

The Lord's Resurrection and Appearance on The Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:1-35

Luke 24:1-12: Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, '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 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Background Notes

At the end of Luke 23, after the Lord's crucifixion and burial, women from Galilee prepared spices and perfumes to anoint the body of the Lord. Then they rested on the Sabbath, in accordance with the Law. *"And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."*

The implication here, of course, is that the Lord was crucified and buried on a Friday. Before sunset, after the women observed the place of the Lord's burial, they returned home to prepare spices to anoint the body of the Lord. This was the custom for proper burial in those days. But because the next day was a Saturday, the Sabbath, the women rested (Luke 23:56). Then they came to the tomb early Sunday morning to anoint the Lord's body with spices.

According to the parallel account in the Gospel of Mark, as they made their way to the grave, the women mentioned the problem of removing the heavy stone that sealed the tomb. Apparently they hadn't thought about this problem earlier. However, angels, who appeared as men in dazzling apparel, had already removed the anticipated problem.

The angels said to the women, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" Then the women remembered that the Lord had predicted these events. The*

Lord had spoken more than once about His coming rejection, death, and resurrection. But when the women shared the good news of the Lord's resurrection with His disciples, at first the disciples would not believe them! They thought it was nonsense - just like a lot of people today. But the disciples became convinced when they saw the evidence! It is the evidence that will convince people today of the resurrection.

Doctrinal Points

1. The empty tomb is evidence for the resurrection.

“And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened” (v10-11).

What convinced Peter of the resurrection? It was not remembering the predictions of our Lord, even though that should have been enough. It was ***the evidence of the empty tomb*** that convinced him. Notice that the linen wrappings were still there, not something anyone would purposely leave if hurriedly stealing a body. It seems that the linen wrappings were left intact and not unwrapped, further evidence that this was a resurrection. The empty tomb is good evidence of the resurrection of Christ to this day. Skeptics who doubt the resurrection have a very hard time explaining away the fact of the empty tomb. Many attempts have been made, but they all come to a dead end.

The “stolen body” idea cannot explain *how* the disciples stole the body. And even if they had stolen it, why were the Jewish and Roman authorities unable to reclaim the body? And why had the cowardly disciples, who had run away when Jesus was arrested, suddenly become such changed and bold men? Cowards would not be bold if they knew they were proclaiming a big lie?

The idea that the women went to the “wrong tomb” does not explain how *everyone* went to the wrong tomb -- a tomb that was observed when Jesus was buried, and a tomb that was well marked by the Roman seal and guard.

The explanation that Peter “hallucinated” about seeing the Lord after the resurrection doesn't explain how everyone hallucinated, and for such a long period of time. And it certainly doesn't explain the empty tomb.

The old “swoon theory” says that Jesus didn't really die but only fainted, or swooned. This idea certainly doesn't explain how a group of Roman soldiers under the command of a centurion could *all* make the mistake of declaring a crucified man dead when he had only fainted. And how could a crucified man, who had been so cruelly scourged, revive sufficiently to escape from a sealed and guarded tomb without anyone noticing.

The crucifixion and the empty tomb of Jesus of Nazareth are well established and accepted facts of history. If there was no resurrection, the empty tomb must be explained. The empty tomb is evidence for the resurrection.

2. The Lord's appearance is evidence for the resurrection.

Verses 13-31: Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. 17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain 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." 25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. 28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

The Lord's appearance with two disciples who were traveling from Jerusalem to a village named Emmaus was not the only appearance that the Lord made after His resurrection. In Acts 1:3 we read, "*He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*" And 1 Corinthians 15 says that the Lord appeared to more than 500 people at one time.

The Lord's appearance on the road to Emmaus was on Resurrection Sunday: "*... two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus.*" The Lord did not reveal Himself to the two disciples at first, but rather questioned them about the events that had taken place that weekend. Then He opened up the Scriptures to them, and showed them how all the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of the Messiah, and pointed forward to Him. What a wonderful Bible study that was! I'm sure the Lord included not only the Messianic prophecies, but the *types* and spiritual pictures of Christ in the Old Testament as well.

The two disciples invited the Lord into their home to stay overnight with them because it was getting late (v29), and the Lord accepted the invitation. By the way, have you invited the Lord into your home? He still accepts the invitation when invited to come into any home today!

During their meal together, as the Lord prayed and passed the bread to the two disciples, their eyes were opened and they recognized the Lord! Then He disappeared. This was not a vision or hallucination. After those hours of close contact with the Lord, these two disciples would certainly have known whether they were talking to an “apparition” or a real person. The resurrection of Christ was a ***bodily resurrection***, not some kind of spiritual resurrection. The Lord’s appearance is evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

Practical Application

Let’s follow the biblical path to a “burning heart”!

Verses 32-35: And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

A burning heart is certainly part of the Christian experience, but let’s face it, our hearts don’t burn within us all the time. Praise the Lord, a burning heart is not necessary for salvation. But those joyful feelings of worship are wonderful to experience.

Verse 32 gives us the biblical path to a burning heart: *“Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”* This verse indicates that getting into the Word of God, and allowing the Lord to lead us to a better understanding of His Word, is the biblical path to a burning heart.

Many Christians don’t make time to regularly walk this “road to Emmaus.” Let’s follow the biblical path to a burning heart.