



Resurrection Sunday

Summary and Goal

The women who were the first witnesses to the resurrection received some shocking news: Jesus is not here, He has risen! They were reminded that Jesus told them He must first pay the cost: His betrayal and death were necessary. As we celebrate this Easter, we know that God is glorified through our suffering. Because Jesus is alive, we can live fearlessly for God, no matter the cost.

Main Passages

Luke 24:1-12

Session Outline

1. Compelled to Holy Living (Luke 24:1-12)
2. Compelled to Good Works (Eph. 2:10)
3. Compelled to Announce the Gospel (Luke 24:9-10; Matt. 28:18-20)

Theological Theme

The good news of the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Christ hinges upon the resurrection of Christ.

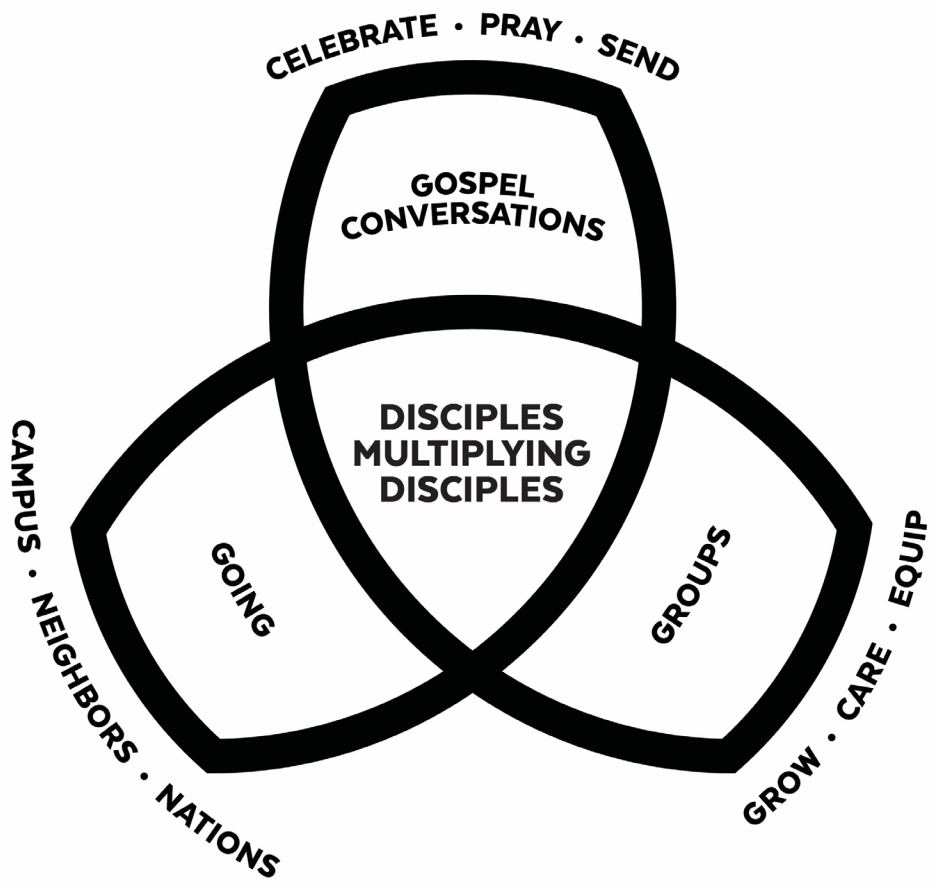
Christ Connection

Jesus lived a perfectly obedient and sinless life, His death upon the cross was effective for sinners, He was able to bear up under the wrath of God the Father against sin, and the grave could not hold Him. He is risen indeed!

Missional Application

The truth of the resurrection compels Christians to live holy lives, do good works, and announce the gospel to all nations on earth.

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



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Session Plan

Resurrection Sunday

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever heard of “Good Samaritan” laws? What do you know about them?
- ❓ Why would it be wrong to withhold reasonable help to someone in need when it is within your power to help?

