

CONCERNING THE WAY

July 10, 2012

LESSON 142: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



Luke 23:50-56 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and righteous man- (51) he had not voted for their plan and action-from the Jewish town of Arimathea; and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. (52) He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (53) Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb cut in the rock, in which no one had yet been laid. (54) It was the Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was just beginning. (55) So the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee, following close behind, saw the tomb and how his body was laid. (56) Then they went back and prepared spices and perfumes, and on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

- It was the custom that the bodies of criminals were not buried at all but left to the dogs and the vultures; but Joseph of Arimathea saved the body of Jesus from that humiliation. There was not much time left that day. Jesus was crucified on Friday; the Sabbath is Saturday. But the Jewish Sabbath day begins at 6 p.m. Friday. So the women had to hurry to see where the body was laid and go home and prepare their spices and ointments for it, because after 6 p.m. all work was illegal.
- All four Gospel writers gave details about Jesus' burial to show that Jesus was really dead. All the preparations for His burial would have been unnecessary if Jesus had not really died. If the Messiah hadn't really died there couldn't be a Resurrection. Joseph of Arimathea believed that Jesus is the Messiah. He was a secret disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27:57; John 19:38). Out of love for Jesus, he buried Him in his own tomb (Matthew 27:60). Jesus died on the Preparation Day (which most assume was Friday) before the Sabbath.
- Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the group that had condemned Jesus. We can assume that Joseph not agreeing with the others about Jesus alienated him from his fellow Council members, and having Jesus buried in his own tomb would just make that worse. Also, he had apparently just bought the land for this purpose, and then had "cut in the rock" (Matthew 27:60) a "new tomb". John 19:39 tells us that Nicodemus was with Joseph in burying Jesus' body.
- The preparation - Evidently Joseph had prepared the tomb very close to Mount Calvary, so they could quickly get the body buried before the Sabbath, which would begin at nightfall. So Jesus died on the sixth day of the week, His body "rested" in the tomb on the seventh day, while everyone else was also supposed to be resting, and then rose again "on the first day of the week" (Luke 24:1). As He had promised, He was "raised the third day" (Luke 9:22). Some try to fit one or two more days between His death and resurrection to make it three full days, but there's not really any believable way to do that, and it's not necessary. He was crucified on one day, rested in the tomb all through the second day, then was "raised the third day."

Chapter 24 - Sunday morning

Luke 24:1-12 But on the first day of the week at early dawn they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. (2) They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they went in, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) While they were puzzling over this, two men in dazzling robes suddenly stood beside them. (5) Because the women were terrified and were bowing their faces to the ground, the men asked them, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is living? (6) He is not here but has been raised. Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee, (7)

'the Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day.' (8) Then they remembered his words. (9) They returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and all the others. (10) The women who told the apostles about it were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some others. (11) But these words seemed nonsense to them, and they wouldn't believe them. (12) Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. He stooped down and saw only the linen cloths. Then he went home wondering about what had happened.

- Who is the “they” that went to the tomb? We have to go back to the previous chapter and the other gospels to get that. Chapter 23 verse 55 tells us that it was the “women who had come with Jesus from Galilee”. The first people to learn about the resurrection of Jesus were the women who had been faithful in following Him. Verse 10 tells us the names of some of the women. Instead of His body they saw two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning, an obvious description of angels. The angels reminded them of what Jesus had said about His crucifixion and resurrection (9:31; 18:31-34). Then the women went to tell the apostles and others what they had seen.
- The apostles did not believe the women because their words seemed like nonsense. This was because they had seen Jesus’ death and had seen His body put in the grave. But Peter ran to the tomb and found what the women had described. But notice even he did not understand what had happened.
- “Two men” - The account in Matthew 28:2 says there was an angel there, and Mark 16:5 says it was a “young man.” The two on the road to Emmaus said the women had “seen a vision of angels” (Luke 24:23). Angels can appear as men, and probably the women did see two angels, appearing as men, but only one did the speaking. It may have been Gabriel, who had earlier announced the birth of Christ (Luke 1:26, 31). These “two men” at the tomb could have also been the “two men” who “stood by” at the ascension (Acts 1:10).
- Only the linen cloths (verse 12) - These were the wide bandage-like strips that were wound around the body. Even though the body was gone, the clothes were in the same shape and position they had been when it was there. If someone had stolen the body but left the clothes, he would have had to unwrap it and the clothes would not have been in this position. See John 20:6-7. So, considering this, how did Jesus apparently rise?
- Peter went out to see if it was true. John tells us in his gospel that he went with Peter, but he got there first (John 20:3-10). However, it says that Peter entered the tomb before John. Considering what we know about Peter up to this point, and of his denials of Jesus, what does this say about Peter?
- Let’s read Matthew’s account to get more information:

