

09-01-2019

**Message: Jesus Assures Us of His Resurrection**

**Text: Luke 24:13-35**

## **Introduction**

- A. This incident of Christ's resurrection appearance to two disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus is only recorded in Luke's gospel account, which begs the questions, "Why?" Why did our crucified, risen, reigning, returning Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, inspire Luke to include this encounter for Luke's original readers in the Roman province of Achaia (today's Greece)? And what does this inclusion reveal about Christ's heart?

*Moved by the Holy Spirit, **Luke composed all of this Gospel in the districts around Achaia**, although there were already gospels in existence - one according to Matthew written in Judea, and one according to Mark written in Italy.  
Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the 3rd gospel, 160-180 A.D.*

- B. Every biblical writer is a "task theologian," writing to accomplish God's pastoral purpose for the original readers, while applicable for future generations including our own. So we see that our Lord Jesus has inspired each of the four gospel writers to include unique details that address the needs and challenges of the original recipients of each gospel. (Show Mediterranean map) E.g., ...
1. Only Matthew records the coming of the Magi, bringing gold, frankincense to the King of the Jews, signaling to the Syro-Judean churches the beginning of the prophesied coming of the nations, from which the churches were to make disciples.

Isaiah 60:2 "... But the LORD will rise upon you and **His glory will appear upon you.** <sup>3</sup>  
**"Nations will come to your light,** and kings to the brightness of your rising. ... <sup>6</sup> ... **They will bring gold and frankincense,** and will bear good news of the praises of the LORD.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ...

2. While other gospel accounts mention Jesus's temptation in the wilderness, only Mark, writing to the church in Rome, mentions that in the wilderness Jesus was with the wild beasts - something Roman believers encountered in Nero's Colosseum .

Mark 1:13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; **and He was with the wild beasts,** and the angels were ministering to Him.

3. While each gospel writer describes Jesus's crucifixion, only John, writing to churches in Roman Asia, records the Roman soldier's piercing of Jesus's side, with blood and water rushing out - bearing witness that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, something Docetists in Asia were denying.

2 John 1:7 For many **deceivers** have gone out into the world, those who **do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.**

John 1:14 And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately **blood and water came out.**

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4. At the introduction and throughout our series in Luke, we've noted several themes/motifs in Luke's gospel specific to his apologetic purpose. The temple motif - Luke's gospel begins and ends in the Jerusalem temple, underscoring that Christianity is not a new religion among the Jews, but the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Israel as written in the Hebrew Scriptures. The outcast motif underscores that the Gentiles were to be saved by Israel's Messiah and included as God's people. So unique to Luke's gospel are outcasts like the shepherds invited to Jesus's birthplace, the good Samaritan as an example of those who inherit eternal life, Jesus seeking and saving the hated tax collector Zacheus, the salvation of the thief on the cross, etc.
  - a. Temple motif - Christianity is Judaism full blossom
  - b. Fulfillment of Scripture/predetermined plan of God motif
  - c. Trial motif - Christ and disciples are innocent of Jewish leadership's charges
  - d. Outcast motif - Israel's Messiah has come to save all kinds of people.

B. I believe there is an additional reason Jesus uniquely inspired Luke to include His resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus, given the original recipients lived in a Greek culture. The Greeks did not believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, a fact well attested in the New Testament as well as Greek sources. E.g., ... epithets on their tombs reflect this hopeless grief and despair. (Show Mediterranean map)

Thessalonica: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not **grieve as do the rest who have no hope.**

Athens: Acts 17:32 **Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer,** but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this."

Corinth: 1 Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do **some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

The Hebrew priestly ruling class was influenced by Greek culture: Acts 23:8 **For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,** nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

Paul before the court of Festus and King Agrippa: Acts 26:8 **"Why is it considered**

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**incredible among you if God does raise the dead?**

C. So Christ, our Good Shepherd, inspired Luke to include this resurrection appearance in the context of His disciples' skepticism in 24:11. Two of these skeptical and despairing disciples are turned into witnesses of the resurrected Christ by His help and mercy. This Scripture account is Christ's means of grace, not only to the original recipients of Luke's gospel, but to every generation of believers - to us here today. There have always been those who found the concept of the bodily resurrection to be nonsense, unbelievable, and their modern counterparts are appearing increasingly in our western culture and even in today's church. E.g., results from a BBC poll conducted in March, 2019 on more than 2,000 British adults revealed that only 46 percent of those identifying as Christians in the United Kingdom believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the world's sins, that the Bible's resurrection accounts are true. (Of those 82% who attend church at least once per month believe the accounts are true.) A number of theologians have claimed that the bodily Resurrection was unnecessary, a metaphor for Jesus' spirit living on in His disciples and inspiring them and the Church.