Good Samaritan laws codify the biblical principle that right behavior isn't only avoiding wrong action, but it is also doing what is right. Good behavior, biblically speaking, is a two-sided coin. It is both avoiding sin and doing good works. The gospel of Jesus Christ compels us to be faithful in completing both sides of the coin.

1. Compelled to Holy Living (Luke 24:1-12)

When Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James heard the news of Christ's resurrection it had a profound impact on them. It changed the way they saw the world and it changed their plans. This was also true for Peter, who got up and ran to the tomb.

- ❓ How would you describe Jesus' life? How was Jesus' life connected to the reality of the resurrection?
- ❓ What does it mean for them to live holy lives if they have already been made holy by Christ's death on their behalf?
- ❓ Application: What sort of feelings does the fact that you were “ransomed . . . with the precious blood of Christ” produce in you? How might that help you flee from sin?

2. Compelled to Good Works (Eph. 2:10)

The resurrection of Christ Jesus led not only to rejoicing among His followers, but also obeying. The commands that Christ had given His disciples when He was with them became more than helpful axioms. Now, they understood fully, they had received the word of God from the mouth of God incarnate. They were compelled by Christ's resurrection to do the good works that He had commanded.

- ❓ Why did Jesus do good works? How should this motivate us to good works in light of the resurrection?
- ❓ How does the resurrection and the truth of the gospel change the reason why we pursue good works in life?
- ❓ Application: What good works in your life are evidence of your belief in the resurrection? How does this challenge you?

3. Compelled to Announce the Gospel (Luke 24:9-10; Matt. 28:18-20)

The witness of the women to the disciples of the empty tomb was a foreshadowing of what would become the primary mission of the church until today. In Matthew 28 and Acts 1, Jesus gives the explicit command to preach the gospel to all nations.

- ❓ What did the women do after receiving the news that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead?
- ❓ How are all Christians called to respond in the same way as the women who went to the tomb that first Easter Sunday?
- ❓ Application: With whom have you had a gospel conversation over the past month? What prevents you from sharing the gospel with others? How does the joy that you possess in Christ help you overcome those obstacles?

Conclusion

Because of the resurrection, Christians are secure in Christ and live with a joy that only the redeemed can know. They have no fear to repent of sin and walk in holiness. They aren't afraid of doing the good works that the Scriptures command. They do not fear the rejection or opposition that will come if they faithfully witness about the gospel of Jesus Christ. They walk in obedience to and love for the One who holds their soul.

- ❓ How has the resurrection impacted your daily life?
- ❓ Are there good works that you have neglected? What are they? What can you do to remedy that sin?
- ❓ With whom can you share the gospel today? Does your love for Jesus and gratitude for His sacrifice outweigh your anxieties about explaining the gospel to someone? How might you pursue greater boldness in Him?



Expanded Session Content

Resurrection Sunday

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever heard of “Good Samaritan” laws? What do you know about them?
- ❓ Why would it be wrong to withhold reasonable help to someone in need when it is within your power to help?

Many states have laws that are a part of a particular category of legislation known as “Good Samaritan” laws. In a nutshell, these laws compel citizens to not only avoid doing harm to another person but also to not withhold reasonable help to someone in need. In the story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), the priest and the Levite didn’t harm the man who was left for dead on the side of the road. They didn’t throw punches, take his possessions, or throw him to the ground. So, they were innocent, right? Wrong. It was within their power to help and they did not. Jesus condemned their inaction, and now many states condemn that sort of inaction as well.

Good Samaritan laws codify the biblical principle that right behavior isn’t only avoiding wrong action, but it is also doing what is right. Good behavior, biblically speaking, is a two-sided coin. It is both avoiding sin and doing good works. The gospel of Jesus Christ compels us to be faithful in completing both sides of the coin.

In our study of the Scriptures today, we will consider how the resurrection of Jesus Christ compels followers of Christ to live distinct lives. Holy living, good works, and the proclamation of the gospel of the risen Savior should mark the lives of those who claim the name of Christ.

