

## *Luke's Gospel: Chapter 24*

# *The Resurrection and the Road to Emmaus...*

### *The Resurrection (Luke 24 v 1 to 12)*

“They went to the tomb” (v 1), where ‘they’ refers to the “women who had come with [Jesus] from Galilee” (Luke 23 v 55). Luke agrees with Mark 15 v 47 and Matthew 27 v 61 that they included Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, Joanna and “the other women with them” (v 10).

“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but... they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus” (v 2, 3) – the actual *event* of Jesus’ resurrection is not described, but the discovery of it is recorded in some detail. Here the women who intended to give Jesus’ body a more proper burial discovered that the stone was rolled away from the tomb, and that the body of Jesus was not inside the tomb.

Matthew 27 v 65, 66 tells us that there was a guard set round the tomb. The stone could not have been rolled away by the women, as they were not strong enough, nor by the disciples, as even if they were brave enough, they could not overcome the armed guards. No one else would have wanted to roll away the stone, and Matthew 28 v 2 tells us that it was an angel who rolled it away. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out: John 20 v 19 tells us that Jesus, in his resurrection body, could pass through material barriers. The stone was rolled away so that others could see in, and believe that Jesus Christ was, and is, risen from the dead!

- Consider the women on Easter morning – should they have been “perplexed” (v 4)? Why didn’t they remember Jesus’ words at first (v 6, 7)?
- To the disillusioned apostles the women’s story was wishful thinking (“an idle tale”, v 11). What distinguished Peter from the rest of the apostles?

“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise” (v 7) – to the women, it must have seemed like a long time ago that Jesus said these words (Luke 18 v 31 to 33). Nevertheless, they needed to remember them, and the angels reminded them of what Jesus said. “And they remembered his words” (v 8) – the first notes of hope were sounded in the hearts of the women when they remembered Jesus’ words. The empty tomb, the presence of angels, the words of the angels could not change their hearts – but *Jesus’ words* would change and cheer their hearts.

“Returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest” (v 9) – the women who saw the evidence of the resurrected Jesus, and remembered his words, were excited about what seemed to be the most wonderful news possible – that Jesus *was* alive and had triumphed over death. They would not be excited if Jesus had only somehow miraculously survived the ordeal of the cross. The news that he was alive meant so much more to them than knowing Jesus was a *survivor*; it meant he was the *conqueror* over death and that he was everything they had hoped for and more!

“Peter rose and ran to the tomb” (v 12) – both Peter and John ran to the tomb together (John 20 v 3 to 8). They saw grave clothes, but not as if they had been ripped off after a struggle. They saw the grave clothes of Jesus lying in perfect order, as if a body had just passed out of them. When John saw that, he believed, and Peter marveled. They had not seen the risen Jesus, but they knew that something *powerful* had happened to cause a body to leave behind the grave clothes in such a manner. “Marvelling at what had happened” – Peter and John both observed what was in the tomb, and John believed...

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### ***On the road to Emmaus (Luke 24 v 13 to 35)***

“Two of them were going to a village named Emmaus” (v 13) – on this Easter Sunday, these two ‘disciples’ (ordinary followers of Jesus, not apostles) were traveling to Emmaus from Jerusalem. “They were talking with each other” (v 14) – they spoke of the things that weighed on their hearts, things regarding the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. “Jesus himself drew near and went with them” (v 15) – Jesus came alongside these disciples, and walked with them, yet for a time they were prevented from recognizing Jesus (v 16). ““Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”” (v 18) – Jesus probably smiled when they said this! ““What things?”” (v 19) – Jesus skilfully played along with the conversation, encouraging the disciples to reveal their hearts. They explained what they *did* know about Jesus: (i) they knew his name and where he was from; (ii) that he was a prophet; (iii) that he was “mighty in deed and word”; (iv) they knew he was crucified; (v) and that others had said he was alive. “We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (v 21) – these disciples were disappointed, but their hope was misguided: Jesus would show them that their true hope was fulfilled in him, and his resurrection.

““Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”” (v 26) – they should have believed what the prophets had said, that the Messiah would suffer first and then be received in glory (see, for example, Isaiah 53 v 4, 5, 12). “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (v 27) – Jesus began to teach them what was surely one of the most spectacular Bible studies ever taught!

- How does Jesus’ use of the Scriptures teach us about their importance and reliability, and the way we should use them? Contrast the attitude of the two disciples before and after their meeting with Jesus. Why were they so slow to recognize him? In what ways was their experience a ‘parable’ for our instruction – what can we learn from this story?

“Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (v 31) – though the meal in v 30 was not a ‘sacramental’ meal as such, there was something in it that showed them who this mysterious guest was. Earlier, their eyes were restrained (v 16); now their eyes were opened and “he was known to them *in the breaking of the bread*” (v 35). Bible teachers have suggested some ways they might have recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread: (i) the way he took the place of the host with ‘a quiet air of majesty’; (ii) the way he gave the blessing over the meal; (iii) the pierced hands that gave them the bread. ““Did not our hearts burn within us while... he opened to us the Scriptures?”” (v 32) – even when they didn’t believe he was risen from the dead, their hearts burned within them because of the ministry of God’s word, and of Jesus, the living Word of God.

### ***Jesus appears to his disciples, and the Ascension (Luke 24 v 36 to 53)***

““Peace to you”” (v 36) – these were words with new meaning, now that Jesus had risen from the dead. Now true peace could come between God and man, and among men. ““See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself”” (v 39) – Jesus first displayed his wounded hands and feet to the disciples. Jesus wanted to establish his identity and that he had in a transformed state the same body he had before the cross, and upon the cross. ““Touch me, and see”” – Jesus wanted to assure them that he had a real, physical body.

““The Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead”” (v 46) – Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that the cross was a necessary part of God’s redemptive plan for mankind, and that it would be in the name of the crucified and risen Saviour that repentance and remission of sins would be preached to the world. ““You are witnesses of these things”” (v 48) – Jesus solemnly told them that they were witnesses – not only of the events surrounding Jesus’ work, but also of the commission to spread the gospel.

““I am sending the promise of my Father upon you”” (v 49) – the apostles could not do the work Jesus had called them to do unless they were “clothed with power from on high”, and that power would come as the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. “He parted from them and was carried up into heaven” (v 51) – Jesus had to ascend, so that the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit could take effect. Acts 1 v 3 tells us that Jesus’ ascension happened 40 days after his resurrection. He spent those 40 days proving the truth of his resurrection, and preparing his disciples for his departure and the coming of the Holy Spirit...