



THE GOSPEL OF
Luke

SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 24:1-12

To understand more about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sunday Morning

Chapter 24 begins immediately where chapter 23 ended. At the end of chapter 23, after Jesus had died and been laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, “the women who had come with him from Galilee followed,” and “prepared spices and ointments” (Lk. 23:56). However, because the Sabbath was quickly approaching, “they rested according to the commandment.” The Sabbath fell on a Saturday, which was seen as the last day of the week and thus the seventh day. Chapter 24 then begins on “the first day of the week” (Lk. 24:1), which would have been a Sunday. The women awoke early, and with “the spices that had been prepared,” they went to continue the process they began on Friday evening and discovered something they were not expecting: an empty tomb.

He Has Risen

Verses 2 through 12 give details concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Below is a brief breakdown of some of the key details concerning this monumental event.

THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY

Verse 2 says, “And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.” Only Matthew in his account gives the details concerning how the stone was moved: “And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.” Matthew records an earthquake and an angel being the means by which the stone is removed. However, even in Luke’s account,

the Greek construction is in the divine passive, meaning “the stone was moved by God.” There really is no other explanation. Roman soldiers had no reason to move the stone nor tamper with the body of Jesus, and Jesus’ disciples would have had to contend with Roman soldiers before getting a clear shot at moving it. The soldiers on duty knew that any kind of dereliction of duty to guard the tomb would result in their death, so they would have been extra careful in keeping watch.

THEY DID NOT FIND THE BODY

Verse 3 indicates that Jesus’ body was not present either: “But when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” An understanding of the Greek Old Testament (LXX) sheds light on Luke’s writing here. Based on how the Septuagint uses the phrase “not find,” Luke is indicating that it isn’t that the women had not yet found a corpse that existed, but that no corpse existed to be found. In other words, it wasn’t that a dead body was missing, but that there was no dead body at all. Jesus’ body was not there because He had risen!

TWO MEN

While they were “perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel” (Lk. 24:4). The word for “dazzling” (Gk. ἀστράπτω) is a word that describes lightning flashing. You could translate it “with clothes that gleamed like lightning.” These, of course, are not merely men; they are angels (Lk. 24:23). While the seraphim are described as having wings and faces of animals, other angels are described in quite human-like form (Gen. 18:2; 19:1-3). The women at least were intimidated by the power of their appearance, and at most recognized them rightly as angels because they immediately “bowed their faces to the ground” (Lk. 24:5).

A MESSAGE DELIVERED

The angels appeared for the specific purpose of meeting the women in the empty tomb to deliver a message: “The men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise’” (Lk. 24:5b-7). Their initial question is enough to explain the absence of Jesus body; He is alive! The angels then remind the women of what Jesus had said multiple times while He was with them, some of which Luke recorded (Lk. 9:22, 44; 18:32-33). These events should not have surprised the disciples because Jesus had warned them of all of it happening several times. Upon hearing the angels speak, “They remember his words” (Lk. 24:8). Somehow, all of the pieces coming together was enough to help them make sense of it all.

Upon their return, “they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest” (Lk. 24:9). It’s subtle, but notice that Luke refers to the now fractured group as “the eleven.” They are no longer “the twelve” because of Judas’ betrayal. The identities of these nameless women are finally revealed: “Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women with them” (Lk. 24:10). As eyewitnesses, they explain everything that happened. They came with Him from Galilee, watched Him be crucified, watched Him die, saw Him laid in the tomb, witnessed the empty tomb, and were confronted by angels. They were a fully reputable source, and yet: “These words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them” (Lk. 24:11). Certainly the cultural influence of a patriarchal society is at play here. The women were not convincing, more than likely, because they were women. There is really no other explanation for why such claims would be so quickly written off. It is an important detail, then, that God chooses women to be the first witnesses of the empty tomb.

CONFIRMATION

Though in doubt, Peter goes to investigate the seemingly unbelievable claims of these women: “Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened” (Lk. 24:12). Luke doesn’t record what John reveals in Peter’s running to the tomb; John was with him, and John beat him to it (Jn. 20:3-4). With Peter now in belief, the others could be convinced. Not only was Peter a man, but he was also one of the inner-three disciples and thus knew Jesus more intimately than any of the other disciples. If he believed that Jesus had risen, his testimony would be seen as significant.

What About Now?

The main takeaway from this story is the question of what the resurrection means for us today. If Jesus conquered death, what does that mean for you? If Jesus has power over death, it means that death is no longer a real threat to Christians. Another takeaway is the attention to detail that Luke provides concerning the resurrection. Luke’s account adds plausibility to the story because of the real life aspects of it.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Luke 24:1. On what day of the week does this verse begin? What day is this for our calendar? What time was it? Who went where, and what did they take with them?

2. Read Luke 24:2-3. What did they find when they arrived? What did they not find when they went into the tomb?

Day Two

1. Read Luke 24:4. Who appeared next to them, and what were they wearing? According to the notes, how did they appear?

2. Read Luke 24:5. How did the women respond? What did the angels say to them?

Day Three

1. Read Luke 24:6-7. What did the angels say? Of what did the angels remind the women? When did Jesus say these things to His disciples?

2. Read Luke 24:8-9. What happened as a result of hearing the angels' words? Where did they go after this, and what did they do?
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Day Four

1. Read Luke 24:10-11. Who were the women? To whom did they share this information? What was the response of the apostles upon hearing this story?
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2. Read Luke 24:12. Who went to the tomb to investigate? What did he find? How did he respond to the empty tomb?
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Week 86 Discussion: Unlikely Witnesses

In Luke 24:1-12, the most unlikely people (for this time period) discover the empty tomb: women. Women did not have a voice like today, and yet it is women that God chooses to reveal the resurrection to first. Because they were committed to anointing Jesus' body with spices (obedience), they were granted an opportunity to witness the empty grave (blessing). Talk as a group about the ways in which God might use unlikely witnesses today to accomplish His purposes.

1. Icebreaker: Who has been the most unlikely witness to share Jesus with you?
2. Do you see yourself as "an unlikely witness?" Why or why not?
3. Do you believe God could use you to bring others to faith in Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
4. What holds you back from allowing God to use you to share the Gospel with lost people?
5. When is the last time you shared your faith with someone?
6. What needs to happen for you to share your faith again?

Takeaways:

1. The women come to the tomb to discover it is empty; Jesus has risen!
2. The women are confronted by an angel who tells them why He is not there.
3. The women tell the apostles about everything they saw and they did not believe them; Peter went to investigate and discovered the same thing.