

Why Luke Is the Indiana Jones of the New Testament

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

There is a seemingly insatiable appetite for books, movies and television shows where someone with a keen mind is on the hunt to find the truth about an important event. This explains our fascination with detectives, forensic scientists, historians, archaeologists and crime scene investigators.

Their equivalent in the Bible is Dr. Luke, who is the Indiana Jones of the New Testament. He penned the two lengthy historical books, Luke and Acts, which function as a prequel and sequel of sorts. In them, he is on the hunt to track down the facts about Christ and Christianity.

In the opening lines of Luke's Gospel, we are told that Luke is aware of other biographies about Jesus Christ, which likely includes Matthew and Mark, as they were probably written before Luke. Even so, he was compelled as a historian to have personally "investigated everything carefully" (Luke 1:3, NASB) so that there would be "an orderly account" (Luke 1:1-4, MEV). According to Bible scholar J.C. Ryle, every Christian should feel indebted to the Gospel of Luke because several wonderful passages of Scripture are only found in Luke's Gospel:

The Gospel of Luke, which we now begin, contains many

precious things which are not recorded in the other three Gospels. Such, for instance, are the histories of Zachariah and Elizabeth, the angel's announcement to the Virgin Mary—and, to speak generally, the whole contents of the first two chapters. Such, again, are the narratives of the conversion of Zacchaeus and of the penitent thief—the walk to Emmaus, and the famous parables of the Pharisee and Tax-collector, the rich man and Lazarus and the Prodigal Son. These are portions of Scripture for which every well-instructed Christian feels peculiarly thankful. And for these we are indebted to the Gospel of Luke.

How did Luke undertake his epic investigation? He hit the road. We have no idea how many miles he traveled or how many months or years he investigated. But we can presume he interviewed the people Jesus met and went to places Jesus went. Luke probably sat down with Jesus' mother Mary, Jesus' brothers and sisters, people who knew Jesus as a child, any of Jesus' disciples who were living, Jesus' personal friends and those who were among the crowds who were eyewitnesses to his preaching, miracles, deliverances and resurrection, along with individuals Jesus ministered to and healed.

Are there specific and practical things you could be doing to learn more about Jesus (e.g. reading your Bible, praying, attending church, joining a small group, reading a Christian book, listening to teaching online, etc.)? {eoa}

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