Session Summary

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that Jesus “was buried” (1 Cor. 15:4). Most, if not all, of the Christians at Corinth did not have any interaction with Jesus Christ before His ascension into heaven. Paul emphasized that the testimony they had heard and read concerning the spilled blood, skin-slicing whips, piercing thorns, and vitriolic mocking were, in fact, true.

Jesus was buried because His physical life truly expired due to the physical torture and trauma that He had endured on the Roman cross. Matthew reported that after the burial of Christ the Romans made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard (Matt. 27:66).

But that's not the end. Paul went on to say, "that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Jesus was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25)! In His resurrection, He is "the powerful Son of God" (Rom. 1:4). Jesus now has the exclusive right to say to us, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Rev. 1:17-18).

Of all people on the face of the earth, Christians have a store of hope, joy, and motivation that is unequaled. If they truly believe what the Bible says, then there is no rival to their hope-filled reality and bright future, no matter what their temporary circumstances might be. This ought to lead them to a certain kind of living that is altogether distinct from those who view the world devoid of the hope of Christ.

1. Compelled to Holy Living (Luke 24:1-12)

When Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James heard the news of Christ's resurrection it had a profound impact on them. It changed the way they saw the world and it changed their plans. This was also true for Peter, who got up and ran to the tomb.

A fundamental truth that we must keep in view is that Jesus' resurrection has implications in our lives today, right now. His death and resurrection not only deal with our broken pasts and assures our future, but it also transforms our lives now. First Peter 2:21 says, "For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."



How would you describe Jesus' life? How was Jesus' life connected to the reality of the resurrection?

There are many adjectives we could use to describe Jesus' life, but it is best to start with this one: holy. Jesus lived a holy life. In other words, Jesus lived a life that was set apart for sacred purposes, not profane. To say it clearly, Jesus did not sin. Peter went on to say, "He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). Jesus lived a sinless life. This matters for several reasons. If Jesus sinned, He wasn't God. And if Jesus sinned, He was unable to offer Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf to pay for our sin.

Sunday Morning

The world's worst Sabbath finally dragged to a close. Sundown brought a new day, the first day of the week. Now the women could fulfill their duty to Jesus and do something concrete to express their grief. But sundown brought darkness, when they could not venture outside their homes, so again they had to wait. The first rays of morning sun gave them opportunity to accomplish their task. They hurried off to the tomb where they had seen Joseph of Arimathea place Christ's body.

 What does it mean for them to live holy lives if they have already been made holy by Christ's death on their behalf?

Christians are holy in a positional sense. When they are justified upon responding to the gospel with faith and repentance, they are made to be holy and righteous in God's sight because Jesus' righteousness is credited to their account (2 Cor. 5:21). But they are not altogether holy in a practical sense. They still battle against sin and sometimes lose the battle. They succumb to the old man and disobey God's will for their lives. Christians continue to be weak even after they are saved. The Bible says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).


It may be helpful to consider the terminology "active holiness" and "passive holiness." Passive holiness is what happens to Christians. They are holy because of what Christ did on their behalf. Active holiness, however, is the war in which Christians engage in the lifelong process of sanctification.

This passage from 1 Peter 1:14-19 is helpful:

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy. If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in reverence during your time living as strangers. For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

God, in His Word, calls Christians to actively battle against sin, to "not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance." The motivating factor for this holy living is found in verse 18. Peter wrote that Christians were "redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ."


Right facts lead to right feelings. As Christians remember those right facts, then right feelings will greatly aid them in their battle against sin.

 Application: What sort of feelings does the fact that you were "ransomed . . . with the precious blood of Christ" produce in you? How might that help you flee from sin?

2. Compelled to Good Works (Eph. 2:10)


The resurrection of Christ Jesus led not only to rejoicing among His followers, but also obeying. The commands that Christ had given His disciples when He was with them became more than helpful axioms. Now, they understood fully, they had received the word of God from the mouth of God incarnate. They were compelled by Christ's resurrection to do the good works that He had commanded.

