
Lesson 57

The Travelers to Emmaus

The Scripture Lesson

Luke 24:13-32

The followers of Jesus were very, very sad. They were also perplexed — that is, there were many questions that they could not answer. They could not understand why Jesus had to die. They thought He was the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel. And now He was *dead!* They had no idea how things, now, could ever turn out for the good of God’s people.

Sunday morning things began to change. There were reports that Jesus had risen from the dead. The hopes of the disciples must have begun to rise a bit. But did a possible resurrection answer their questions? No. Their perplexity only grew. For, if Jesus were going to rise anyway, why did He die in the first place? Besides this, the women who saw Him after His resurrection said that He was somehow *different* from what He was before. What could that mean for the establishment of His kingdom?

The followers of Jesus waited together, hoping that something would happen to clear things up. But the hours passed, and nothing happened. Finally, two men from the village of Emmaus decided that they had better head for home. They had about seven miles to walk, and that would take two or three hours. So they left.

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On their way to Emmaus they kept talking about Jesus and about the mystery of His death on the cross. Then Jesus Himself appeared a little behind them, caught up with them, and walked for a ways with them. To them, Jesus was just another traveler, for He made it so that they could not recognize Him. Jesus listened for a moment or two and then asked them what they were talking about, and why they were so sad. They told Him about their problem. We thought that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they explained. Last Friday our leaders killed Him. There are reports that He has risen. But we cannot figure out why He *died*; and, if there is a resurrection, we do not understand that either.

Then Jesus said to them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” Jesus’ followers, you see, believed *some* of what the prophets had spoken. They believed that the Messiah would establish a kingdom of glory. But they overlooked other prophecies, which showed clearly that Jesus *must* suffer these things in order to redeem His people.

To make this clear to them, Jesus pointed them to the Scriptures. The Old Testament had pictures of a suffering, dying Christ: like the

sacrifice of animals, and the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat. And there were prophecies, like Isaiah 53. Perhaps it was to some of these, and surely many more, to which Jesus pointed them. He showed them that it was not that the Scriptures were not *clear*; it was that they were slow to *believe*.

The two men began to understand. When they reached Emmaus, they wanted to be able to hear more. Jesus agreed to stay. But He did not stay long. When they sat down to supper, Jesus asked the blessing. He broke the bread and gave it to them. And suddenly their eyes were opened and they knew Him. This Man, who had made the Scriptures so clear, was none other than Jesus Himself. But before they could say another word, He was gone — vanished out of their sight.

Jesus' Appearance to the Disciples

Luke 24:33-43

At the very moment that the men from Emmaus recognized Jesus, He disappeared from their sight. They wished He had stayed, but they knew that He had already given them what they needed. So excited were they, therefore, that they simply could not keep the good news to themselves. They wanted more than anything else to share it with their friends. So they set out at once to return to the city.

When they reached Jerusalem they went to the house in which they had earlier left the disciples. And there they found the Eleven (except for Thomas) and some other of Jesus' followers. They learned that they were not the only ones with good news. For the disciples cried out happily, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon (Peter)."

We do not know anything about Jesus' appearance to Peter, but we can guess why Jesus did show Himself to that disciple. Peter had denied his Lord. He had said with an oath that he had no part with Jesus of Nazareth. But that was not true. Peter really loved Jesus and *did* have a part with Him. He was terribly sorry for his sin, and he wanted to be able to say that to his beloved Master. Besides, he needed Jesus' forgiveness.

Christ understood the anguish of Peter's soul, so He came to him alone and gave him the wonderful assurance that his sin was forgiven him. That word must have been of great comfort to Peter — as it is also to us when we fall into sin and, with true sorrow of heart, flee to Jesus for pardon.

The two men from Emmaus then told their story. There must have been great joy among Jesus' followers, but they still wondered what it was that had been seen. If Jesus' *body* had risen, and if they were seeing Him in His body, how could He suddenly *disappear*?

As they were talking about problems such as these, Jesus suddenly stood in their midst. The disciples were *afraid*. For, you see, they knew that the doors of their house were shut tight. What they were seeing, therefore, could not very well be Jesus' risen *body*, for bodies must go through *doorways* in order to enter a room. They must be seeing a *ghost*.

