sailing route and it is well documented in history. He mentions Neapolis as Philippi's main port and this is attested by archaeological findings, by writings, by inscriptions. That's the first thing.

The second point is Luke calls Philippi a Roman colony. Why would Luke include that? It's not germane to the story but he says it's a Roman colony. Several first century sources mention the privileges that Philippi enjoyed because they were, indeed, a Roman colony. They operated under Roman law, which is documented. Also, because Philippi was a colony, they were exempt from paying taxes, which they enjoyed. And, its citizens were citizens of Rome. That is all historically documented.

Now, why would a writer one hundred years later put these little words in after the fact? The direct sailing route? He could have just said, "They sailed from here to there." Or, "They landed here," not even mentioning the route. It seems more likely he would do that because he was writing one hundred years down the road.

And, why would a later writer give details of the fact that Philippi was a colony? He wouldn't do that. He would just gloss over these details, but an eyewitness wouldn't. An eyewitness would give the details. And, God inspired Luke to have a very detailed eye and to write the details down. God also inspired Luke to have a very detailed memory and to write it down.

3. Acts 16:14.

Paul and Luke next went to Thyatira, verse 14.

Acts 16:14. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, [and] she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. (KJV)*

Here's a little note, "a seller of purple." Archaeologists have found at least seven inscriptions in the city of Thyatira noting it was a center for dying wool, especially purple wool and crimson wool. Again, why would somebody writing a hundred years later even put that in? They would not, but Luke included these words at God's inspiration to let us know that Luke's account is authentic by these little words, by these little details.

4. Acts 17, verse 1.

Paul and Luke are in Thessalonica.

Acts 17:1. *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: (KJV)*

Verse 5:

5) But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6) And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, these that have turned the world upside down are come [here] also; (KJV)

There is this little phrase "rulers of the city." The Greek word for "rulers," we would say in English is *politarches*. It means *an officer, or a magistrate or a ruler of a city*.

Further, The History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff says this:

This was a very rare title for magistrates [politarches] and might easily be confounded with the more usual designation politarch. But Luke's accuracy has been confirmed by an inscription still legible on an archway in Thessalonica giving the names of seven politarches who ruled before the visit of Paul.

He said "rulers of the city," plural. There were seven. Luke uses a different word than what is common. And, here is this little word that opens up the understanding that Luke had to be there at that time because of those who were governing at the time this incident occurred.

Now this would be almost impossible to know one hundred years later. And, why would somebody writing one hundred years later even include it. It has absolutely no bearing on the account, but it proves the accuracy of Luke's writing and Luke's observation. God inspired it to be there.

5. Acts 17, verse 16.

Paul and Luke are on a journey to Athens, verse 16.

Acts 17:16. *Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.*

17) Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18) Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, what will this babbler say? ... (KJV)

It's interesting that this would be quoted in the first place. And, how could somebody writing a hundred years later even quote this? Yet, in that day and time, this word translated as "babblers" was an Athenian slang term that they applied to Paul. This word has a very interesting definition.

The Greek word for "babblers" is Strong's #4691 and it's the Greek word *spermologos*, *logos* being "word." When you first read this definition, it kind of blows your mind. It means *a seed-picker*. What? I'm quoting Strong's, "*a seed picker (as the crow), i.e. [that is] (figuratively) ... (specifically, a gossip or trifier in talk)*". Now Expositor's Bible Commentary gives the background for this word.

A word originally used of birds picking up grain; then, of scrap collectors searching for junk ...

They would pick up scraps—*spermologos*.

... then, extended to those who snapped up ideas of others and peddled them as their own without understanding them.

That's what they were accusing Paul of doing, being a *spermologos*, grabbing up the ideas of others ideas and spewing them out without even understanding them.

Now, we have to stop and ask the question: How could somebody one hundred years down the road, be aware of the slang term? Because we know that slang terms popular today didn't even exist fifty years ago. And, a slang term today probably won't exist in ten or twenty years down the road either. So, how would somebody writing a hundred years later know of an Athenian slang term? The point is he wouldn't. Only an eyewitness would.

6. Acts 18, verse 12.

I'll read this out of the New King James. Paul and Luke are now in Corinth.

