

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 26

The Tomb

Luke 24:1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

On Friday afternoon, the body of the Lord is safely in the tomb. In the minds of all of His followers, His grave represents the end of their hopes and dreams. The three-year journey has come to an abrupt halt. On Sunday, April 8, 30 AD, some of the women journey to the tomb to complete the preparation of His body. This procedure is not normal; however, because sundown was approaching so quickly on Friday, they did not have time to complete the customary procedure to anoint the body for burial.

No Body

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

The picture to the right is the generally accepted tomb of the Lord. The stone is not present in this picture.



Two Angels

Luke 24:4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; ⁵ and as *the women* were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." ⁸ And they remembered His words, ⁹ and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

Upon arriving at the tomb on Sunday morning, the women cannot understand why the tomb is empty with the linen clothes there but the body is gone.

As in Acts 1:18, the angels appear in the likeness of men. The frequency with which Luke mentions angels is a peculiar feature in his Gospel. An angel appeared to Zechariah, the Virgin Mary and the shepherds in the field when the Lord was born; all are mentioned only by Luke. He makes certain that we know that it is an angel that is appearing at the tomb.

In verse 9, we see the interesting fact that the women remember the angel's words and report what they see and hear. They are the first to preach the message of the resurrected Lord.

The Women

Luke 24:10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

Mary Magdalene: Magdala is a town on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias. We first saw this Mary in Luke 8:3 as one of the women who "ministered to Christ" from her personal finances. Her motive was that of gratitude for the deliverances the Lord had brought to them. Out of this Mary seven demons were cast. Gratitude to her great Deliverer prompts her to become His follower. She accompanies Jesus on His last journey to Jerusalem. She stands near the cross. She remains there until all is over and the body is taken down and laid in Joseph's tomb. Here she is at the tomb with Salome and Joanna. She is the first to hasten to tell Peter and John who are probably living together at this time according to John 20:1-2. She then returns to the tomb where she lingers thoughtfully, weeping at the door of the tomb. The idea that this Mary was the woman who was a sinner caught in adultery, or that she was unchaste, is altogether groundless.

Joanna: Joanna is first seen in Luke 8:3 as one of the women whom Jesus had healed and who ministered to Him out of her own private means. She is the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza.

Mary, the Mother of James (Salome): She is the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John and probably the sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord. She sought for her sons to have places of honor in Christ's kingdom.

Their message of the empty tomb is nonsense to the men and it causes them all to return to the tomb to see with their own eyes.

It should be noted that if the body of the Lord had been stolen from the graves by his friends, they probably would not have taken the trouble to remove the linen clothes and wrap them together in an orderly fashion.

Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our

rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also 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 exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

The events in these verses are not found in any of the other Gospels. Of the eleven appearances of Christ after His resurrection, perhaps none is so interesting as the one described in this passage. Here we see that the Old Testament is full of Christ.

1. Christ was the Substance of every Old Testament sacrifice ordained in the law of Moses.
2. Christ was the True Deliverer and King, whereas all the judges and deliverers in Jewish history were archetypes.
3. Christ was the coming Prophet Who was greater than Moses and His glorious coming filled the pages of the prophets.
4. Christ was the True seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head.
5. Christ was the True Shiloh to Whom the people were to be gathered.
6. Christ was the True Scapegoat.
7. Christ was the True Tronze Terpent.
8. Christ was the True Lamb to which every daily offering pointed.
9. Christ was the True High Priest.

Unrecognized

Luke 24:28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke says, "...their eyes were kept from recognizing him." Mark explains this difference by saying, "he appeared in another form." (Mark 16:12). Whatever the case, in some miraculous way, the disciples are kept from seeing Him clearly.

A look back at verse 18, shows that Jesus' crucifixion was well known.

In verse 25, the disciples are "... slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" They believe the predictions of the Messiah's glory, but not the Messiah's sufferings. Christians today often make similar mistakes, though in a totally different direction. They believe all that the prophets say about Christ's sufferings but not all that they say about Christ coming the second time in glory. Their eyes are open when Jesus takes the bread and blesses it; then they recognize Him. This event refers to a well-known gesture of the Lord in the act of breaking bread with which all His disciples are familiar. It could also be a reference to the Lord's demeanor at the miracle of feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes. We cannot explain this sudden revelation of Christ. The whole transaction is so miraculous that we can only take the words as we find them and not waste time in attempting to define what is beyond our comprehension.

