

LUKE 24:

The Power of an Indestructible Life

1

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

1 Corinthians 15:13-20

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain...

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins... If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

2

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

1. Luke 24:1-12: The Empty Tomb
2. Luke 23:13-35: On the Road to Emmaus
3. Luke 23:36-49: Jesus Appears to His Disciples
4. Luke 23:50-3:5 The Ascension

3

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

It's interesting to note that, in ALL the accounts, the writers were recording these events second hand, giving us the vivid sense of disorientation in the witness accounts.

Those present at the tomb that first Easter morning:

Mary Magdalene	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
Mary the mother of James	Matthew, Mark, Luke
Salome wife of Zebedee	Mark
Joanna & the other women	Luke

4

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

Matthew: "An angel of the Lord," appearance like lightning

Mark: "A young man" wearing a white robe

Luke: "Two men" in dazzling clothing

John: "Two angels" wearing white + Jesus himself
(cf. John 20:12-14 w/ Gen. 18:1-2, 22-23, 19:1-2!)

5

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?

He is not here but has risen. Remember how he told you..."

There are many reasons to believe the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as a historical fact – indeed, as *the* pivotal fact of human history. But the GREATEST evidence for the historicity and truth of the resurrection is Scripture itself (see 2 Pet. 1:16-21): (a) the resurrection was foretold in the OT then by Jesus himself; (b) it was recorded in the Gospels; and (c) its reality was attested to and its meaning and significance interpreted in the remainder of the NT.

6

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

It's interesting that the initial reaction of the apostles was one of disbelief. They rejected the witness of the women as "an idle tale." Even the fact that this thing of which they were testifying had been explicitly and repeatedly foretold by Jesus himself was not enough to break through their wall cultural assumptions here.

Let's face it, having the first witnesses of the empty tomb be women wouldn't help Luke's case in a culture (both Jewish and Greco-Roman at that time) that devalued the evidentiary value of women.

7

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

And, at least in the case of Mary Magdalene, it's not just the fact that she's a "woman" witnessing to these things, but that she's one "from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:2).

For us, as fellow believers, we see her as one who had seen and experienced the transformative power of our great God, having been redeemed, restored, and forgiven. We praise God for her great deliverance! But in the eyes of that world – let's face it – this was not the sort of person you'd put forward to establish the veracity of your claims.

8

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

So why would Luke include this?

Well, because it's true! As a matter of hard historical fact, she was there! She saw and reported the empty tomb, and it was to her that the Lord appeared first.

But why did Luke mention that part about the demons?

I mean, this fact isn't helping his case with a first century audience. From a worldly perspective, it calls to mind mental illness, and that undermines credibility. Why do this?

Again, because it's true! And because her restoration brings no dishonor to her but all glory to our great Savior.

9

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

Okay, but... why would Jesus do this? It hurts his own case! When did Jesus ever do anything to please those who argued for keeping up appearances?

We can see two things here.

First, Jesus loved and cared for Mary, and appeared to her that first Easter morning in her deepest need. "Mary..." One of the most beautiful moments ever recorded.

10

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

Second, Jesus upends the worldly world here in every way. The world says dead is dead, the testimony of women isn't valued, and that of "damaged" women valued even less.

But the light and power of Christ's resurrection breaks into and upends the worldly world in every way! Christ is risen! And the first to witness it are women. And the first woman to witness the Risen Lord is one who'd been hurt, broken, and tormented by this broken and tormented world, but who'd been delivered by a great Savior and made whole and holy and blessed. Amen!

11

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Empty Tomb

"But Peter rose and ran to the tomb..."

The apostles doubted, but Peter ran to the tomb to check for himself. What was he thinking? Was he hoping against hope? We can only imagine his confusion, dismay, anxiety.

We know that John went with him and that John got to the tomb first, but that it was Peter who went in before John to see for himself. No body! The women were right! But ... where is he? Where have they taken the Lord? Unless, I mean... could it be...?

12

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Empty Tomb

1. We have multiple witnesses attesting to it – including at the bare minimum at least six women that morning (the two Mary's, Salome, Joanna, and the "other women") and two apostles (Peter, and John).
2. We have the fact that Jesus' enemies didn't deny the fact that the tomb was empty, but sought to explain why it was empty (see Matthew 28:11-14). The claim could easily have been falsified, but was not. This points to other witnesses as well (e.g., the guards).

13

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

"Two of them were going to a village named Emmaus..."

Why does Luke report this incident?

Presumably because he was told about it when he was researching for his Gospel. (See Luke 1:1-4.)

And well ... once again, because it's true! Because this is what happened.

14

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

"Two of them were going to a village named Emmaus..."

But ... why did Jesus appear to these two in this place...?
I suppose we'll find that out the answer to that in heaven!

