

THE NEW BEGINNING OF THE STORY AND THE KINGDOM

LUKE 24:36-53

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In our passage this morning we come to the end of Dr. Luke's Gospel. The end of Dr. Luke's Gospel however is also *a new beginning in Jesus Christ*.

The redemptive-historical story that climaxed in Christ will start with a new beginning as Jesus has a *resurrection reunion* with his disciples who now make up the *Restored-Remnant-Reformed Israel*; Jesus teaches *resurrection revelation* to his own, and has a *resurrection reunion* with His Holy Father as he ascends back to heaven to receive glorification and enthronement at God's right hand.

The end of the story is only a new beginning!

Only the truly Resurrected Christ could have convinced his disciples "slow of heart to believe" that he had truly risen, and we are granted another glance into a third resurrection visit of Jesus to his disciples in our passage this morning.

Perhaps by now you have noticed that Dr. Luke narratively gives us an Easter Triptych in chapter 24 of his gospel. A triptych is a three-paneled printing (or three-hinged tablet) that shows three scenes side by side.

In Luke 24, we first had the one panel revealing the women and the angels at the empty tomb; then we saw the second panel revealing the risen Lord Jesus on the road to Emmaus; and finally in our passage today we have the third and final panel of Luke's Easter Triptych that shows the risen Christ appearing finally to give last words to his disciples before his ascension.

All three panels of Dr. Luke's triptych have included similar occurrences after the resurrection: confusion of the disciples, rebuke from the risen Lord for misunderstanding and being slow to understand, instruction-interpretation from God's Word and finally, an evangelical witness of the glorious good tidings of the empty tomb (see also Hughes, Vol. II, pg. 413).

I. **RESURRECTION REUNION:** Jesus appears to his disciples; Jesus' reunion with his sinful, doubting disciples (24:36-43)

As they were talking about these things... (24:36a). The disciples of Jesus were speaking about how Jesus was the substance and END of God's story, how he revealed himself to the other disciples, and how thankful they were that he appeared

to be alive again! The reason why the disciples were gathered was because of fear of the Jews, and so they were locked in a room in Jerusalem when Jesus appears to them (see John 20:19).

When Jesus appears to the disciples for this “Resurrection-Reunion” the disciples are described as ‘startled’ and ‘frightened’ and even a bit superstitious in that they thought at first that Jesus was a phantom, spirit, apparition or ghost (24:37). Jesus appeared to His disciples clothed in a resurrected, glorified, heavenly or celestial body that was not bound now by the limitations of an ordinary earthly body (Geldenhuys, pg. 640; cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-38).

Even though by now, the disciples had heard the women’s report, Peter’s report and the report of the two disciples that had learned from the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus, they were slow to grasp the truth of Christ’s resurrection that Scripture had foretold.

Even though Jesus had told the disciples numerous times that he had to die and would rise again; even though Jesus had appeared to some of the disciples by now and interpreted God’s Word to them clearly; nevertheless, they are still slow to believe.

Sinful eyes, even when clearly shown the revelation of God; even though the truth of God’s revelation may be right before their eyes, they cannot see clearly enough to believe apart from the work of the Spirit. As Jesus said earlier in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, even if someone should rise from the dead, if people do not believe the Word of God, neither will they believe in another form of special revelation.

If all sinful mankind can clearly see God in general revelation as we are taught in Romans 1:19ff, and yet exchange the truth of God for a lie, how much more do sinners take the clear revealed realities of supernatural or special revelation and also exchange the truth for a lie—apart from God’s supernatural disclosing and opening eyes to see through His Word (as we saw in the last sermon concerning the disciples on the Road to Emmaus).

Jesus’ message to the disciples in this “Resurrection-Reunion” is “Peace”- *-shalom* (24:36b). That which God had promised to True and Believing Israel- *-Shalom-Peace* is granted from Christ to them because they have found favor in God’s eyes; Christ extends his hands of benedictory grace and peace to them!

As Dr. Luke’s Gospel began with glad tidings of Peace from the angels, particularly peace on earth for those upon whom God’s favor rests (2:14), so Jesus after the fulfillment of His Divine Messianic Mission extends to them this *Shalom-Peace* as those who are recipients of God’s special grace and love.

Again, Jesus gently rebukes his disciples who are slow of heart to believe Moses and the Prophets: **“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”** (v. 37). In the midst of Jesus’ extension of peace, when shalom is being granted by the

risen Christ Himself- -God in the flesh- -all that sinners can muster up is to be troubled and doubtful (again, as we learned in the last sermon, these are not the types who could have or would have ever invented a resurrection hoax story!).