Jesus set this example Himself. He didn't spend His time on this earth simply fleeing from sin, though He certainly did no less. Jesus' life was also characterized by the good works that He did. When Peter called Christians to follow in Jesus' steps in 1 Peter 2:21, this wasn't only avoidance of sin, but also the completion of good works.

 Why did Jesus do good works? How should this motivate us to good works in light of the resurrection?

Jesus was motivated by His love for and submission to the Father. Jesus did good works because it pleased God the Father. At Jesus' baptism, God the Father spoke these words, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17). That statement was a summary of Jesus' entire life. Jesus was pleasing to God the Father in all respects because He always did good works, at the right time, with the right attitude, and for the right reasons.


This is contrasted to the motivation of many religious people who do good works. While Jesus' motivation was selfless, many people do good works for selfish reasons. A common motivation for doing good works is because a person feels that they must balance out the sins that they commit. In other words, it is a form of penance. Others complete good works thinking that then God will owe them something and bless them in some special way.

 How does the resurrection and the truth of the gospel change the reason why we pursue good works in life?

Muslims believe that at the end of their lives they will go before an eternal judgment and there will be a scale placed before them. All of their good works will be placed on one side and all of their evil deeds will be placed on the other. Whichever side weighs more will determine their eternal destiny. The Christian motivation is different. Christians will also have to face a scale, but for the Christian, the evil deeds have been removed and Jesus' righteousness is placed on their scale. Paul put it this way:


And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:13-14).

The hope and joy that Christians find in the gospel is the spark for doing good works. Their love and gratitude toward the one true and living God is the seasoned oak that keeps it burning. Paul told the Ephesians that they were created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10).


 Application: What good works in your life are evidence of your belief in the resurrection? How does this challenge you?

3. Compelled to Announce the Gospel (Luke 24:9-10; Matt. 28:18-20)

Followers of Jesus live lives of holiness (avoiding sin) and righteousness (doing good works) because of the fact of the gospel, which produces affections like joy, hope, peace, and gratitude. There is another good work that we ought to give special emphasis to in our study.

 What did the women do after receiving the news that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead?

They went and told the disciples what they had heard. They did this because this news was too amazing not to share! Their teacher and leader turned out to also truly be their Savior and the Son of God come in flesh. He had overcome the grave!

 How are all Christians called to respond in the same way as the women who went to the tomb that first Easter Sunday?

The witness of the women to the disciples of the empty tomb was a foreshadowing of what would become the primary mission of the church until today. In Matthew 28 and Acts 1, Jesus gives the explicit command to preach the gospel to all nations.

Followers of Christ ought to be compelled to go and tell the good news of Christ because they know that this is a lost world's only hope of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with their Creator. They know that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; and that no one can come to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). They also know that Christ has commanded them to be about this work. But Christians aren't compelled

only by Christ's command to preach the gospel to every tribe, tongue, and nation. They have internal motivation. They are moved and compelled to preach Christ because of the deep well of joy and contentment that they have found in Christ. They share the gospel with their neighbors because they enjoy a peace that passes understanding and they know that all people are lost in sin and need the peace that only Christ can give.

- ❓ Application: With whom have you had a gospel conversation over the past month? What prevents you from sharing the gospel with others? How does the joy that you possess in Christ help you overcome those obstacles?

Conclusion

Because of the resurrection, Christians are secure in Christ and live with a joy that only the redeemed can know. They have no fear to repent of sin and walk in holiness. They aren't afraid of doing the good works that the Scriptures command. They do not fear the rejection or opposition that will come if they faithfully witness about the gospel of Jesus Christ. They walk in obedience to and love for the One who holds their soul.

- ❓ How has the resurrection impacted your daily life?
- ❓ Are there good works that you have neglected? What are they? What can you do to remedy that sin?
- ❓ With whom can you share the gospel today? Does your love for Jesus and gratitude for His sacrifice outweigh your anxieties about explaining the gospel to someone? How might you pursue greater boldness in Him?

Prayer of Response

Close in prayer, thanking God for the reality of the resurrection. Ask Him to lead you to good works in His name as one who has been deeply impacted by the gospel.