But here's one thought: maybe it was to call them back to Jerusalem, to keep the disciples together so that (a) they should ALL witness the Risen Lord Jesus, (b) and ALL witness his ascension, and (c) ALL be clothed with power from on high at Pentecost. Sort of like, "Where do you think you're going? I need you to report this to the others!"

15

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

Who is this Cleopas and the other unnamed disciple?

A reasonable case can be made that the unnamed companion of Cleopas was his wife, Mary. This was "the other Mary," "the mother of James," also identified as "the sister of Mary, the wife of Clopas" (Jn. 19:25). Jesus' mother Mary wouldn't have a sister named Mary, so this Mary would have been her sister-in-law, making Clopas (i.e., Cleopas), the brother of Joseph. This means in turn that James the Younger, one of the Twelve – also called James son of Alphaeus (=Greek version of Cleopas!) – would therefore have been Jesus' cousin. Whew!

16

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

"But their eyes were kept from recognizing him..."

1. Jesus himself drew near! But they didn't know it. How often might this be the case, that the Lord is close to us, but we are unaware of it?
2. Jesus appears, but they don't recognize him. (Same as with his appearance to Mary Magdalene in John 20.) What is going on here? Let's hold off on that for a moment. We'll come back to it.

17

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

"What things...?"

1. We can't help but feel the wonderful irony here, as we, the readers, know the truth of which Cleopas and the other disciple are still unaware.
2. Their testimony concerning Jesus: he was a prophet mighty in deed and word – not just word! Like Moses and Elijah, he was a great prophet in Israel. But he was betrayed, delivered over, condemned, and crucified. (The crucifixion w/o the vindication of resurrection would have been a tragedy, yet another injustice...)

18

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

1. What did Jesus do? Before revealing himself, he explained the Scriptures, which reveal him even more perfectly than the evidence of our eyes!
2. Wouldn't you have loved to have been there for THIS sermon?!? What did he say?

19

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus

What did he say?

Answer: we don't know! It's not recorded for us. We'll learn in heaven! But the details are left out, which, if you think about it, encourages us to think of the matter for ourselves.

What might Jesus have included in demonstrating, first, that the whole of the Scriptures speak of "things concerning himself," and second, that the Christ HAD to suffer before entering into glory?

20

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

"The Emmaus Road": The Suffering Servant

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Genesis 3:15 | <i>In sum, Christ's suffering</i> |
| 2. Leviticus 16 | <i>HAD to precede his glory.</i> |
| 3. Deuteronomy 18 | <i>It is true that the Cross w/o</i> |
| 4. Psalm 22 | <i>the Crown (the resurrection)</i> |
| 5. Isaiah 50:6-7 | <i>would have been pointless</i> |
| 6. Isaiah 53:1-12 | <i>and tragic – yet more injustice.</i> |
| 7. Zechariah 9:9-10 | <i>But just as surely, the Crown</i> |
| 8. Zechariah 12:10 | <i>w/o the Cross would have</i> |
| 9. Zechariah 13:7-8 | <i>been meaningless. Our Christ</i> |
| 10. Matthew 20:28 | <i>is the Crucified and Risen Lord!</i> |

21

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight."

- First, concerning Christ's resurrection body:
This is indeed a wonderful mystery! There is continuity and discontinuity. Christ appears into locked rooms and vanishes suddenly. He is there before them and yet – somehow – not recognized, as if our earthly body cannot recognize the Lord in his resurrection body until their eyes are opened and they are enabled to see him.

22

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- In Mary Magdalene's case, it was when Jesus said her name, "Mary...." And here with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it was when he blessed, broke, and gave them the bread.
- And yet, once given "eyes to see," they see him as the *same* Jesus, i.e., not as mere projection or spirit, but as truly embodied (eating the fish) and still bearing the marks of his life.

23

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- 1 Corinthians 15:35-44:
But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body...

24

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 (cont'd)
So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

25

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- 1 John 3:2: Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.
- 1 Cor. 13:12: For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

26

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight."

- Second, concerning his breaking and giving the bread:
Note the order! He took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and then was seen by them. The words here are obviously reminiscent of the feeding of the 5,000 and of the 4,000, and especially of his actions at the Last Supper.

27

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- Matthew 14:19b: And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. (Also Mt. 15:36.)
- Matthew 26:26: Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

28

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- It seems to me that Jesus is teaching them – and us – something here. He may not be with us physically, visibly, the way he was before and the way he will once again be. But he is with us. He is truly spiritually present with us wherever two or three gather in his name to worship him in Spirit and in truth. He is present with us when his word is read and expounded and received with faith, and when his sacraments are administered and received with faith. Indeed, whereas before he was only present in one place at one time, he is now present everywhere he is worshipped. (John 14:12, 23)

29

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- Cleopas and his companion rush back to the Upper Room, to inform the disciples of the greatest news that could possibly be told. We can imagine their excitement as they are received into the group. "Brothers," they say breathless with excitement, "we have news to report!" And just as Cleopas is about to tell of it, it's as if the assembled disciples in their own excitement have news that couldn't possibly be more important! "So do we! The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" And Cleopas and Mary be like, "Wait, what...?!?"