Matthew 28:1-10 After the Sabbath, around dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to take a look at the tomb. (2) Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. For an angel of the Lord had come down from heaven, stepped forward, rolled the stone away, and was sitting on it. (3) His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. (4) Because they were so afraid of him, the guards shook and became like dead men. (5) But the angel said to the women, "Stop being afraid! For I know you're looking for Jesus, who was crucified. (6) He is not here. He has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying. (7) Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee, and you will see him there. Remember, I have told you!" (8) So they quickly left the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. (9) Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "**Greetings!**" They went up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. (10) Then Jesus said to them, "**Stop being afraid! Go and tell my**

brothers to leave for Galilee, and there they will see me."

- In the Mideast tombs were often carved out of caves in the rock. The body was wrapped in long linen strips like bandages and laid on a shelf in the rock tomb. The tomb was then closed by a large round which ran in a groove across the opening. When the women came, they found the stone rolled away. The tomb had been sealed by the Roman authorities and guarded (Matthew 27:62-66). It would not be possible for one man to move this stone, and it was guarded by Roman soldiers, so the Jewish leaders bribed the guards to tell everyone that the disciples came and stole the body while they were sleeping (Matthew 28:11-15). Why was the stone rolled away? Was it to let Jesus out?
- We know that Mary Magdalene, a disciple that Jesus had cast seven demons out of (Luke 8:2), was in this group of women along with "the other Mary", the mother of James and John (Matthew 27:56, 61, 28:1) who first discovered the empty tomb, and went to tell the disciples (John 20:1-2). She apparently followed Peter and John back to the tomb, and stayed there after the two disciples left, and Jesus appeared to her there:

John 20:11-18 Meanwhile, Mary stood crying outside the tomb. As she cried, she bent over and looked into the tomb. (12) She saw two angels in white clothes who were sitting down, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had been lying. (13) They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She told them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him." (14) After she had said this, she turned around and noticed Jesus standing there, without realizing that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus said to her, "**Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?**" Thinking he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away." (16) Jesus said to her, "**Mary!**" She turned around and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means "Teacher"). (17) Jesus told her, "**Don't hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'**" (18) So Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" She also told them what he had said to her.

- Some to this day think that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and that He wasn't really resurrected. Considering all we have just read, discuss how reasonable that theory is.
- Now back to Luke:

Luke 24:13-24 On the same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. (14) They were talking with each other about all these things that had taken place. (15) While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began to walk with them, (16) but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. (17) He asked them, "**What are you discussing with each other as you're walking along?**" They stood still and looked gloomy. (18) The one whose name was Cleopas answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know what happened there these days?" (19) He asked them, "**What things?**" They answered him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in the things that he did and said before God and all the people, (20) and how our high priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and had him crucified. (21) But we kept hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel. What is more, this is now the third day since these things occurred. (22) Even some of our women have startled us! They were at the tomb early this morning (23) and didn't find his body there, so they came back and told us that they had actually seen a vision of angels who said he was

alive. (24) Then some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn't see him."