Additional Resources

- *The Case for the Resurrection* by Lee Strobel
- *Raised?* by Jonathan Dodson and Brad Watson
- *Luke 18-24* by John MacArthur

For Next Week

Session Title

- The Last Place You Look

Main Passages

- Luke 24:13-35

Session Outline

1. Come Near (Luke 24:13-16)
2. Listen (Luke 24:17-24)
3. Speak (Luke 24:25-35)

Memorize

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.

- Luke 24:12

Daily Readings

- Monday - Luke 24:1-8
- Tuesday - Luke 24:9-12
- Wednesday - Matthew 28:1-10
- Thursday - Mark 16:1-8
- Friday - John 20:1-10
- Saturday - Acts 1:1-3

Historical Context of Luke

Purpose

The Gospel of Luke is a carefully researched (1:3), selective presentation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, designed to strengthen the faith of believers (1:3–4) and to challenge the misconceptions of unbelievers, especially those from a Greek background. Its portrait of Jesus is well balanced, skillfully emphasizing his divinity and perfect humanity.

Author

The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1–3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called “we” sections of the book (Ac 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–37; 28:1–16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural (“they,” “them”), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural (“we,” “us”). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no “we” passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Since Luke wrote both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts (Ac 1:1–3), it is relevant to consider the dating of both books together. The events at the end of Acts occurred around AD 62–63. That is the earliest point at which Acts could have been written. If Acts was written in the early AD 60s from Rome, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Ac 28:30), the Third Gospel could date from an earlier stage of that period of imprisonment. The other reasonable possibility is during Paul’s earlier two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 24:27). From that location, Luke would have been able to travel and interview the eyewitnesses to Jesus’s life and ministry who were still alive.

Setting

Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the AD 60s or 70s have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the AD 70s or 80s.

Special Features

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testament. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to “most honorable Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

Extended Commentary

Luke 24:1-12

24:1. The world's worst Sabbath finally dragged to a close. Sundown brought a new day, the first day of the week. Now the women could fulfill their duty to Jesus and do something concrete to express their grief. But sundown brought darkness, when they could not venture outside their homes, so again they had to wait. The first rays of morning sun gave them opportunity to accomplish their task. They hurried off to the tomb where they had seen Joseph of Arimathea place Christ's body.

24:2-3. The stone was rolled from the tomb. Yes, the large stone that resembled a millstone that donkeys might pull did not have to be moved. They could enter the tomb immediately. As they did, they saw that the tomb was empty.

24:4-5. What had happened? What could they do? How could they stand the loss of his body in addition to losing him to death? From out of nowhere two men in glistening garments appeared. Dazzled by it all, the women fell face down to the ground, afraid to look up. Then those angelic voices addressed them: Why do you look for the living among the dead?

24:6-8. Again the voices. He is not here. He is risen! The angels reminded the women of what Jesus had said in Galilee. Then they remembered!

24:9. The women had followed Jesus and supported his ministry in Galilee (8:1-3). They had faithfully watched at the cross (23:49). They were certainly qualified witnesses to recognize and tell the story of Jesus. In Luke the women believed the resurrection and told about it without even encountering the resurrected Lord. Here the disciples, with Judas missing, of course, must learn the central theme of the faith from the faithful women.

24:10. Luke carefully documents the women involved. Mary Magdalene and Joanna were listed in chapter 8, as supporting Jesus in his ministry in Galilee. Here Luke adds one prominent name—Mary, the mother of James—and does not include Susanna from chapter 8. Mark 15:40 identifies the second Mary as the mother of James-the-less. This is usually taken to mean he is the same as the apostle James the son of Alphaeus, as distinct from the apostle James the son of Zebedee and the brother of John. It is quite striking, however, that James and Joseph were also names of Jesus' brothers (Mark 6:3). This James became a strong leader in the Jerusalem church and probably is the author of the Epistle of James. Could it be that the early tradition of the church quietly identified Jesus' mother as the mother of their leaders James and Joseph rather than as the mother of Jesus in a humble effort not to pay too much homage to Mary? Is it not reasonable that Jesus' mother would have been among those first women seeking to pay honor to the dead son and to fulfill the ritual requirements of burial? This view is seldom espoused in scholarship but should not be totally dismissed. Present-day respect for Mary does not demand that the early church would always identify her as the mother of Jesus.