Acts 18:12. *When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat,*

13) saying, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law." (NKJV)

Luke mentions here that Gallio was the proconsul. Why didn't Luke just say, "The proconsul of Achaia said this or that?" Or, "A ruler said this or that," or "A magistrate said this or that"? But Luke records the man's name. Gallio is documentable in archaeology. A letter was found at the temple of Delphi dated 52 AD and written by Roman Emperor Claudius that says "Gallio, my friend and proconsul." This little phrase, which mentions Gallio's name, tells us when Luke recorded this event and when it occurred. Someone writing a hundred years later couldn't do that.

7. Acts 19, verse 8

Paul and Luke are in Ephesus. The more you read these phrases it just astounds you how great God's brilliance is that He would inspire Luke to include these little words. And, we're here two thousand years later picking them up. Verse 8:

Acts 19:8. *And he (referring to Paul) went into the synagogue, and [spoke] boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.
9) But when ... (KJV)*

The King James says "divers." It means *different people*.

9b) ... were hardened, and believed not, but [spoke] evil of that way ... (KJV)

And, as we know, Christianity is a way of life.

9 continued) ... [they spoke] evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10) And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. (KJV)

Here again we have a little word, a little phrase—"the school of Tyrannus." Why not just say, "Paul reasoned daily with the people." That happens in other places, "He reasoned daily with the people." Somebody a hundred years down the road would probably say that without giving details. Today, you can go to the ruins of Ephesus to see an inscription in a large complex identifying it as "The School of Tyrannus." It was real. It was there and it proves Luke was there and it proves the timing of it there.

8. Acts 19, verse 23

Paul and Luke are still in Ephesus.

Acts 19:23. *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. (KJV)*

The way of God, the way of Christ. Verse 24:

24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; (KJV)

What they would do is build small shrines similar to those that Catholics have in their homes, but this was a shrine unto Diana made out of silver. And, of course, at the temple, these silversmiths would be hocking their wares. They would say, "This is authorized by Diana. If you take this home, then Diana is present in your home and you can kneel before this shrine to worship Diana." So, the silversmiths made a lot of money doing that. Verse 25:

25) Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, [you] know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26) Moreover [you] see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul [has] persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, ... (KJV)

"That these shrines we're making are not gods."

26 continued) ... which are made with hands:

27) So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at [nothing]; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world [worships]. (KJV)

And, by the way, worships today under different names. Verse 28:

28) And when they (these silversmiths, who were making all this money) heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29) And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre (yelling and screaming). (KJV)

Now, we find another little set of words—"rushed with one accord into the theater." What does that have to do with anything? The author could have simply said, "They created this great disturbance." Here the author mentions something that is unnecessary by saying "The citizens rushed into the theater." Why not just say, "The whole city was filled with confusion." Or, "The whole city was upset against Paul and they seized Gaius and Aristarchus." But God wanted this phrase included—"rushed into the theater." God wanted this recorded so that it could be verified down the road.

The Ephesian theater was a meeting place of the city. And, it has been confirmed by archaeological evidence, inscriptions on stone, from at least AD 104. The University of Washington paid for excavations at Ephesus and they wrote a report. Let me quote from the report of the University of Washington.

This theater was used for large meetings of the entire city population. Festivals like the annual procession of the city's goddess, Artemis, and any other large gathering. It is likely that this theater was the site of the mob protest against Paul reported in Acts 19.

This is a college publication. These little words show that Luke was there. The theater was there. Luke was there. Archaeology tells us the theater was there. But why include this phrase? It's not germane where the people went to do their rioting when upset, but God saw that it was included so that we could know what Luke wrote was the absolute truth.

9. Acts 19, verse 35

We're continuing with the same account. I'll read this out of the New King James.

Acts 19:35. *And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, ... (NKJV)*

This was the crowd that rushed into the theater.

35) ... he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? (NKJV)

That's all according to Greek mythology.

36) Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

37) For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

38) Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls (plural). Let them bring charges against one another. (NKJV)

Now, notice. We talk about every word in the Bible being inspired. What about every letter? Verse 38 mentions "proconsuls" rather than "proconsul." If we believe God, we believe every word and every letter are inspired. In verse 38, "proconsuls" is plural not singular. And, we have to ask the question, "Why did God cause that?" Let me read from the book entitled I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist (a very good title) by Geisler and Turek.