Jesus knew that they were afraid, so He began at once to show them that they had no reason to fear. Did they wonder if this was really Jesus? "Behold my hands and my feet," Jesus said, "that it is I myself." And when they looked, they saw the nail prints. This must be the Lord. But did they still wonder if this was the *real body* of the Lord? "Handle me, and see," Jesus said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." So they touched Him; and they found it to be just as He said. Difficult as it was to believe, they knew that it was *Jesus* who stood before them, and in His own resurrection body. It was *changed*, they knew, for He could appear and disappear as He pleased — but it was His own real body. And when they knew this at last, they were filled with great joy.

Memory Work

Group A

Luke 24:25, 26 "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Group B

Luke 24:26 "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

ACTIVITIES

This paper has been prepared in the hope that it will be used by students of all ages. The activities are designed so that the oldest will be challenged, and the youngest will find some of it within reach. Parents should encourage their children to attempt only what they can handle without frustration. For some that will be much, for others little.

DO YOU AGREE?

If you do, write Yes; if you do not, write No.

- ___ 1. When two followers of Jesus left for Emmaus early Sunday evening, they had not yet heard reports of Jesus' resurrection.
- ___ 2. When they were on the way home, Jesus Himself joined them and asked what they were talking about that made them so sad.
- ___ 3. The two men explained that Jesus of Nazareth, the One whom the Jews hoped would be the redeemer of Israel, had been crucified.
- ___ 4. Jesus called them fools, and told them that their problem was that they were slow to believe everything that the Scriptures had foretold about the Messiah.
- ___ 5. When they reached Emmaus the two travelers hoped that this stranger, who had rebuked them for their unbelief, would now leave them.
- ___ 6. Jesus, however, stayed for awhile with them and proceeded even to serve them at their own table.
- ___ 7. At that point they recognized Him, but then He suddenly disappeared.
- ___ 8. On returning to Jerusalem the two men found the followers of Jesus assembled together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews.
- ___ 9. The men from Emmaus learned that, while they were gone from Jerusalem, Jesus had also appeared to His beloved disciple John.
- ___ 10. While the disciples were discussing these developments, Jesus Himself knocked on their door.
- ___ 11. The disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus because they thought they were seeing a spirit.

- ___ 12. Jesus calmed their fears by showing them His hands and feet and by eating a piece of fish.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER READERS

1. After Jesus died, His followers were not only very sad, they were also very troubled, very perplexed. Why were they perplexed?
2. On Sunday morning those disciples of Jesus began to hear stories about angels and about Jesus appearing. They were excited about that — but just as confused as ever. Why would it not help them solve the mystery, if they knew nothing more than that Jesus had risen?
3. Jesus appeared to the travelers to Emmaus in order to help them understand. What were these two men talking about when Jesus joined them on the way? Why did they not recognize Jesus, when He was right next to them?
4. When Jesus asked the two travelers why they were troubled, what did they answer?
5. Why did Jesus call the men fools? How did He then make it clear to them that they should have known why it was necessary that Jesus die?
6. How did it happen that Jesus went into the men's home? What new thing did the two disciples of Jesus learn there?
7. What did the two men decide to do with the good news? When they returned to Jerusalem, what did they learn from other of Jesus' followers?
8. Jesus must have appeared to Peter because Peter wanted and needed that appearance to him. Why did Peter want so badly to see Jesus? How should we be like Peter?
9. Why were the disciples terrified when they saw Jesus?
10. How did Jesus prove to them that they were seeing, not a spirit, but Jesus' own resurrected body? Did the disciples then believe?

COMPLETING SENTENCES

1. By late afternoon on Resurrection Sunday, the disciples of Jesus must have been fully persuaded that something miraculous had occurred with respect to the body of their Lord. Not only was there the reported message of the angels, but Jesus Himself had been heard and seen and touched by competent witnesses. Still, the little group of followers of Jesus who were gathered in Jerusalem that day were baffled. What kind of “resurrection” could this be, they wondered, if it left grave clothes untouched, and if, as seemed to be the case, Jesus’ appearances were fleeting — here for a moment, and then gone.