**I. Luke 24:13-16 Jesus comes to help ordinary, nameless people by opening their eyes to see and receive Him as their crucified, risen Savior and Lord.**

A. On this same resurrection day, some women who went to Jesus's tomb came back and reported to the disciples that the tomb was empty, and that angels had appeared to them, announcing He was risen from the dead. But the disciples regarded the women's words as simply silly talk. This context of skepticism regarding the resurrection parallels the cultural skepticism surrounding the original recipients of Luke's gospel.

Luke 24:6 "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,<sup>7</sup> saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."<sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words,<sup>9</sup> and returned from the tomb and **reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.**<sup>10</sup> Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.<sup>11</sup> **But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.**

B. Two of "the rest," one unnamed and Cleopas, named nowhere else in Scripture, were walking the seven mile journey from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus, perhaps returning home from the Passover festival. They were in a very passionate discussion (suzeteo) about the events involving Jesus, clearly sad, no doubt perplexed and directionless, disillusioned by dashed expectations and dashed hope. Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick ....

Luke 24:13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.<sup>15</sup> While they were talking and **discussing** (suzeteo), Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them.<sup>16</sup> **But**

**their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.**

- C. Once again we see the heart of Jesus in seeking out those of no reputation to be the recipients of His help, kindness, mercy, salvation (outcast motif) - even as angels first announced His birth to shepherds and His resurrection to women who loved Him.
- D. Their eyes were prevented (divine passive) from recognizing Him. We all need His grace, mercy, blessing, power to believe in Him as our once crucified for sin, now risen Lord, for we can't see Him with our natural eyes. Even if we could, we could not, like these two disciples, recognize Him for the God and Savior He is, unless He opened our spiritual eyes, the eyes of our hearts.

Deuteronomy 29:2 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land;<sup>3</sup> the great trials which your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders.<sup>4</sup> **"Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.**

Proverbs 20:12 The hearing ear and **the seeing eye, the LORD has made both of them.**

**II. Luke 24:17-24 The stunned, disappointment and sadness of the disciples.**

- A. Jesus draws out what is in their hearts with a pair of questions.

Luke 24:17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" **And they stood still, looking sad.**<sup>18</sup> *One of them,* named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about **Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,**<sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.<sup>21</sup> **But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.** Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

1. These two men have a favorable view of Jesus's prophetic ministry, words, actions, power. It is appropriate to refer to Jesus as a prophet, since Luke records Jesus referring to Himself as such, and Peter attributed Moses's prophecy that God would raise up a prophet like him to Jesus.

Luke 4:24 And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.

Luke 13:33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next *day*; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.

Acts 3:22 "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.

2. Nor did these men limit the identity of Jesus to a prophet, but were (continuously) hoping that He was Israel's promised Redeemer.

B. So when Jesus asked them about what things had taken place in Jerusalem, they stopped dead in their tracks with sad, gloomy faces. The death of Jesus three days earlier had crushed their hopes and spirits. What would become of their lives now, their country Israel now? In spite of the astonishing report by the women and witnesses to an empty tomb, no one had seen Him, and for them that was decisive (if not ironic, for they were looking right at Him.)

Luke 24:22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,<sup>23</sup> and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.<sup>24</sup> "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; **but Him they did not see.**"

1. If Jesus had not been resurrected from the dead, then their futures would be far worse than they had imagined - and so also would ours. As was mentioned last Sunday from 1 Corinthians 15 ...

1 Corinthians 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;<sup>17</sup> and **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**<sup>18</sup> Then **those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**<sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, **we are of all men most to be pitied.**

2. There is no point to this life if there is no hope of eternal, resurrection life. What difference will yesterday's achievements make, yesterday's entertainment, happiness, memories, friends, families make?

- a. At best, if there is no God, no Creator, our lives will be as one writer put it ...

*"You are an accidental by-product of nature, the result of matter plus time plus chance. There is no reason for your existence. All you face is death. Your life is but a spark in the infinite darkness, a spark that appears, flickers, and dies forever."*

- b. At worst, if there is a God (and there is), our eternal future will be, as Jesus put it, ...

Mark 9:43 ",,, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,<sup>44</sup> *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED .*

### III. 24:25-31 By the means of the Scriptures, Christ prepares their hearts to see and believe in Him.

- A. Their failure to see with eyes of faith that Jesus was risen was due to a “slowness of heart” to believe the Scriptures.