The use of the plural "anthúpatoí" is a remarkable reference to the fact that at that precise time, the fall of 54 AD, two men were co-jointly exercising the functions of proconsul because their predecessor, Silanus, had been murdered.

So, two men took his place. Luke said "proconsuls." How easy it is for us just to read over that. What is the difference—counsels, counsel? And, you just go on through.

Yet, this little letter, not a word, but this little letter "s" proves when Acts was written. And, it proves there was an eyewitness who wrote it—not some person a hundred years later dreaming this up.

10. Acts 21, verse 30

Paul and Luke are now in Jerusalem. Once again, Paul is in trouble. As you go through this, you see all the trouble Paul had. We think we have problems; Paul had many problems.

Acts 21:30. *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. (KJV)*

Now Paul is out in the court, outside the temple. The doors are shut. They don't want Paul going in that temple because he was creating too many problems. Verse 31:

31) And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, ... (KJV)

I'm reading out of the King James. The New King James reads, *commander of the garrison*. The Greek word is "*chiliarch*." So, the chief captain of the band, or the commander of the garrisons—we'll get into the word "*chiliarch*" in a minute.

*31b) ... came to [him and said] that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.
32) Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, ... (KJV)*

Now, notice this.

32b) ... and ran down unto them: ... (KJV)

We'll come back to that.

32 continued) ... and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. (KJV)

They stopped beating Paul. Verse 33:

*33) Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.
34) And some cried one thing, some another, ... (KJV)*

It was just a riot going on.

34) *And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.*

35) *And when he came upon the stairs, ... (KJV)*

More little words.

35b) *... so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.*

36) *For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him. (KJV)*

Meaning, kill him; we don't want him here.

Now let me read from the Elliott Commentary.

On the word for "chief captain," literally *chiliarch* or captain of one thousand men [which is what it means], they were stationed in the tower known as Antonia, built by Herod the Great, which stood on the northwest side of the temple area on a rock with a turret at each corner...

Herod built this so that his soldiers could be on posts on top of the tower and could look down on the courtyard of the temple at all times. From atop the tower, the soldiers could see if the Jews were causing any trouble such as talking against Rome, starting a riot against Rome, or whatever it might be. This resembles the forts in West Texas where there is a turret on each corner, and the soldiers can look around and see what's going on. This was exactly what had happened.

... with a turret at each corner and two flights of stairs leading to the arcades on the northern and western sides of the temple.

So, the Roman soldiers could quickly get down from the towers, get onto the temple grounds, and stop some kind of insurrection. Going on from the Elliott Commentary:

The Roman garrison was obviously stationed there to command the crowds of pilgrims ...

Meaning, the soldiers had a commanding view to be able to keep things in order.

... and was likely to be on the alert at a time like the Pentecost feast.

Now, let's stop here and ask these questions. If you were writing a hundred years later, how do you know where the soldiers were stationed? And, how do you know specifically the relation with the temple because the temple had been destroyed for over a hundred years? Or, the fact that there were stairs to run down or stairs for Paul to be taken up? Why would somebody writing a hundred years later even bring up stairs? The author could get the point across without bringing up stairs saying that the troops went down and carrying Paul up because of the riot. Why would somebody writing a hundred years

later even include these details? These little words are included because only an eyewitness would bring them out.

11. Acts 27, verse 13

Acts 27 talks about sailing and we'll read some comments about that shortly for scripture number 11 and number 12. Acts 27:13, out of the New King James, Paul and Luke are setting sail.

Acts 27:13. *When the south wind blew softly, ... (NKJV)*

Why include "the south wind blew softly"?

Acts 27:13. *When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea, ... (NKJV)*

Meaning, the wind was coming from the right direction. That way they could put out to sea, raise their sails, and head in the direction they want.

13b) ... they sailed close by Crete.

14) But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, ... (NKJV)

This wind came from the northeast, as we'll see.

14b) ... called Euroclydon. (NKJV)

"Euroclydon" in the Greek means *a storm from the northeast*. That's the definition. Now, Crete was a well-known travel route. It was a travel route because normally there were soft southerly breezes at that time of the year. It's documented in numerous places that was the case. It is well documented that along that route at certain times a storm coming from the northeast (a Nor'easter as it is called in New England) could occur, making sailing nearly impossible, and, if you were caught out in it, very, very dangerous.