- When Jesus asked these two disciples what they were discussing, they told Him what most of the nation believed at that time. The one named Cleopas commented that the stranger walking with them must be the only one living in all of Jerusalem who did not know what had happened. Luke was making the point that Jesus' ministry and death were known to everyone in the city and in most of the nation. The entire nation was responsible to accept the Messiah.
- Along with many others these two thought that Jesus was the One who was going to redeem Israel, that is, be the Messiah and bring in the kingdom. They even said that they had heard about the tomb being empty from some women. But still they were gloomy (verse 17). Apparently they just could not bring themselves to believe in the possibility that Jesus could have been resurrected.

Luke 24:25-32 Then Jesus said to them, **"O how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe everything the prophets said! (26) The Christ had to suffer these things and then enter his glory, didn't he?" (27) Then, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them all the passages of Scripture about himself. (28) As they came near the village where they were going, he acted as though he were going on farther. (29) But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening and the day is almost gone." So he went in to stay with them. (30) While he was at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it in pieces, and gave it to them. (31) Then their eyes were opened, and they knew who he was. And he vanished from them. (32) Then they said to each other, "Our hearts kept burning within us as he was talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us, didn't they?"**

- Notice that Jesus didn't show His nail scars here, but told them they should have believed what the prophets said! This is such an important lesson for us as well. Many choose to ignore the books of the prophets. God gave those prophecies to let us know what is coming! We must learn what the prophets said, so that we will not be caught by surprise and confused when those prophesied events happen, like these followers of Jesus.
- Jesus calls those who don't believe the Bible fools for not understanding and believing what the scriptures said. He explained from Moses and all the Prophets in the scriptures what had been said about Him. Those scriptures were not allegorical, as so many say today about prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled. And Jesus implied that these disciples should have understood from the Old Testament what had happened. This proves how important the Old Testament is, and that we know what it says, because it says so much about Jesus! Jesus here confirms that all the Scriptures point, from Genesis on, in one way or another, to the person and work of the Savior.
- "Enter in to his glory" - The Messianic Scriptures clearly teach that Christ would be crucified (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53), and then be raised (Psalm 16) and enter into His glory (Psalm 110), so that those who knew and believed the Scriptures should have been expecting these things to happen.
- "Our hearts kept burning" - "Christian heartburn" happens when the Lord—through the indwelling Spirit—opens the Scriptures today as we read and obey God's Word. When the Scriptures were explained, their eyes were opened (Luke 24:31). Later on their understanding will be opened (Luke 24:45).

Here is a list of all the appearances Jesus made after His resurrection that are recorded in the Bible. There could have been many more that were not recorded.

Resurrection Appearances

#	Appeared to	Location	Time	Scriptures
1	Mary Magdalene	Jerusalem	Sunday	Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18
2	Some other women	Jerusalem	Sunday	Matthew 28:9-10
3	Peter	Jerusalem	Sunday	Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
4	Emmaus disciples	Emmaus	Sunday	Luke 24:13-35
5	10 disciples	Jerusalem	Sunday	Mark 16:14; Luke 24:33-43; John 20:19-25
6	11 disciples	Jerusalem	A week later	John 20:26-31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
7	7 disciples	Galilee	?	John 21:1-25
8	500 at one time	?	?	1 Corinthians 15:6
9	James (brother of Jesus)	?	?	1 Corinthians 15:7
10	11 disciples	Galilee	?	Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18
11	11 disciples	Jerusalem	40 days later	Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12

Luke 24:33-35 That same hour they got up and went back to Jerusalem and found the eleven and their companions all together. (34) They kept saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon!" (35) Then they themselves began to tell what had happened on the road and how he was recognized by them when he broke the bread in pieces.

- It was not until after Jesus had broken bread with them that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Their experience with Jesus made them hurry back to Jerusalem (seven miles) and confirm the Resurrection to the Eleven and others who were meeting together. The disciples who were meeting together now had at least three reports of the Resurrection: the women, Peter, and Cleopas and his companion. But still they did not understand that Jesus had been resurrected (verse 37-38 below).
- The Bible doesn't give us details about the appearance of Jesus to Peter, but we can guess why Jesus appeared to Peter alone. Peter needed to be restored to fellowship with Jesus after denying Him three times, and it needed to be private between the two of them.