How does Jesus vanish from their sight? This expression and other expressions concerning our Lord's risen body show plainly that it is a body in some wonderful way different from the common body of a common man. It is a real material body and true flesh and blood but it is a body capable of moving, appearing and disappearing in a manner that we cannot explain.

Verse 33 deserves close attention. Is Thomas with them or not? If he is, he must have gone out immediately after the two disciples came in; otherwise it is difficult to reconcile the verses which immediately follow describing the Lord's appearing when Thomas is not present.

Next Jesus "... appeared to Simon!" This appearance to Simon Peter alone is mentioned only here and in I Corinthians 15:2 by Paul. We do not know the circumstances of the appearance.

Jesus at the Tomb

Luke 24:36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." **37** But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. **38** And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39** "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." **40** And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. **41** While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" **42** They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; **43** and He took it and ate *it* before them. **44** Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." **45** Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48** "You are witnesses of these things. **49**

"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Notice the words of verse 45, "... He opened their minds to understand the scriptures." We all need a similar enlightenment of our understandings. Anyone who wants to read the Bible profitably must first ask the Lord Jesus to open the eyes of his understanding through the Holy Spirit. Commentaries have their place because the help of learned men can shed light on a subject, but no commentary compares to the teaching of Christ. A humble and prayerful spirit will find a thousand things in the Bible which the proud and arrogant student will utterly fail to discern.

Jesus does not open their understanding without the Scripture; He sends them to it. He also knows that Scripture will not give them a sufficient knowledge of the things of God without the influence and illumination of His Spirit. Those who are taught by His Spirit to understand the Scriptures are truly taught by God. The Lord gives great honor to the Scriptures. The devil cheats those whom he drives away from the Scriptures in expectation of a teaching by the Spirit. The Spirit teaches by the Holy Scriptures, not without them, and not contrary to them.

In verse 47, the proclamation of the risen Savior will begin from Jerusalem. It teaches that the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel will not shrink from offering salvation to the worst and greatest sinners within the city that crucified the Lord. The other lesson here is that the first offer of salvation will always be made to the Jews; hardened, unbelieving as they are, they are still "loved on account of the patriarchs" and are not to be despised.²⁶ Jesus says, "I am sending you what my Father promised." This statement refers to the Holy Spirit Whom the Father had promised in the Old Testament and Who came down on the day of Pentecost.

Isaiah 44:3 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty *land* And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants;

Joel 2:28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Ezekiel 36:27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

It may be good to mention here the eleven separate appearances of the Lord after His resurrection.

²⁶ Romans 11:28

1. to Mary Magdalene alone (Mark 16:1; John 20:14)
2. to the women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
3. to Simon Peter alone (Luke 24:34)
4. to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 26:13)
5. to the Apostles at Jerusalem, except for Thomas, who was absent (John 20:19)
6. to the Apostles at Jerusalem, a second time, when Thomas was present (John 20:26, 29)
7. to the sea of Tiberias when seven disciples were fishing (John 21:1)
8. to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16)
9. to more than 500 brethren at once (I Corinthians 15:6)
10. to James on his own (I Corinthians 15:7)
11. to all the Apostles on Mount Olivet at his ascension (Luke 24:51)

To Bethany

Luke 24:50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising God.

It is interesting how each of the four Gospels end their books. Matthew ends in Galilee with the Lord's charging the Apostles and followers to make disciples and baptize them and teach them all that He has taught them. Mark ends with a quick summary of the events from sitting at the table with Jesus to the ascension and discourse on making disciples. Mark does not tell where the events take place. John ends his Gospel with a conversation between the Lord and Peter about John that took place by the sea, probably in Galilee. Luke concludes with the Lord and His followers leaving Jerusalem to go to Bethany where Luke merely mentions the ascension with a statement indicating that the group returned to Jerusalem to continue their ministries. It is probably all Paul knows. The resurrection has turned the Jewish community upside down and the Sanhedrin is scrambling to save its religion.

It is too late to save the religion in Jerusalem and other parts of the Promised Land. Too many have seen the resurrected Lord. It is a good time to discover what happened to those who were Jesus' disciples and those who witnessed His death.