It is important to note that Jesus reveals himself bodily in his resurrection as we learned about in our last sermon from Luke 23:13-35. He showed physical “proofs” to them that he is alive from the dead (24:39). Jesus said to the disciples: ***“See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have”*** (v. 39).

Jesus specifically wants them to understand that he is not merely a phantom, an apparition or ghost-spirit, but the flesh and blood man as he was conceived in Mary’s womb.

Jesus was resurrected in the same body- -he was not a spirit-ghost-phantom- apparition- -Jesus condemns in this passage all the false thinking of ancient and modern forms of Gnosticism that cannot fathom a holy God dwelling in real human flesh; Jesus overturns any notion of true spirituality being the opposite of being embodied before God.

No, Jesus reveals here that true Christianity is about embodied spirituality before God. Spirituality is not merely in worshipping God in spirit and truth, but the worship of God being embodied and offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God, sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to him.

The materiality of Jesus’ resurrection was a fact! The incarnation of Christ continues; Jesus is resurrected in the body that came from Mary’s womb! As Jesus revealed himself in His incarnation in his public prophetic word ministry and he taught his disciples, he will now go bodily to God’s right hand to be the Prophet, Priest and King of God’s people. The Apostle John remembers the incarnation of Jesus when he wrote:

ESV 1 John 1:1-4: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.⁴ And we are writing these things so that our¹ joy may be complete.

The incarnation of Jesus will continue as Jesus goes bodily to sit as the enthroned Son of David, Son of God and Son of Man, as Mediator between God and man, serving in the very Holy of Holies, the throne room of God not made with hands, but the eternal, heavenly place where God is revealed as the King that Isaiah saw enthroned in glory.

Jesus’ incarnation will continue as he goes to prepare a place for His people and lives to ever intercede for his own as Advocate with the Father. As the Author of Hebrews

wrote, Jesus' ministry at God's right hand will not be interrupted because of weakness and/or physical death:

Hebrews 7:23-26 ²³ *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* ²⁴ *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.* ²⁵ *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost¹ those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.* ²⁶ *For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.*

As emphasized before, just because the disciples see that Christ is risen and that Jesus is incarnate and a real resurrected flesh and blood man, they still do not completely believe God's Word (24:40-41). In fact, Dr. Luke records for us the response of the disciples: ***"And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling... (v. 41)"***

Again for emphasis, remember Jesus' words before in the *Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus*:

ESV Luke 16:29-31: But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ *And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'* ³¹ *He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"*

It should be noted that one can believe in the resurrection, while not believing in Christ; one can believe in certain experiences that they have had with "God" but can turn a deaf ear to God's Word which is the source, the fount of all special divine revelation concerning theology, doctrine, life, and our experience.

The disciples were not merely rejecting objective special revelation from God here; they are more important misunderstanding God's Word- -they are slow to understand all that Jesus has taught them!

Luke 9:22: "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

ESV Luke 18:31-33: And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² *For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon.* ³³ *And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."*

Although the disciples are marveling as they have done before (24:41), they are not necessarily believing (contrast other places in Luke's Gospel where the people marveled but did not believe, Luke 4:22; 8:26; 11:14).

In order to teach the disciples, Jesus again reveals himself through the breaking of bread in fellowship. Jesus continues to show his favor and grace and *Shalom-Peace*

to his disciples even in the midst of their unbelief, and he asks them for some food. This is the grace of God to sinners...

Jesus asks them: ***“Have you anything here to eat?!”*** The disciples respond by giving him a piece of broiled fish (24:42).

Fellowship meals are very important in Dr. Luke’s Gospel and his particular focus on Jesus’ ministry. If you remember many times Jesus ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners, had fellowship meals with his disciples, and established the Lord’s Supper at the eschatological-typological fellowship meal of the Passover.

Here Jesus once again sups with his disciples- -this time after having been dead- - after his resurrection, as he reveals again his incarnated-enfleshed state before them, he takes some broiled fish and fellowships with them.

The Apostles in this scene are now beginning to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, even while there is doubt, disbelief, and marveling going on as they are beginning to understand what is happening; even while all this is happening Jesus is commissioning them to serve and to begin to function as they have been called to do as servants of the king.

Earlier in Jesus’ ministry in his state of humiliation as a suffering servant, Jesus came as a servant. Now his disciples are fulfilling their call to serve *him now*; before Jesus had served fish to many followers and disciples, but NOW after his resurrection, they shall serve HIM as Resurrected King!