Now, why include these details hundred years later? What's the point? Why include information about traveling? If you're writing a history of this trying to create myths, you wouldn't waste time by adding these kinds of details. Why include this detail if it was written one hundred years later? The only reason is God wanted it there. He wanted it in His word.

12. Acts 27, verse 27

This is the same sailing and, now, Paul and Luke are out in the Adriatic Sea being blown to and fro by this storm.

Acts 27:27. *But when the fourteenth night ... (KJV)*

This was the fourteenth night. They were being battered around by this storm since the storm began.

Acts 27:27. *But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria (the Adriatic Sea), about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; (KJV)*

Meaning, they thought they were near land, but it's dark and they're not sure.

*28) And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.
29) Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. (KJV)*

They hoped for daylight so they could see where they were and they wouldn't run against the rocks.

Why include sounding information? What sounding was in those days—today we have radar, undersea radar—but in those days, you would have a big, thick rope with a large heavy weight at the bottom. The rope was marked off in lengths. The sounder would stand at the side of the ship, drop this rope down, and when the big weight hit the bottom, the rope would go slack. So, the sounder would pull up the rope to see where the water hit the rope. That was his sounding. That was the depth of the water at that particular place.

Now, a fathom is six feet. So, twenty fathoms would be one hundred twenty feet; fifteen fathoms would be ninety feet. Guess what the depth of the water near Malta is? Between ninety and a hundred twenty feet. To the foot!

Let me read from The History of the Christian Church, volume I, by Philip Schaff. He's writing about Acts 27, which both scripture number 11 and number 12 also refer to this sailing. Philip Schaff says this and I want you to notice this.

This chapter contains more information about ancient navigation than any work of Greek or Roman literature.

Think about that.

... and betrays the minute accuracy of an intelligent eyewitness who, although not a professional seaman, was very familiar with nautical terms from close observation. He uses no less than sixteen technical terms, some of them very rare, to describe the motion and management of a ship, and all of them, most appropriately. He is strictly correct in the descriptions of the localities at Crete, Salmone, Fair Havens, Clauda, Lasea, and Phoenix. The latter two are small places just recently identified....

So, somebody writing a hundred years later wouldn't even know those last two. Schaff goes on.

... and Malta, as well as the motions and effects of the tempestuous northeast wind in the Mediterranean.

Notice what Schaff says in concluding:

Monumental and scientific evidence outweighs critical conjectures ...

Critical conjectures like this Acts Seminar.

Monumental and scientific evidence outweighs critical conjectures and is an irresistible vindication of the historical accuracy and credibility of Luke.

Now, how could this be forged, dreamed up one hundred years after the fact? And, why would such details be included one hundred years after the fact? They wouldn't. They just simply wouldn't—and to have such precision. So, God, by including these little words, proves to us that what Luke wrote is true. The book of Acts is indeed true.

We have just seen twelve scriptures that have provable facts in them—little tiny words in them. The classical scholar and Roman historian Colin Hermer wrote a book called The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History. He identifies eighty-four facts in the last sixteen chapters of the book of Acts, all of which have been confirmed by historical research and archaeological research.

Again, we have to go back and ask the question we asked in the beginning: What is more likely?

That some unknown author used the pseudonym of Luke and was able to recreate all of this details a hundred years after the fact down to the most minute little detail and using these little words—many unnecessary to the telling of the story—knowing that if one was wrong, he would be discredited entirely. If any of these turned out to be wrong and he's writing a hundred years down the road, he could be discredited. The point is you wouldn't do that. You wouldn't give these details, especially if you were making them up because historians and archaeologists down the road could discredit you.

Or, you must conclude that this is actual eyewitness testimony by Luke.

You can't have it both ways. Which is it? And, which is the most logical? Even to an unconverted mind, which is the most logical? The answer is obvious. Luke was an eyewitness to these events. He recorded what he saw; he recorded what he was told, and what he experienced in incredible detail. The only viable answer is that Luke is a credible, believable accurate historian. And, as I said, he was probably a better historian than he was a doctor.

So, if this is true of these twelve scriptures in the book of Acts that Luke was accurate, credible, and believable, then, we must view all of Acts the same way. It's the same author, the same accuracy, the same detail, and we can stake our lives on it—things such as the resurrection of a human being.