Luke 24:25 And He said to them, "**O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**"<sup>26</sup> "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"<sup>27</sup> Then **beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.**

1. Though they were disciples, their preconceived ideas of how the Messiah would redeem God's people prevented them from seeing and believing in a crucified yet risen Messiah as spoken of in the Scriptures. E.g., Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, and Jesus affirmed that God had supernaturally convinced him of this. Yet Peter still could not believe the Messiah would be crucified and resurrected.

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**"<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ..."<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, **and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.**<sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "**God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.**"

1 Corinthians 1:23 but **we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block** and to Gentiles foolishness,

2. There is another heart issue that prevents some people from believing in Christ's deity, death for sin, and resurrection. A heart unwilling to do Christ's will, a heart that wants to sin can find justification by dismissing the reality of Christ, and therefore, His authority over our lives.
  - a. Personal example.
  - b. Joshua Harris example versus Francis Schaeffer.

John 7:17 "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.

Jeremiah 29:13 'You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.'<sup>14</sup> 'I will be found by you,' declares the LORD,

James 4:6 ... "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."<sup>7</sup> Submit therefore to God.

- B. The law (Moses) and the prophets, the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, all point to Christ, to His substitutionary, sacrificial death for the sins of those who trust Him as their crucified, risen Savior and God. All of the Scriptures are Christ's means of giving us the grace to believe He is our risen God and Savior.

John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "**We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth**, the son of Joseph."

John 5:39 "**You search the Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; **it is these that testify about Me**;

- C. The Scriptures themselves testify that God's Word is the primary means of grace whereby Christ's Spirit opens our eyes to the reality of Christ's deity and resurrection from the dead.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, for it **is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For **the word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it **is the power of God**.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 for **our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction**; ....

- E. Luke 24:28-31 Having prepared their hearts with the Scriptures, their hearts being hungry for more (urging Him to spend the night), the God opened their eyes to see Jesus as their once crucified, now risen Lord and Redeemer as they communed with Him.

Luke 24:28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.<sup>29</sup> But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them.<sup>30</sup> When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them.<sup>31</sup> **Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him**; and He vanished from their sight.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For **God**, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," **is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ**.

#### IV. Luke 24:32-35 Jesus transforms us from depressed skeptics to enthusiastic witnesses.

Luke 24:32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"<sup>33</sup> And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the

eleven and those who were with them,<sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."<sup>35</sup> They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

- 1 A. With the eyes of their hearts opened to see the resurrected Jesus, they were energized to make the 7 mile journey back to Jerusalem in the dark in order to share this good news with their fellow disciples.
- B. Christ had transformed them from depressed skeptics to enthusiastic witnesses. May He so transform us.
- C. Now at the end of Luke and throughout the book of Acts, the word "witness" is used numerous times to describe Christ's calling on His disciples. E.g., ...

Luke 24:48 **"You are witnesses of these things."**

Acts 1:8 ... **you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Acts 2:32 **"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."**

Acts 23:11 ... the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for **as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.**"

## Conclusion

- A. Why is this resurrection account exclusively in Luke? The church first receiving this gospel had to persevere and make disciples within a Greek culture that found the idea of a resurrected Messiah ridiculous, nonsense, as is the case increasingly in our western culture today. This text of Scripture, with all the Scriptures are the means by which Christ's Spirit creates, sustains, and grows our faith in Him as our crucified, risen, reigning, and returning God and Savior.
- B. So Christ is at this moment using this very text in Luke to keep us, His people, believing, for without His continuous help and power, doubts would overcome us. What does this say about Christ's heart toward us? Christian, when doubts arise, do not despair. It happens (24:38). But Christ's heart and kind intention is to keep our faith from failing. So call upon Him wholeheartedly for grace to help us when doubts and fears arise in our hearts.

Luke 24:36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you."<sup>37</sup> But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.<sup>38</sup> And He said to them, **"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"**

Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like



wheat;<sup>32</sup> but **I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail;**

- C. Some, like the late, popular Cornell University scientist, Carl Sagan, sadly have no eyes to see Christ, and with all of their earthly wisdom have no words of hope for the world.

*“I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But as much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an afterlife, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking.”* Carl Sagan

- D. But take heart Christian in One infinitely wiser than all the worlds intellectuals, our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, our only hope for lasting meaning and eternal life, Who inspired His apostle Paul to proclaim to us ...

1 Corinthians 15:20 **But now Christ has been raised from the dead**, the first fruits of those who are asleep.<sup>21</sup> For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ all will be made alive.**<sup>23</sup> **But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming ....**<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not *in vain in the Lord.***