

RESURRECTION ~ WEEK 3 ~ LUKE 24

STUDY NOTES

In my view, Luke gives the fullest account of the events surrounding Jesus' resurrection. This is marked by his explanatory details that can be seen as "gap-fillers." For example, while Mark and Matthew note that the women went to the tomb after the Sabbath, Luke points out that they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment (23:56). Luke clearly reports that the women told the disciples about their meeting at the tomb, in part because of their "remembrance" of Jesus' words (24:6, 8). (Note, however, that there is no mention of the disciples being told to meet Jesus in Galilee; for in Luke/Acts, the disciples must remain for a time in Jerusalem.) Further, Luke plants the seeds for the cause of "doubt," noting that, prior to their own meeting with Jesus, the disciples thought the women's report was an "idle tale," and even Peter was unsure (24:11-12).

Luke's resurrection story, which appears to take place all in 1 day, is broken into three sections and a conclusion:

24:1-12 – The "standard" story (told in varying degrees in all 4 gospels)

24:13-35 – The walk to Emmaus (and meal)

24:36-49 – In the upper room

24:50-53 – Conclusion/overlap with beginning of Acts (which continues what Jesus "did" and "taught")

Through these sections, Luke shows the main point of the resurrection is the revealing of God's divine plan for Israel and the world and that plan has come to its unexpected climax in Jesus' resurrection. Further, the disciples, and us, are commissioned to bring that message to the world. Thus, the resurrection is about 1) the meaning of history; and 2) the task and shape (pattern of life) of the church. This emphasis is accomplished in part by Luke's use of the "it is necessary" language (and variants) [see 24:25-26; cf. 24:44; 24:36//2:14, 29]. The resurrection completes the "necessary" things that must happen to the Messiah (to fulfill Scripture).

Of particular interest (for me, at least) is the Emmaus road incident (section 2). Two "followers" are on a journey (which is a theme in Luke [9:51 begins Jesus' long journey to Jerusalem—and his death roughly 14 chapters (well over half the book) later] and Acts [the journey of the apostles, most noticeably Paul]). Jesus shows up to journey with them, but their eyes are "kept from recognizing him" (v. 16). While they experience glimpses of knowledge, including a lengthy messianic scripture exposition, it is not until Jesus, as *host in their house*, takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them that they recognized him. After their recognition, Jesus vanishes, and they reminisce about how their hearts burned within them while they learned about Jesus during the scripture exposition.

The “recognition” of Jesus (“their eyes were opened, and they recognized him”; *auton de dienoichthesan hoi ophthalmoi, kai epegnosan auton*, 24:31) shares a very important connection linguistically with the Greek (Septuagint) of Genesis 3:7 (“the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”; *dienoichthesan hoi ophthalmoi ton duo kai egnosan hoti gymnoi esan*). The real significance of this, if it is a true connection, is the long exile of the human race (and not just Israel) is OVER.

Further, this incident shows two actions of Jesus that continued into the practice of the early church (thus, the church continues the ministry and teaching of Jesus). First, scripture teaching (vs. 27, 32, 45). Second, “breaking of bread” (vs. 30, 31, 35; Lord’s Supper?). Both of these are present in Acts 2:42. The instruction of Jesus (after Emmaus) demonstrates how Scripture reveals who Jesus is, who they are in relation to him, and what they must do now—the NEW way of reading Scripture. Jesus’ actions provide the pattern for church life, and the church continues what Jesus did and taught.

Finally, just prior to Jesus’ ascension, Jesus revealed that they are now in the NEW AGE, which is characterized by a message of repentance and forgiveness, for all nations (vs. 46-48). The ascension marks Jesus as the enthroned true lord of the world; he reigns now with God, and the kingdom is now being restored (Acts 1:6). If this is so, then Jesus’ followers are now to confront the kingdoms of this world. This is seen in Acts, where the first section, chapters 1-12, concludes with the death of a Jewish tyrant (12:29), and the second section, chapters 13-28, ends with unhindered preaching in Rome, the capital of the world. Israel’s messiah has been vindicated through the ascension as the true lord of the world. Those who oppressed Israel and Jesus—both Jewish and Roman—are now subject to worship Jesus and candidates for the gospel.

One question I never answered for myself: When did Jesus appear to Simon (v. 34)?

WORSHIP

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How does Luke 24:1-12 differ from Mark’s and from Matthew’s stories? What is the main emphasis of vs. 1-12?
2. Imagine you are writing a script for a play about the walk to Emmaus. What things are the two followers talking about before Jesus shows up? What tones of voice do you hear? What hopes are gone? What plans might they be making? How do they react to the stranger?
3. Why did Jesus teach them Scripture like this instead of simply revealing himself?
4. Why did they recognize Jesus as they sat at the table with him?
5. What does the scripture teaching and bread-breaking teach us about our own practice in the church?

6. What had happened in the meantime to the rest of the Eleven?
7. Is “peace be with you” (v. 36) a good summary of the gospel? Why or why not? Why were they frightened when Jesus appeared to them?
8. What is the mission Jesus gives to them now? Who is it for?
9. What is the point of the ascension, and how does the structure of Acts demonstrate this?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What is the gospel? What is the meaning of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus? How could Luke 24 help you to teach others about Jesus?
2. How can you fulfill Jesus’ mission in your own life? What people can you be a “witness” for? How could you apply the gospel to their lives?
3. Which parts of the Old Testament make your heart “burn” with recognition of Jesus? Why?
4. How do/can we recognize Jesus during the Lord’s Supper? Should we reconsider how we practice the Lord’s Supper and what we focus on?
5. Is following Jesus more about knowing HIM, or knowing ABOUT him? Why? Which approach do you emphasize more? Do you need to change? Is a balance necessary?
6. Read 24:46-48. How does Jesus “open” our minds to understand Scripture? What does it mean for Bible reading to read with this sort of understanding?

PRAY FOR ENLIGHTENMENT, OPEN MINDS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, AND FOR EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY (“OPEN CHAIR”)