As the day wore on, and there were no further developments, two men of the company decided that they had better head for home, since the village in which they lived, called _____, was about threescore _____ from Jerusalem (Luke 24:13).

2. On the way, these two followers of Jesus continued talking about the things that had _____. They were perplexed. The truth is that by Jesus’ death all of the types and shadows of the old dispensation were fulfilled and therefore set aside. But the disciples of Jesus did not yet understand that. They had expected redemption through Jesus, but had always assumed that redemption was connected to Israel as a nation, and that it must involve deliverance from the power of Rome. With that kind of understanding of redemption, these two followers of Jesus could not understand at all why Jesus had to *die*. And as they _____ together and _____, Jesus Himself drew near and _____ with them (Luke 24:15).

3. The appearance of Jesus to these two travelers was in another _____ (Mark 16:12) — that is, in a form different from that in which He appeared to Mary and to the women. Still, however, the two men would have been able to recognize Him, were it not for the fact that their eyes were _____ that they should not _____ Him (Luke 24:16).

4. Jesus was therefore able simply to join in the conversation of these men, and thus also give them the instruction that they so sorely needed. After listening quietly to their discussion for a few moments, Jesus asked, “What _____ of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye _____, and are _____?” (Luke 24:17).

5. The travelers were surprised that anyone in Jerusalem could hear so much of their conversation and not immediately know what the problem was. One of them, therefore, whose name was _____, answered, “Art thou only a _____ in Jerusalem, and hast not _____ the things which are come to pass there in these _____?” (Luke 24:18).

6. When Jesus responds by asking, “What things?” the men give Him a brief account of how Jesus was delivered by their _____ to be _____ to death. What troubled them, the men said, was that they had _____ that it was Jesus who would _____ Israel. In other words, their hopes had been dashed by Jesus’ *death*. They add that, besides all this, “Today is the _____ day since these things were done.” This is a clear reference to Jesus’ promise that He would rise again; but from the rest of the conversation it’s clear that they did not believe that their problem would be *solved* if Jesus *arose*. Resurrection or not, they still did not have any idea how the crucifixion could possibly fit into the work of Israel’s redeemer (Luke 24:19-24).

7. “O _____, and _____ of heart to believe all that the _____ have spoken,” Jesus said. And He adds, “_____ not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his _____?” Had they not been so slow to believe, they would have seen from the Scriptures themselves the *necessity* of the cross. Beginning at _____, therefore, and all the _____, Jesus

patiently _____ unto them in _____ the Scriptures the things concerning _____ (Luke 24:25-27).

8. A wonderful sermon that was. Two hours of it was not enough for the travelers to Emmaus. They were beginning to understand, and they wanted more. When they drew near to the _____, and Jesus made as though He would have gone _____, the two men _____ Him, saying, _____ with us, for it is toward _____ (Luke 24:28, 29).

9. In the breaking of bread at the table, however, their eyes were _____ and they knew Him; and He _____ out of their sight. Disappointed, they must have been, that He was gone; but, at the same time, they were excited about the new insights they had been given. Their hearts, they said, had _____ within them, with the new hope kindled by the opened Scriptures (Luke 24:30-32).

10. The two disciples in Emmaus could not keep all this to themselves. Not only had they seen the Lord, but they had begun also to see *purpose* in the vexing events of the past several days. So, though it was already evening, they rose up the same _____, and returned to _____, where they found the _____ gathered together, and them that were _____ them (Luke 24:33).

11. The two men from Emmaus discovered, on their arrival, that there had been further developments in Jerusalem during their absence. Jesus had appeared to Peter. Why to Peter alone? Jesus surely knew the anguish of Peter's soul for having denied his Master. A private appearance, therefore, about which the Scriptures say not a word, is appropriate for what was surely a time of confession and forgiveness. The much-relieved Peter reported his experience to the rest of the Eleven, and they in turn greeted the men from Emmaus with the joyful news, "The Lord is risen

_____ , and hath appeared unto _____ " (Luke 24:34).

12. The men from Emmaus then told what things were done to them in the way, and how Jesus was _____ to them in the _____ of bread (Luke 24:35). The majority of those present, however, had still not with their own eyes seen the risen Lord. Still therefore the doubts and misunderstandings must have persisted in the minds of some; for we read that, when the travelers to Emmaus told their story to the _____, neither _____ they them (Mark 16:13).