The disciples will continue this servant ministry throughout the Book of Acts, Dr. Luke’s second volume, as they will be revealed as Church Servants of the King who preach and proclaim as Jesus did during the time of His incarnation while Jesus will be seated at God’s right hand as the King over His Church, ruling and reigning as he is made known through their word and deed revelation.

II. **RESURRECTION REVELATION**: Jesus commissions his disciples; a fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures (24:44-49)

Although the disciples have not fully understood all that their eyes have beheld, all that their hands have touched, and all that their senses have engaged with regard to the Word of Life, the risen Jesus, nevertheless Jesus graciously continues to minister to them until they are fully prepared to go out and preach His Gospel Word.

It is important that although Jesus specially and fully reveals himself to all their sensory faculties, *his focus is on God’s Word* (just as we saw his focus was on the Word on the Road to Emmaus). Jesus wants his disciples to understand God’s Word of revelation; Jesus wants his disciples to make the resurrection known, but not through mere experiential religion, but through a *Religion of the Word*.

In fact, in each panel of Luke's resurrection triptych the focus is on instruction from God's Word (the angels quoted Scripture, Jesus taught from Moses and the prophets on the road to Emmaus, and in this final passage from Luke Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and taught them from them, vv. 45-46).

The resurrection appearances of Jesus in the flesh will support the Divine Revelation of God's Word (1 Corinthians 15:1ff), but it should not replace the important focus of God's Word as used by the Holy Spirit in the convincing and converting of sinners that Jesus is alive from the dead.

This is why the Bible tells us that all they are experiencing at that moment; all that their eyes are beholding and their hands are touching (cf. John 20:22-31; 1 John 1:1ff) are revealed in Scripture and should be understood through God's Holy Word.

ESV Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

As Jesus had revealed himself to the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, so Jesus once again reveals himself through God's Word. Jesus says that all of the TNK is about him! (cf. 24:25ff). The TNK is the Jewish three-fold division of Scripture: *Torah, Nevviim, and Kethuvim* which means the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (or "writings" that the Psalms represent)- -the entire Old Covenant Scriptures are written about Christ. Another way of saying this is that there is no part of Scripture that does not bear witness to Jesus Christ!

It is important to note that this is another strike against ancient and modern forms of Gnosticism that seeks to root their theology and experience of "God" or "Jesus" in their personal and private so-called experiences of the divine. Gnosticism in its many forms abhors materiality, including the enfleshed materiality of the visible Church. For Gnostics the way to knowledge of God is through privatized divine mystery that is secretly revealed only to the initiated.

Jesus opens their minds to understand the Scriptures the objective (rather than subjective) revelation from God about God (24:45).

While every person who can read, and has a Bible in their own language, can read the Holy Scriptures and have some idea of the contents, only by a work of God's sovereign grace by His Spirit can one rightly and fully understand that what they are reading, what they are hearing in the reading is the very voice of God himself!

Jesus opens the minds of the disciples through Divine Illumination so that they will have understanding, then he quotes Scripture for them so that now they can understand fully from God's written revelation:

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”- 24:47.

As you recall, when Jesus had spoken of his death clearly before in Luke’s Gospel, the Bible would tell us:

Luke 9:45 ⁴⁵ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Luke 18:34 ³⁴ But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

If the disciples were to understand God’s Word, if we are to understand God’s Word, if anyone is to understand God’s Word, there must be Divine Illumination from God Himself- -lest the truths of it remain concealed, hidden, and we will not grasp what was written as well!

This ministry of the Word is Jesus’ Divine Messianic Mission that will now be carried out by his disciples (which the Book of Acts further reveals). Jesus’ Divine Messianic Mission has been accomplished in his life, death, resurrection and soon to be ascension, but the torch now has been passed to the disciples.

Now the disciples of Jesus will go forth preaching and teaching that the Christ did suffer, that he did indeed rise from the dead, and that in light of this great truth, repentance can be obtained and true forgiveness of sins can be had by believing in Jesus’ Name!

This mission will start in Jerusalem and go to the ends of the earth (which incidentally and interestingly, the Book of Acts is outlined by Dr. Luke to show in its form how this mission was accomplished by the power of God’s Spirit; e.g. Acts 1-7: Jerusalem; Acts 8: Samaria; Acts 10: God-fearing Jews; Acts 16-19: Gentiles; Acts 28: the Gospel reaches the ends of the earth).