24:11. The apostles knew the women well and had traveled long miles and hours with them. Still, the men did not believe the women. This may show the chauvinistic, patriarchal bent of their society and times. It may show how totally separated the disciples were at this time from Jesus. They played a very minor role at the cross. (Luke has not mentioned them specifically since Jesus' arrest.) The disciples, like the women, had ignored Jesus' passion predictions. They had no expectations of resurrection. The disciples had not seen or heard the "men" in the tomb. Resurrection and renewed fellowship with Jesus were something they did not even think about. They gathered for comfort in grief, not to find Jesus again. This apostolic skepticism is a major evidence for the truth of the resurrection. The apostles would not have invented the resurrection story. They had lost hope and sunk into despair at the arrest and death of Jesus.

24:12. Denying Peter was also impulsive, inquisitive Peter. The women's story pricked his conscience and challenged him to take a look for himself. Here the open tomb is taken for granted in the narrative. Peter easily entered the tomb. His response to such easy access was not recorded. The two "men" did not appear to Peter. All the evidence he had to go on were the cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body. They set him wondering. No one would remove the wrappings and then steal the body. Only a person needing to walk away would remove the cloths. Could the women's story be true?¹

References

1. Butler, Trent C., and Max Anders. *Luke*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.

Author Bio

Trent Butler (Luke)

Trent C. Butler is a freelance author and editor. He served ten years on the faculty of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and for twenty-two years as editor and editorial director for Holman Bible Publishers and LifeWay. He wrote the Word Biblical Commentary volume on Joshua, the Layman's Bible Book Commentary on Isaiah, the Holman Old Testament Commentaries on Isaiah and Hosea through Micah, and the Holman New Testament Commentary on Luke. He served on the editorial Board of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and edited the Holman Bible Dictionary. Dr. Butler has a Ph.D. in biblical studies and linguistics from Vanderbilt University, has done further study at Heidelberg and Zurich, and has participated in the excavation of Beersheba.

Max Anders (Luke)

Dr. Max Anders is the author of over 25 books, including the bestselling 30 Days to Understanding the Bible, and is the creator and general editor of the 32-volume Holman Bible Commentary series. He has taught on the college and seminary level and is a veteran pastor. Max provides resources and discipleship strategies at www.maxanders.com to help people grow spiritually.

Lee Strobel (The Case for the Resurrection)

Lee Strobel was the award-winning legal editor of The Chicago Tribune and is the bestselling author of The Case for Christ, The Case for Christ Devotional, The Case for Christianity Answer Book, The Case for Faith, The Case for a Creator, The Case for Miracles, and The Miracles Answer Book. With a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a Master of Studies in Law degree from Yale, Lee has won four Gold Medallions for publishing excellence and coauthored the Christian Book of the Year. Lee is President of the Lee Strobel Center for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics at Colorado Christian University. Visit Lee's website at: leestrobel.com

Brad Watson (Raised?)

Little is known about the early life of this Puritan preacher and author, but his writing shows a profound understanding of the English language, and a firm grasp of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Moreover, his knowledge of Scripture is superb, and his sermons demonstrate his comprehension of physics, botany, history, logic, medicine and more. He endured a significant upheaval in 1651, being imprisoned for plotting to restore the monarchy after the execution of Charles I. He was ultimately released, however, and restored to his pastorate.

John MacArthur (Luke 18-24)

John MacArthur has served as pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, since 1969. His ministry of expository preaching is unparalleled in its breadth and influence. In more than five decades of ministry from the same pulpit, he has preached verse by verse through the entire New Testament and several key sections of the Old Testament. He is Chancellor of the Master's University and Seminary, and can be heard daily on the Grace to You radio broadcast (carried on hundreds of radio stations worldwide). He has authored numerous bestselling books, including Twelve Ordinary Men and One Perfect Life.