Let's go to Acts 20 and begin in verse 7. I'm going to read this out of the NIV. If all of the details that we've covered each one have been proven true, then, what we're going to read must also be true.

Acts 20:7. *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*

8) *There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.*

9) *Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on.... (NIV)*

It's interesting here that Luke tells us "Read between the lines." Paul rambles on here when maybe he could have cut it shorter.

9b) *...Paul talked on and on. When he (Eutychus) was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.*

10) *Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"*

11) *Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. (NIV)*

We think services are long here! Verse 12:

12) *The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted. (NIV)*

Based on everything we've talked about today, the only conclusion we can draw is this actually happened! God through Paul resurrected this young man who fell asleep and fell to his death.

Yet, understand it's not just the book of Acts. We can believe everything that's in the book of Acts, but it's more than the book of Acts. We can stake our faith, our belief, and our certainty on the gospel of Luke also. Let's go to Acts 1:1 back to the beginning of this writing. Notice what Luke says here because it leads to his gospel. There is a connection. Acts 1, verse 1, I'll read it out of the New King James.

Acts 1:1. *The former account I made, ... (NKJV)*

This refers to the gospel of Luke.

1b) O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
2) until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,
3) to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (NKJV)

These two words "infallible proofs" are found only here in the Bible. It means *criterion of certainty*. This is the criterion of certainty—infallible proofs.

Now, Luke wrote the book of Acts for Theophilus. We'll see who he is shortly. Luke wrote this so Theophilus can know exactly what happened in the New Testament church. There is a record and Luke sent this record to Theophilus. Luke was an eyewitness to so much of what went on in the early New Testament church. And, Luke talked to the other disciples to get the exact details of what he had not seen with his own eyes.

Yet, this is not just about the book of Acts. If we are left with no other conclusion than to realize that Luke is one hundred percent accurate in what he wrote, then we must not only accept the book of Acts as being one hundred percent accurate but also the gospel of Luke as being one hundred percent accurate. Let's go to Luke 1 and verse 1 to see the connection with Theophilus.

Luke 1:1. *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (KJV)*

So, Luke talked to the other disciples. Therefore, Luke can say, "What I'm going to tell you is 'most surely believed among us,'" because there were many eyewitnesses.
Verse 2:

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, ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for "perfect" means *accurate or precise*. Perfect (accurate, precise) understanding, continuing in verse 3:

3b) *... to write unto [you] in order, most excellent Theophilus, (KJV)*

That's the King James Version. The Greek for "most excellent" is *very honorable or most noble*. We would say today, "Your Excellency." Apparently, although nobody knows for sure, Theophilus was a high-ranking Roman official. Otherwise, why would Luke say that?

Let's go on in verse 4. Why did he write this gospel of Luke?

4) that [you might] know the certainty of those things, wherein [you have] been instructed. (KJV)

So, Luke says, "I'm writing a history of Jesus Christ so Theophilus can have certainty of what actually happened." Luke wanted Theophilus to know the things he had been taught actually truthfully happened. And, like Theophilus, we can have certainty that what Luke wrote in the book of Acts and what he wrote in his gospel account happened. It was real. It was accurately described. It is there for us today, and, by the way, it is provable.

Also, by the way—I just found out this fact yesterday. Over fifty figures from the Bible have been confirmed archaeologically. That information is from the March/April 2014 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review, proof that these people existed, proof that they were there.

When we started this sermon, we began by our understanding that we believe all scripture is God-breathed, every single word, and as we've seen, even every single letter. It was specifically inspired by God for a reason.

And, we looked at twelve scriptures, twelve examples of words, that when you casually read them appear totally unnecessary. These are not there to add anything to the flow of the story. They could be eliminated and the lessons learned would still be there. These words appear to be unnecessary, but when we take a deeper look, these little words prove in the case of the book of Acts that Acts is true and provably true. It was written by an eyewitness, by a master historian named Luke. And, if Luke is accurate and that precise when he wrote the book of Acts, guess what? Luke is just as accurate and just as precise in his gospel account of the life of Christ.

Therefore, Luke was inspired by God to write these little words, which are there for our benefit. So that by investigating these little words, we may know the words written in the Bible are true and accurate. And, God gives us these little words to help us determine and prove without any doubt so that we can stake our lives on these words. Let's be thankful for God's "little words."