30

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

On the Road to Emmaus: The Lord Appears!

- It is unclear in our English translation who is doing the talking in English, but in the Greek, it's clear that the ones doing the "saying" are "the eleven and those who were there with them gathered together."
- This then is a reference to Jesus' appearing to Simon Peter, which is also mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:5.
- Their testimony would have served as powerful and joyful confirmation of Cleopas's own report, as indeed his report would have been thrilling confirmation to their own. The Master ... is alive! He is risen!

31

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

- "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." They are afraid when he suddenly appears among them. He directs them to see his hands and feet, so recently pierced by Roman nails. Literally, he says *Ego eimi autos* ("I am he!"), which calls to mind God's covenant name, "I AM WHO I AM... I AM has sent me to you." (Ex. 3:14), and these words from Isa. 41:4: Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I AM HE. (See also John 8:58; Matt. 14:27; John 18:6.)

32

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

- Luke draws to an end on a grand climax here, with the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms, all showing that the Christ should suffer and rise on the third day, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations. He opens their mind to understand the Scriptures, and declares their – and our – mission moving forward: “You are witnesses of these things.”
- They were to wait in Jerusalem until being clothed with power from on high.

33

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Ascension

- Forty days after the resurrection, just in advance of Pentecost, the Lord ascended up into heaven in the sight of his followers, there to receive the kingdom and sit enthroned at the right hand of God the Father.
- The ascension is the coronation of Christ as King.
- He is at the same time our High Priest, who daily intercedes for us in the heavenly temple. Christ has become a priest in the likeness of Melchizedek, “not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.”

34

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

The Ascension

- Notice how now he is no longer simply the Master among them, but now is worshipped.
- The Lord reigns.
- He is Lord of lords and King of kings, our Savior, our Rock, our Redeemer, and our Deliverer!

35

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Empty Tomb

1. We have multiple witnesses attesting to it – including at the bare minimum at least six women that morning (the two Mary’s, Salome, Joanna, and the “other women”) and two apostles (Peter, and John).
2. We have the fact that Jesus’ enemies didn’t deny the fact that the tomb was empty, but sought to explain why it was empty (see Matthew 28:11-14). The claim could easily have been falsified, but was not. This points to other witnesses as well (e.g., the guards).

36

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Resurrection

- Third, we have the many witnesses who saw and interacted with the resurrected Lord Jesus – among whom were Mary Magdalene, the other women, Simon Peter, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; the ten (minus Thomas) on that first Easter evening; the eleven (now including Thomas) the following Sunday; the seven on the lake in Galilee; James and the five hundred on the mountain in Galilee and also on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, etc., and last of all, as to one untimely born, the Apostle Paul.

37

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Resurrection

- Fourth, we also have the evidence of a thoroughly consistent and unified body of testimony among these many witnesses, holding fast under extreme persecution, even to death for many of them. Surely this is strong evidence against the charge that they were somehow liars or deceivers. Examine the real world and it becomes quickly apparent how silly the notion is that these early disciples of Jesus would hold fast to a story with such unity amidst severe persecution were it not true and thoroughly believed in.

38

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Resurrection

- Fifth, we have the evidence of the apostles' totally transformed lives following Jesus' resurrection. It seems to have been an event that produced in them extraordinary courage and devotion. Moreover, against the charge that they were "lunatics" or simply deceived and moved by mere wishful thinking, we read their epistles and see in the character of their lives and words extraordinary moral weight and wisdom. This is incredibly strong evidence to both the veracity and sagacity of their claims.

39

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Resurrection

- Sixth, we have in addition the evidence of the testimony of the church through the ages, which has continued to proclaim, believe, and witness to the crucified and risen Lord who lives, the veracity of which being shown forth in lives transformed by the power of new life in Christ, in a great chain of testimony extending even to us this morning, a great chain of witness reaching back to that first Easter morning some 1,993 years ago. Amen!

40

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

Reasons to Believe the Evidence of the Resurrection

- But the greatest evidence we've got for the historical fact of the resurrection is, seventh, the testimony of the Triune God in Scripture. The Lord told us what would happen; what was prophesied came to pass exactly as promised; then he explained for us the meaning and significance of what had happened.
- Christ is risen!
"The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock,
and exalted be the God of my salvation!"

41

THE POWER OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE

I Know That My Redeemer Lives!

Job 19:25-27:

I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him with my own eyes –
I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

42