Luke 24:36-49 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." (37) They were startled and terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. (38) He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why are doubts arising in your hearts? (39) Look at my hands and my feet, for it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (40) After he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. (41) While they still could not believe it for joy and were full of amazement, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" (42) They gave him a piece of broiled fish, (43) and he took it and ate it in their presence. (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, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled." (45) Then he opened their minds so that they might come to understand the Scriptures. (46) He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ was to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, (47) and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things. (49) I

am sending on you what my Father promised. But stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Let's look at John's account of this:

John 20:19-29 It was the evening of the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, **"Peace be with you."** (20) After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side, and when they saw the Lord the disciples were overjoyed. (21) Jesus said to them again, **"Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."** (22) When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, **"Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. If you retain people's sins, they are retained."** (24) Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called the Twin, wasn't with them when Jesus came. (25) So the other disciples kept telling him, **"We have seen the Lord!"** But he told them, **"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger into them, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe!"** (26) A week later his disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were shut, Jesus came, stood among them, and said, **"Peace be with you."** (27) Then he said to Thomas, **"Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, but believe."** (28) Thomas answered him, saying **"My Lord and my God!"** (29) Jesus said to him, **"Is it because you have seen me that you have believed? How blessed are those who have never seen me and yet have believed!"**

- In these appearances to the disciples we learn some things about the resurrected Jesus:
 - Jesus proved to His followers that He had really been resurrected. Not only did He stand in their presence so they could see Him and His wounds, but He also ate food in front of them to show that He was not a ghost. In the John account we see Thomas actually touches Him. Do you realize that Jesus, right now and forevermore, has a real, physical, flesh and bone body (Luke 24:39)?
 - He had a physical body, but it had capabilities that normal human bodies do not have. He could appear and disappear at will. And verse 39 also tells us that it was still Jesus, He retained His identity. He was the same person, fully God and fully human, but in a resurrected heavenly body. This gives us information about what our resurrection bodies might be like, because our bodies will be like His (Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2). We also will continue to eat food in the ages to come (Revelation 2:7; 19:9; 22:2). We will retain our identities, we will be able to eat food, we will still have flesh and bone bodies, but we will have abilities far beyond what these earthly bodies have.
 - Jesus showed His followers all the facts written... in the Old Testament about the Messiah. The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms are the three divisions of the Old Testament sometimes referred to in Jesus' day. In other words He showed them from different parts of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 2:7; 16:10; 22:14-18; Isaiah 53; 61:1) that He is the Messiah and that He must suffer and rise from the dead (Luke 24:26,46). Because of His death and resurrection, the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins could be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, because they were witnesses of His death and His rising from the dead. This became the outline for Luke in his second book (Acts 1:8).
- Some liberal teachers and pastors interpret the resurrection as spiritual, rather than physical. They say His spirit never died so He could not be resurrected. But Jesus doesn't allow that interpretation. You can't

honestly come to that conclusion when you read these passages. Jesus Himself disproves those who argue that the “appearances” to His disciples were “spiritual appearances,” or even hallucinations. Even they at first thought He was a spirit, but He then showed them the scars of the spikes that had pierced His hands and feet, and then even ate food in front of them. Even “Doubting Thomas” couldn’t deny the reality of His bodily resurrection any longer, and the disciples never doubted it again.