The Apostle Paul summarizes the Gospel Ministry that the Apostles were given that would continue Jesus’ ministry of the Word proclaiming what the Scriptures say, or speaking the words **in accordance with the Scriptures**:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Now I would remind you, brothers,¹ of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures....

The Book of Acts ends with these words describing Jesus’ Divine Messianic Mission through his disciples that began in Jerusalem:

ESV Acts 28:28-31: Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."¹ ²⁹ ³⁰ He lived there two whole years at his own expense,¹ and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Jesus' Messianic Mission was continued through the disciples and the end of the Book of Acts is that the Kingdom of God, that is the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom is being made known with boldness and *without hindrance as it continues to go to the ends of the earth- -and the elect from all the nations are believing in Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords* (cf. 24:47).

This focus on God's Word that is revealed here as Jesus' last words should remind us of the utmost importance as God's people to always place our primary focus on God's Word. This means that it is through God's Word that the Spirit of God makes Christ known. This means that when we talk about the power of God's Spirit it is the power that comes from rightly understanding, interpreting, believing and making known God's Word.

This primary focus of Jesus, especially since these are some of his last words to His disciples, this focus is on God's Word, even when Jesus is standing right before them in the flesh.

You know, here would be the place where Jesus might say: "You'll experience me whenever you imagine me bodily with you." Or, "I will make myself known through objects like pictures, crosses, and other "religious items." Or, "I will speak to you intimately like I am now, if you will seek my face with all your might." Or, "I will reveal myself in private revelations to you in order to make myself and my word known."

Here would have been the place for Jesus to emphasize experiential religion; here would have been the place where Jesus would tell the disciples that if they would just listen in their inner spirit, then he would make himself known; here is where an inward, charismatic-kind of religion could have been started and originated by Jesus.

But Jesus' focus was on God's Word revealed and written (eventually the written Word of God would be completed and sufficient for all life and doctrine). Jesus said that you can find me, you can find the truth of my resurrection, you can hear me, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit ***BUT only through my Word!***

Jesus is saying that His people should seek him through the Word; that we should understand that the Word of God: Moses, the Prophets and the Writings *still* speak of him (24:27; John 5:39-40). We might be reminded of what Jesus had said some years before to Israel's teachers of the Word:

ESV John 5:39-40: You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

The experiences that we partake of in the Christian life should always come bubbling forth from our right understanding and interpretation of God's Word. It is in God's Word that we will find the Christ and the eternal life that is promised by God Himself to all who believe in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ *for them!*

Experiential religion is a religion of sinful man; privatized and inner revelations of God's supposed truth is a religion of sinful man; **Revealed and inspired written revelation from God is the religion of Jesus Christ.**

It would behoove all those who call themselves Christians, who seek experiences with God, and rely on privatized and inner words of revelation from him to consider whether they truly know where to find Christ and life. For if they are relying on anything other than what is clearly revealed in God's Word to save them, to comfort them, to guide them, then they are relying on something or someone other than Christ and His Spirit!

Let us all rethink how we view revelation from this passage. Jesus wants us to seek Him through His Word. Through God's Word, Christ will be heard; salvation will be revealed; comfort will be given; and guidance will lead us along the narrow path of life here in this world.

Jesus specifically sends the disciples out as witnesses to all that he has interpreted to them from God's Word (24:48). They are indeed witnesses of the flesh and blood resurrection of Jesus, but more importantly Jesus has sent them as witnesses to the Biblical truth that ***"it is written"*** (24:46).

In other words, it is the ***"it is written"*** that they were to be witnesses of; that is, the disciples will continue Jesus' Divine Messianic Mission to His Church as they teach and proclaim the Word of God, the very ***"it is written"***- -otherwise they fail in their mission and their ministry and their message.

That is why the Apostle Paul would later tell Timothy that his main aim for building the Church of Jesus is through preaching the Word as often as he is given the opportunity ("in season and out of season").

Finally, Jesus links the Holy Spirit's ministry with the ministry of the Word (24:49). The power from on high that they will receive (particularly on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2) will be power to declare and make known God's Word found in Moses, the Prophets and the Writings, and the disciples themselves will join Moses, the Prophets and those who authored the writings in also writing written revelation of the final word of God that they heard from Jesus Christ.

On the Day of Pentecost, if you go back and re-read Acts 2, how was the Apostle Peter's great preaching power revealed? What was the content of Peter's powerful Spirit-filled preaching?

