

Opened Their Minds

Luke – Chapter 24

As Luke brings his researched, chronological and specific work for “the most excellent Theophilus” to end, he records a last set of instructions from the lips of Christ just prior to His ascension. Jesus walked on the earth for forty days after His resurrection. He startles his disciples by appearing in their midst one last time. Some were frightened, others were startled, some thought they were seeing a spirit. Jesus calms their fears, “ And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? “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.” As they marveled in joy, they could not believe it. Jesus said he was hungry, was given a piece of broiled fish that he ate as the others looked on.

Before He leads them, “out as far as Bethany” and lifts up , “His hands and blessed them”, Jesus reminds them “... that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Throughout His ministry, Jesus emphasized the connection of the Old Testament prophecies and His life. He fulfilled God’s promise in Genesis 3:15. He provided the perfect sacrifice required by the Law of Moses. He satisfied God’s wrath for those who were given to Him by the Father. His job on earth, at this moment, was complete and in a little while He would depart from them.

After reminding them of His words, “...He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Jesus enabled them to perceive in their minds and understand the “Scripture”. The basis for the gospel message is the Scriptures. The evidence needed to verify Jesus is indeed who He said is contained in the Scriptures. The unveiling of God’s plan for redemption is in the Scriptures. The disciples spent three years with the Master and they still didn’t understand, so Jesus provided what they needed, the ability to perceive and understand the Scriptures. They had new insight, knowledge and ability they did not possess before. They were no longer chewing on the bark, they could now get down to the wood, the meat of the matter as revealed in Scripture. We get a glimpse of the results of Jesus action in Acts 4:13, “ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.” Peter quotes verses from Amos in his sermon to the crowd at Pentecost.

After opening their minds, Jesus reminds them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. “You are witnesses of these things. “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.” They became men on a mission, a mission to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sin in the name of Jesus starting with Jerusalem. They were witnesses to the great truth revealed in scripture. They now understood how God’s plan, Christ’s life and sacrifice along with the events of the past few days connected to fulfill God’s promise of salvation. Forgiveness of sin is not found in a prayer, or a walk to the front of the church during an altar call, or an emotional reaction that is intense in the moment but quickly fades or in the acquisition of knowledge and information. Forgiveness of sin is only available to those who repent. Who does an “about face” turning away from sin’s power, dominance and hold on their lives to pursue righteousness. God, “being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ”. (Eph 2:4) It is God who takes a person, dead in sin, raises the dead to life. Salvation is not “...of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but God”. (Jn 1:10) Salvation has never been an “I found it” moment; it is a resurrection moment, a God loves me moment, that changes us forever because we are now spiritually alive.

Many intellectuals have studied the scriptures and totally missed meaning reflected in them, or twist the words of scripture to accommodate their worldly point of view. “The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” In a June 11, 2019 article in the “*Banner of Truth*”, James Thomas writes, “Consider a man trapped in a burning house. He senses no dire need, because he is just one doorway from his drive and from safety. What he does not realize is that the door is locked and he has no key.” Is your mind open?

Today, The Holy Spirit provides conviction, understanding, wisdom and revelation to all who will hear. Are you listening? He will make His ways known to you, “guide you into all the truth” and seal your future.