- It is interesting that Christ did not use the more common phrase, “flesh and blood.” His blood had been shed on the cross, as the price of our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19), and now “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). Does this mean our glorified bodies will not need blood?
- “Come to understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45) – The Bible can become easy to be understood by the sincere believer who diligently studies it. But it is mostly incomprehensible foolishness to the unbeliever, because “a person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the things of God's Spirit, for they are nonsense to him. He can't understand them because they are spiritually evaluated.” (1 Corinthians 2:14). When Christ, by His indwelling Holy Spirit, opens our understanding, only then do we “understand the scriptures.”
- “Repentance and forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:47). You can see here that it’s not enough just to believe the gospel. There must be repentance involved to be forgiven of your sins. Repentance is not just being sorry for past sins, but a complete change of mind toward God and toward sin, which is then proved real by a changed life (see Acts 26:20).
- “What my Father promised” Luke 24:49 - This promise is the Holy Spirit, a promise made to the disciples in the upper room before the crucifixion (John 14:16-17). Christ also had told them He was sending them out into the world (John 20:21), but first they had to wait until the promised Spirit is sent to empower them for that service.

Luke 24:50-53 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, lifted up his hands, and blessed them. (51) While he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. (52) They worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (53) And they were continually in the temple blessing God.

- In the vicinity of Bethany, that is, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:9-11 below). The disciples responded with worship and great joy and kept praising God in the temple. This set the stage for Luke’s next book which began with Jesus’ followers staying in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:4-14). Here’s a little taste of the beginning of Acts to whet your appetite. We’ve already done a study on the book of Acts, and you can download the lessons from Concerningtheway.com.

Acts 1:1-14 In my first book, Theophilus, I wrote about everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning, (2) up to the day when he was taken up to heaven after giving orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. (3) After he had suffered, he had shown himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and telling them about the kingdom of God. (4) While he was meeting with them, he ordered them, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the Father's promise, about which you heard me speak. (5) For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (6) Now those who had come together began to ask him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He answered them, "It is not for you to know what times or periods the Father has set by his own authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (9) After saying this, he was taken up while

they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, two men in white robes were standing right beside them. (11) They asked, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go up into heaven." (12) Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. (13) When they came into the city, they went to the upstairs room where they had been staying. They were Peter and John; 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) With one mind all of them kept devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

- The challenging question in this story of the resurrection is what the angels said in the tomb, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is living?" Where are you looking for Jesus?
 - Some think of Him as the greatest man and teacher who ever lived, as one who lived the greatest life ever seen on earth; but who then died. That's not an accurate view. Jesus is not dead; he is alive. He is not just a hero of the past; he is a living reality of the present.
 - Some think of Jesus as a man whose life must be studied, his words examined, his teaching analyzed. It's possible to fall into the trap of thinking of Christianity and Christ as just something to be studied. Bible studies and studies on the life of Christ are extremely important, but Jesus is not only someone to be studied; he is someone to be met, to get to know more and more, to be lived with every day. He is not just a character in a book, even if that book is the greatest in the world; he is a living presence.
 - Some see in Jesus the perfect pattern and example. He is that; but a perfect example can be a very disheartening thing, can't it? Some of us when we were young at school learned to write using a writing book. At the top it had a line of printed writing; below it had blank lines where we had to copy it. At first it was so difficult to reproduce that perfect pattern! It was so frustrating! But then the teacher would come and, with her hand, guide our hand over the lines and we got better and better at it, nearer the example. That is what Jesus does. He is not only the pattern and the example. He helps us and guides us and strengthens us to follow that pattern and example. He is not just a model for life; he is a living presence to help us to live.
 - Jesus is first and foremost our Savior, the One who reconciled us to God by taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself. He is right now physically at the right hand of the Father in heaven, interceding for us and waiting for the Father to "make His enemies His footstool" (Romans 8:34, Psalm 110:1, Acts 7:55-56). He has left the written Word for us to learn about Him and be a witness, and the Holy Spirit to be His constant presence within those who belong to Him until He returns.

That ends our study in the book of Luke. I hope it has been a blessing to you! Every time I read the gospels again I learn more about Jesus. I encourage you to study Luke's sequel, the book of Acts, to see the beginning of the Church and what the Apostles did after Jesus ascended into heaven.