He interpreted the Old Testament correctly; he showed how Christ was the substance of all Scriptural revelation ultimately, and that in Him all sinners could find hope through repentance and faith in what God had written.

I have heard talk of so-called "powerful preaching" that barely had any scriptural content at all! Well, the way to know that you have heard a powerful sermon is that you were able to better understand God's Word, and that Christ and His Gospel was made known to you, and that you by God's grace and Spirit were edified, built up, admonished, and even rebuked.

I've heard it said (rightly!) that powerful preaching is using God's Word to "afflict the comfortable and to comfort the afflicted"- - that's a very good summary of "powerful preaching" when the affliction and comfort comes forth clearly from God's Word!

As the Apostle Paul wrote:

ESV 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: And I, when I came to you, brothers,¹ did not come proclaiming to you the testimony² of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

It is worth noting again, for those who may be slow of heart to believe what Moses and the Prophets have spoken, that the Spirit's ministry here is linked, that is redemptive-historically and eschatologically **linked** or attached to the Ministry of God's Word.

Those who would be "Spirit-filled", those who want to know the power of God's Spirit had better get busy doing the hard work of studying the Word of God, rightly interpreting it, proclaiming it clearly, as they learn Christ *together with all the saints both living and dead* (Eph. 3:18).

Geldenhuis quoted another teacher in his commentary that summarizes this well: The apostles would be endued by the Holy Spirit from on high, given to them by the Father and the resurrected-ascended Christ. **And it will be such that "the power of the apostolic message does not rest upon the visibility of Christ, but upon the presence of the Spirit"** (my emphasis, pg. 644).

Spirit-filled preaching is not first of all an experiential thing (chill bumps, goosey pimples, whatever); it is first of all a revelation of Jesus Christ *from God's Word*. Spirit-filled preaching is not first of all application to the self-centered so-called needs

of sinners (although it should include proper application); it is first of all a revelation of Jesus Christ *from God's Word*.

Spirit-filled preaching is not the preacher's "ingenious" anecdotes, or supposed words of revelation that he thinks he has heard from God; it is first of all a revelation of Jesus Christ *from God's Word*.

This is why expositional, verse-by-verse, book by book preaching should be the practice of every preacher seeking to be "Spirit-filled". Preachers should seek to make known to God's people the "whole counsel of God (Acts 20:28), not merely the preacher's pet doctrines, or politics, or pet beliefs about what's wrong with the world, or a focus merely on "how to's" that the preacher thinks are important for others in the Christian life.

It is written, that it is the "it is written" that matters most!

We must be taken through the Bible as God's people- -we must be taught to see Jesus in this grand redemptive-historical story of God's redemption. We must be taught to see ourselves as part of this grand story of redemption and then live our lives, inform our identities as we live out of, that is ***as we live informed by this written revelation of God's Word!***

III. **RESURRECTION REUNION**: Jesus ascends back to the Father; Jesus' reunion with His Holy Father (24:50-53)

And Jesus ascended and was carried up into heaven (24:51).

And so the new beginning of God's redemptive-historical story *begins* anew as Jesus ascends back to experience the glorified state that he experienced with the Father since the foundation of the world (cf. John 17:1-5). Only BIG difference in Jesus' return to the Father: ***He is now in hypostatic, eternal union with humanity.***

Believing humanity will now have a human representative in heaven. Jesus ascends back to the Father as the God-Man, as the Son of God and Son of Man who will take the eternal throne of David's Dynasty (2 Sam. 7:12ff; Acts 2:25ff), and the eternal throne of Daniel's Prophecy:

^{ESV} Daniel 7:13-14: I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

And now the disciples worship in spirit and truth. The disciples now participate in their first Word-centered worship service after Christ's resurrection-ascension-

glorification. They do not worship literally at Jesus' feet, but now through God's Word.

Dr. Luke appropriately ends his Gospel on a worshipful and joyful note! The disciples return to Jerusalem specifically described as "*with great joy*" and they continually (that is day after day) were in the temple blessing God (24:52-53).

There are several rich aspects of these two verses. At this new beginning of God's story now that there is a resurrected-ascended-glorified-enthroned man in heaven; this new beginning begins with the sound of the worship of Jesus Christ for who he is and what he has done for His people.

Worship in Spirit and Truth should be characterized as worship that is informed by Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings (and now the completed New Testament writings)- -worship according to God's Word that is Christ-centered and tells the people of God *who Jesus is* and *what He has done for them*.

