

# WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION

*Life and Times of Early Disciples*



***Welcome to the class series titled “WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION ~LIFE AND TIMES OF EARLY DISCIPLES.” How many times have you said: “I wished Jesus walked the earth when I lived. I would really be impacted in my faith more profoundly if that were the case.” This class is intended to close that gap by taking an in-depth look at various characters of the NT, and how they were impacted by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.***

## What Has Gone Before...

*We have studied a number of people so far:*

- John the Baptist
- Mary, mother of Jesus
- John son of Zebedee
- Nicodemus
- Mary of Magdala
- Thomas
- Judas Iscariot
- James, brother of Jesus
- Stephen
- Philip the Evangelist
- Barnabas
- **And next in the series...**

## Luke the Physician!



\* There is not a lot said about Luke in the Bible, but as you will see, there is a lot to glean from what we do have available.

\* I encourage you to go do your own personal study, as this class is just an overview.

# Outline

1. Background
2. Travels
3. Writing Style & Method
  - A. Method
  - B. Theophilus
  - C. Mary
  - D. **Paul**
  - E. **Cast of Others**
4. Lessons

## Background

- Three references in the Bible (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phm. 24)
- Luke was a doctor, and beloved:
  - *Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. (Col 4:14)*
- He traveled with Paul, Timothy, Mark, and others:
  - *Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers (Phm 1:24)*

## Background

- He was from Antioch.
- He was either a Jew of the Diaspora or a Gentile (maybe a convert to Judaism based on evidence of knowledge of the Septuagint (LXX)).
- Some traditions say he was a painter.

## Travels

- You can follow Luke's travels in Acts by noting the change of pronouns:
  - *Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him...After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Act 16:1-2,10)*



- Part of the Second Missionary Journey
  - Acts 16:10 - Troas->Samathrace->Neapolis->Philippi - Acts 16:40
- Latter Portion of the Third Missionary Journey
  - Acts 20:6 ->Macedonia->Troas->Miletus->Tyre->Jerusalem->Acts 21:17
- Stayed in/near Jerusalem for a while.
- Journey to Rome
  - Acts 27:1->Jerusalem->Up over Cyprus->Myra->Hugged the coast to Crete->Malta->Rome->Acts 28



## Writing Style/Method



- Luke was not a witness to the resurrection himself but, as you will see, he was the next best thing: a WITNESS of the witnesses of the resurrection.
- Luke got to get first hand accounts from a number of people who saw the risen Christ.
- There is a lot of value to that, because Luke was in the position that we are.

## Writing Style/Method

- Author of two books: Gospel of Luke and Acts (sometimes referred to as Luke-Acts).
- Makes up 25% of the NT.
- Written before the siege of Jerusalem (which was 70 A.D.), in the 60s A.D.
- The style of Greek used in these writings are a more formal and **higher form of Greek**.
- **If Luke was a Gentile, then he is the only Gentile author in the NT.**

## Writing Style/Method, Luke

- His focus was to *"carefully investigate everything from the beginning,"* in order *"to write an orderly account."* (Luke 1:3)
  - Took care to get events in chronological order.
  - He interviewed a number of people.
  - Geographical details.
- Marginalized people/outcasts (e.g. the poor, Samaritans, women) were an emphasis of his gospel.
  - Good Samaritan (ch 10)
  - Ten lepers (ch 17).

\*\*\*\*\*READ THE FIRST FEW VERSES OF LUKE.\*\*\*\*\*

Sinners and outcasts

- Pharisee and the tax collector, Zacchaeus, penitent thief

## Writing Style/Method, Luke

- Women and their stories were referenced 45 times in his gospel, including:
  - Jesus' genealogy traced through Mary.
  - Women who supported Jesus financially (Luke 8:2-3).
  - Birth of Jesus and John the Baptist told from women's POV.
- 18 parables are unique to his gospel, including:
  - **Good Samaritan**
  - **Lost Sheep**
  - **Prodigal Son**

## Writing Style/Method, Acts

- The sequel to Luke.
- Begins with the Ascension, and ends with Paul in Rome.
- Orderly, chronological account.
  - Acts 1:8 – The book of Acts has that flow: Jerusalem->Judea->Samaria->the world.
- May have been written to prove that Christianity wasn't a threat to the Roman empire.
  - Paul was in Rome on house arrest defending the faith to Roman officials.
- The Spirit is mentioned 57 times! (He's also mentioned 15 times in Luke).

\*\*\*\*\*READ THE FIRST 8 VERSES OF ACTS\*\*\*\*\*

# Theophilus

- Who is this Theophilus fellow, anyway?
  - Actual Person
    - "Most Excellent" (Luke 1:3): Formal greeting for someone of importance, e.g., government official.
    - A paying Patron.
  - All Christians
    - Theophilus means "*lover of God.*"
    - Written to edify the believers.

# Mary

- Details connected to Mary in Luke's gospel:
  - Jesus' genealogy through Mary.
  - Gabriel's visit to Mary and Elizabeth.
  - Mary visits Elizabeth.
  - Story of the birth of John the Baptist.
  - Mary's Song and Elizabeth's Song.
  - The shepherds.
  - Simeon.
  - Mary "treasured all these things in her heart" (2:19, 53)

## Paul

- Scholars who believe Luke was Jewish think they may have crossed paths, since Antioch and Tarsus are so close.
- Traveling companion of Paul for a large portion of his missionary travels.
- Possible influence on Luke's writings?
  - Paul was the Apostle to the **Gentiles**, Luke's gospel is Gentile friendly.



## Cast of Others

- Crossed paths with many people:
  - Peter
  - Matthew & Mark
    - Synoptic gospel stories (e.g. baptism of Jesus, John the Baptist's ministry & imprisonment, Peter's confession, Transfiguration, etc.).
  - John son of Zebedee
  - James, brother of Jesus
  - Other surviving apostles
  - Cleopas? (Luke 24: Road to Emmaus)
  - The 500 witnesses?
  - Others?

## Lessons & Summary

- God will use all kinds of people to do His will.
- Reliance on God and the Spirit is paramount to doing His will.
- God cares about the poor, needy, and disenfranchised.
- God wants the world saved!

- God will use all kinds of people to do His will.
  - Luke was just one of people of many backgrounds used to author the Bible, and you can see both God's overall message and Luke's own individual touch.
  - God can and will use you, if you only let Him.
- Reliance on God and the Spirit is paramount to doing His will.
  - You see through Luke and Acts all of the prayers, parables and stories about prayer, and acts of the Spirit that show how important using God's strength is. Is this an area where you can improve?
- God cares about the poor, needy, and disenfranchised.
  - Will you help the homeless, the drug abusers, and prostitutes?
- God wants the world saved!
  - Luke 15 is a chapter devoted to this specifically. Acts is a book about this very thing. Is this the theme of the book of your life? A chapter? A sentence?

**Thank You. Go Get Your Children.**



