

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

JESUS SAVES

JESUS THE RISEN KING

The Risen King on the Emmaus Road

In our times people take ‘walks to Emmaus’ to experience Christian spiritual renewal. These ‘walks’ become an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ in a new way. The first walk to Emmaus began the afternoon of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead. Two people who had hoped that Jesus was the One who would ‘redeem’ Israel were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It was about a seven mile walk. Many sites have been suggested as to the location of the town. In reality, the town and the road to it are insignificant. What is significant is the conversation these two disciples had with Jesus along the way. This is one of at least eleven appearances of the Lord after His death. Let’s travel back in time 2,000 years and listen in on a conversation.

Read Luke 24:13-18 (ESV) ¹³ *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,* ¹⁴ *and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.* ¹⁵ *While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.* ¹⁶ *But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.* ¹⁷ *And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad.* ¹⁸ *Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”*

Luke identifies one of the people as being Cleopas. We cannot be sure who Cleopas was. Some speculate that this person might have been the same person mentioned in **John 19:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ *but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.* You will notice there is a spelling difference in the names. The name Cleopas is a Hebrew spelling while Clopas is Aramaic. We cannot be sure if the two are same. The individual walking with Cleopas to this day remains unidentified. Some believe they were husband and wife because the pair eventually invited Jesus to their home. Maybe they were married, or father and son, or two brothers, or friends. Once again, their relationship is not significant to the story. What is significant is their conversation with the risen Lord. H.A. Ironside said, “...Apart from the physical resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church has no foundation upon which to rest, and there would be no basis for the gospel message.”

As the two were discussing the recent events of Christ’s crucifixion and the empty tomb, the Lord shows up and joins in the conversation. This was a common practice in that day. As people traveled on foot, they would often join others in their hikes from one place to another. Their conversations with strangers would make the journey pass quicker and there was safety in numbers.

However, what occurred is more than just a casual joining of others for a walk! Jesus drew near as they were seeking to understand the truth about the Lord and His death. Part of our mission today is to follow the footsteps of Jesus and explain the gospel message to others. Here they were questioning each other about Jesus and He shows up! **James 1:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.* What a great truth! God reveals His truth, wisdom and understanding to those who want to know it and seek it.

They did not recognize Jesus immediately. Scripture explains the Lord kept them from recognizing Him. But why? The Bible does not specifically tell us. Mark, the only other writer who mentions this encounter, indicates that Jesus appeared to the two on the road in a different form. **Mark 16:12 (ESV)** ¹² *After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country.*

In these two disciples not recognizing the presence of Jesus, we can picture ourselves at times. For example, we often become so caught up in our daily activities and problems that we fail to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit gently whispering – *follow me, fear not, be still and know...*

It seems that since Jesus was going to clarify the scriptures, He did not want their understanding influenced by His bodily presence. **Romans 10:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* The two on the Emmaus Road came to know the risen Christ in the same way that we learn about Him today – through the scriptures!

The risen King is with us in our sorrow and confusion.

Read Luke 24:19-24 (ESV) ¹⁹ *And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”*

Even though these two knew biblical prophecies, they were not making the prophetic connections to Jesus. They had missed the picture of His suffering being His path to glory. They thought God should have intervened at the cross and at the moment they did not have a clue what the empty tomb meant. They had anticipated their coming Messiah as a person of political power and military might while missing the picture that His kingdom was not of this world. They did not yet realize that life grows out of death. On their journey of faith, they would realize that the risen King is the focus of all the scriptures.

Read Luke 24:25-27 (ESV) ²⁵ *And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

By Jesus **NOT** disclosing His identity, we realize that it was NOT His intention to use the print of the nails in His hands to prove He was who He said He was. The proof was in the scripture! Remember in the story of the rich man and Lazarus how Jesus said in **Luke 16:31 (ESV)** ³¹ ... *‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’*” Scripture has always been God’s design for revealing the Redeemer.

As we consider the scriptural revelations that Jesus made on the Emmaus Road, keep in mind that the first appearance of the Savior on this earth was not in the virgin birth. We have studied pictures of appearances of the Angel of the Lord. He appeared to Moses in the midst of a burning bush. We have seen the picture of His Shekinah glory as His presence filled Solomon’s temple. But, when our Savior was born, He literally became humanity – that is – flesh and blood and bone. God the Son had to be able to bleed in order to be the blood substitute for our sins. Sometimes, when looking at old photographs it takes a while to recognize individuals and sometimes someone else has to point people out we’ve never met before. Jesus pointed out many things to these two disciples.

The exact transcript of what Jesus explained on the Emmaus Road is not given. Warren Wiersbe suggests this: “Perhaps Jesus started at **Genesis 3:15**, the first promise of the Redeemer, and traced that promise through the Scriptures. He may have lingered at **Genesis 22**, which tells of Abraham placing his only beloved son on the altar. Surely He touched on Passover, the levitical sacrifices, the tabernacle ceremonies, the Day of Atonement, the serpent in the wilderness, the Suffering Servant in **Isaiah 53**, and the prophetic messages of **Psalms 22** and **69**. **The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page!** He taught them *all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*”

We can only speculate how much of the scripture that was related on the road. The distance they walked would have been comparable to our walking from Jacksonville to McCain Mall – a quick trip by car – not so quick on foot. It is likely that although Jesus shared many scriptures, there were still scriptures left for them to connect for themselves. **Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)** ¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* Understand that Christ is the thread woven through all the Scriptures, the central theme that binds them together.

If there is ever any doubt in your mind concerning the need for reading the Old Testament, remember that Jesus began His Bible study with Moses and the prophets. The risen King makes Himself known to His people.

Read Luke 24:28-35 (ESV) ²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus did not come into the disciples’ home until they invited Him. We do not genuinely learn about Jesus until we invite Him in!

Some suggest that Jesus was dressed as customary with Jewish men - an outer cloak with long flowing sleeves. As He stretched out His hands to break the bread, His sleeves would have naturally pulled back to reveal His scars. When they looked at Him, they saw the print of the nails. And, it very well may have happened that way.

But, somehow, I believe it was more than just the visible sight of the nail-scarred hands because they said: *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?* Paul would later explain in **Romans 10:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.* Salvation starts with the heart!

John wrote of his heart’s reaction when he first looked into the empty tomb. **John 20:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.* It was not the same for Thomas. He doubted until he saw the risen Jesus. But out of Thomas’ doubt, those who believe today discover a blessing! **John 20:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

When they recognized Him, He disappeared from their sight. Jesus was no longer limited by a physical body. They had already walked at least seven miles that day but they did not say, ‘Well, I’m tired and it’s late so I’ll just wait until tomorrow or next week or some more opportune time to share the good news about Jesus.’ No, they got up immediately and hot-footed it back to Jerusalem to tell the truth! Jesus is alive! We don’t know much about Cleopas or his companion but we know this – they both did what they called to do – that is share the good news. Let’s do what we are called to do – come and see – go and tell!