13. As they were thus speaking, Jesus Himself stood in the _____ of them and said, _____ be unto you. The disciples were nevertheless _____ and _____, because they _____ that they were seeing a _____ (Luke 24:36, 37). For, not only had Jesus appeared suddenly *among* them, but He had done so at a time when the doors were bolted shut where the disciples were assembled for _____ of the _____ (John 20:19).

14. The disciples were just barely beginning to understand the nature of the resurrection. Because the tomb was empty they had figured that His resurrection was a resurrection of the *body*. But, what kind of "body" is it that can pass through walls and locked doors? They must have concluded that what they were seeing was not really the resurrected body of Jesus but a ghost. Understanding their difficulty, Jesus set about teaching them that they were wrong. "Why are ye _____?" He asked. "Behold my _____ and my _____, that it is _____ myself; _____ me, and see; for a spirit hath not _____ and _____, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:38, 39).

15. Knowing, as they did, that Jesus had just entered the room through locked doors, the disciples understood that He was not now teaching them that the resurrected body was one of real

flesh and bones. It isn't. They understood that Jesus was adapting Himself for the moment to their world, in order to convince them that what they were seeing was in truth the *same body* of the *same Person*, though now in a new and wonderful state. While they were still wondering about all this, and while they yet _____ not for _____, Jesus asked, "Have ye here any _____?" And when they gave Him a piece of a broiled _____ and of a _____, He took it and did _____ it before them (Luke 24:41-43). Thus did Jesus provide the disciples with decisive proof that He had risen bodily from the dead.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Can you explain why the disciples were still in a state of confusion even after the resurrection was announced by the angel, the empty grave was examined by Peter and John, and Jesus Himself appeared to the women?
2. Mark tells us that Jesus appeared to the travelers "in another form" (Mark 16:12). Luke says that "their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:16). It would seem that if either one of those were true, the other would be unnecessary. How, do you suppose, did they *both* work to keep the two men from recognizing Jesus immediately?
3. The purpose of this appearance seems to be the instruction that Jesus gave concerning the necessity of His death. Why, then, would He withhold, for a time, His identity from the travelers? Would they not have learned just as well (or better) if they knew all along that their instructor was Jesus, not a stranger?
4. In recounting for Jesus the sad events of the past several days, the two travelers placed the first responsibility for Jesus' death not on Pilate but on the chief priests (see Luke 24:20). Do you think that the opposition of Israel's spiritual leaders *added* to the disciples' confusion at this time?
5. The travelers told Jesus about the report of the women and the report of Peter and John, but they do not indicate whether they *believed* those reports. It seems clear that the disciples considered the reported resurrection not as a possible *solution* to the mystery but rather as *part of* the mystery. Do you understand why that would be true for them?
6. Jesus rebuked the two men for their slowness to believe *all* that the prophets had spoken, and then He expounded to them *all* the Scriptures concerning Himself (see Luke 24:25-27). Why is there this clear emphasis on "*all*"?
7. Jesus vanished from their sight at the moment of recognition. By doing that, Jesus taught them something about the nature of His resurrection. Can you tell what that was?
8. The gospel writers give detailed information about the appearance of Jesus to the travelers to Emmaus, but tell us nothing about the appearance to Peter. Why were they silent about the latter?
9. The travelers from Emmaus found the disciples gathered together behind locked doors, for fear of the Jews. What reason did they have to fear the Jews?
10. When the disciples saw Jesus they were terrified, thinking they saw a spirit. To assure them that what they were seeing was not a spirit, Jesus said to them, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). The truth is, however, that His resurrected body was not flesh and bones. Nor did His resurrected body have any need for food and drink. How did the disciples *know*, without being *told*, that Jesus was not teaching them that His glorified body was the same body of solid material, flesh and bones, as He had had in the state of humiliation? Can you explain what it was that Jesus *did* teach them?
11. Jesus told His disciples to "handle" Him (Luke 24:39). The gospel writers do not tell us whether the disciples did in fact *do* that. Do you think they did?