This new beginning of God's redemptive-historical story is characterized by worship of the risen-ascended Jesus Christ, reflecting on, interpreting, and sitting under the Word of the Scriptures that declared what had happened.

As Luke's Gospel begins with a proclamation of "great joy" that shall be to all the people through the angelic revelation to the shepherds (2:8ff), so now there is indeed great joy in Jerusalem as some have believed the gospel good tidings of the angels and have believed in the Savior born in Bethlehem.

Although Jerusalem had rejected Messiah formally, there were True Israelites who lived within her gates. The disciples, those who worshipped at Jesus' feet and now through His Word, were True Restored-Remnant-Reformed Israelites, and a foretaste of the joy and worship that characterized Jerusalem in the Old Testament revelation is partially fulfilled.

Even though the passage tells us that the disciples worshipped and blessed God in the Temple, we must understand that they are only worshipping ***in the temple and no longer through the temple.***

Before the coming of Christ and the new and living way opened up through His body (cf. Heb. 10:19ff), the people of God worshipped ***through the Temple***; that is they worshipped God through this typological temple made with hands.

Now that Christ has come and fully accomplished his Divine Messianic Mission the people of God worship Christ under God's Word (as we have understood from this passage) and ***seek God through Jesus Christ, the True Temple of God.***

In other words, although the disciples are still worshipping and blessing God in the temple, they are not worshipping God through the temple as a type; now that the Real

and Living True Temple of God has come in Jesus Christ, ***they are using the building merely for worship services and not for the worship of God itself.***

There is a resurrected man in heaven; a man named Jesus Christ to rule and reign over heaven and earth; a man named Jesus Christ to save sinners who repent and call upon His Name. His name is *Caesar Christus*, Christ the King! Luke's Gospel began with two kings and two cities: Caesar Augustus and Caesar Christus, Rome, the City of Man, and the Heavenly Jerusalem the City of God.

Caesar Augustus is dead; the Roman Empire is no more a historical reality, and the kingdoms of man have been conquered by the ruling and reigning Caesar Christ who is ruling and reigning over earth in the Heavenly Jerusalem at God's right hand, possessing an eternal dominion!

There is a resurrected man in heaven to serve before God's holy throne as the Advocate-Mediator-Intercessor-Prophet-Priest-King according to the Order of Melchizedek who will never die and who represents those who believe so that there is no condemnation before God, but now peace *shalom* (Rom. 5:1ff):

ESV Romans 8:31-34: What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be¹ against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died- more than that, who was raised- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

As Jesus closes the chapter of his earthly ministry, Jesus pronounces an appropriate eschatological benediction upon the disciples; Jesus blesses them as the High Priest Greater than Aaron according to the Order of Melchizedek (24:50).

ESV Leviticus 9:22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

The Aaronic priesthood had offered benediction blessings and sacrifices, but they were typologically of Christ who had come and offered himself as a final sacrifice for sins; this Great Priest Christ now blesses his people as he departs from them to enter into the Heavenly Temple *not made with hands* where he will serve as Advocate and Mediator of His people.

Jesus as the Great Prophet, Priest and King pronounces the benediction after reading, interpreting and proclaiming God's Word.

Death did not hold him; he was resurrected and lived again; he ascended and was enthroned according to the Scriptures. He will come again according to the Scriptures, and so we must be made prepared for His coming! As the angels declare to the disciples as Jesus departs from them in His ascension:

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." – Acts 1:10-11

There is a resurrected-ascended-glorified man in heaven who sympathizes with our weaknesses, who was tempted just as we are but was without sin. This resurrected-ascended-glorified-enthroned king will return for His own (in the same way that he departed, so he will come back, see Acts 1:8-11).

But when he stands up from his throne to return, he will put on the battle dress of the Divine Warrior; he will saddle his divine white war horse and he will return to save his people but to destroy his enemies- -those who have not submitted to his lordship or acknowledged him as King of kings and Lord of lords, the very *Caesar Augustus Christus!*

This great king will come with the great fury and wrath of God to destroy his and our enemies and so we dare not put our hope in anyone or anything else!

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in¹ blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave,¹ both small and great."¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence¹ had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord of all to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

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Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Daniel 7:13-14:** I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Luke 9:22: "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

^{ESV} **Luke 18:31-33:** And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³ And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."

^{ESV} **Luke 16:29-31:** But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

^{ESV} **Acts 1:1-14:** In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying¹ with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with¹ the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.¹

^{ESV} **Hebrews 1:1-4:** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.