

24:13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

24:14 And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.

24:15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them.

24:16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

The phrase “very day” (24:13) places this event on Sunday, the day that the women discovered the empty tomb. The word “two” is Luke’s last reference to pairs of witnesses (see notes on 24:2), but is probably the most important one; the two people on the road to Emmaus are the first people mentioned by Luke to see the resurrected Christ even though they were initially unaware of who He was.

Different suggestions for the location of Emmaus have been made. However, Luke says it was seven miles from Jerusalem. Since ancient people walked long distances up to speeds 3 1/2 miles (30 stadia) per hour (Edwards, 715, 716), Emmaus was a two or three-hour walk from Jerusalem.

Those on the way to Emmaus were talking about their disappointed hopes – what *might* have been. “All these things which had taken place” were the events surrounding Jesus’ death and the empty tomb. In 24:15 the word “discussing” is *suzeteo* (συζητέω) which means to argue or debate; it was an emotional conversation.

These two disciples did not know it was Jesus who joined them. In Luke 24:16 it says that their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. Later, in verse 31, “their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.” The reason for the disciples’ inability to recognize Jesus is disputed. Was it satanic blindness? Was it because of the hardness of their hearts? Was it a divine concealment?

The passive progressive construction (literally, “were being prevented”; an imperfect passive) places responsibility outside of the disciples. Since Satan is entirely absent from the context, the words “prevented” and “opened” are probably divine passives; the disciples’ ability or inability to recognize Jesus was due to divine agency. The wording and meaning is similar to Luke 9:45 and 18:34.

At the same time, as Leon Morris says, “There seems to have been something different about the risen Jesus so that He was not always recognized. The walk to Emmaus is the outstanding example of this, but we see the same thing at the miraculous draught of fishes (Jn. 29:4), and Matthew tells us that when the disciples saw Jesus on a mountain in Galilee they worshipped, ‘but some doubted’” (Matt. 28:17; Morris, NIGNT, John, 838).

D.A. Carson in his commentary on John says,

As so often in the resurrection narratives, Jesus is not immediately recognized. The couple on the Emmaus road were “kept from recognizing Him”(Lk.24:16), and the long ending of Mark says He appeared to them “in a different form” (Mk. 16:12); the disciples in the boat on the Lake of Tiberias did not recognize the man on the shore (Jn. 21:4); Mary did not realize that it was Jesus

(Jn. 20:14–15) . . . Taken as a whole, however, the resurrection accounts provide a certain tension. On the one hand, Jesus' resurrection body can be touched and handled (Jn. 20:27; Luke 24:39), bears the marks of the wounds afflicted on Jesus' pre-death body (Jn. 20:20, 25, 27), and not only cooks fish (Jn. 21:9) but eats it (Lk. 24:41–43). On the other hand, Jesus' resurrection body apparently rose through grave-clothes (Jn. 20: 6–8), appears in a locked room (Jn. 20:19, 26), and is sometimes not (at least initially) recognized. The closest we are likely to come to an explanation is 1 Corinthians 15:35ff. (Carson, John, 641).

(see my notes below on Luke 24:38-39)

24:17 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.

Jesus' question emphasizes that He wanted to know the content of what was being discussed; the word "things" is emphatically forward in the sentence. To paraphrase: "These things that you are speaking with one another, what are they?"

Even before they verbalized their answer, their faces told the story of how they were feeling; "they stood still, looking sad." Gloom, disappointment, and sorrow filled their hearts.

24:18 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?"

24:19 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, 24:20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

24:21 "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.

24:22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,

24:23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

24:24 "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."

Cleopas' response is harsh. In essence he is saying, "Are you the only one who has no clue what has been going on around here? Aren't You returning from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem? How could you be so oblivious to what has been going on?"

The unfolding of Jesus' life was of huge public interest. The death of Jesus and news of His missing body spread like wildfire, even though the women had just visited the tomb that same day. In one sense, Cleopas' comment is almost humorous. He was asking the One who was crucified and raised if He was the only one who was unaware of what had happened!

Jesus' question, "What things?" (24:19), invites them to tell Him what they knew and believed, and how they interpreted what had taken place.

The disciples described Jesus as a man from Nazareth, a prophet who was powerful in word and deed. Later, in Acts 7:22, Luke will call Moses "a man of power in words and deeds." These go together biblically, for Moses, in speaking of the Messiah, had said, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him" (Deut. 18:15).

The disciples had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel (24:21), but He didn't; He was crucified instead.

But they were also confused. Although Jesus had died, some women went to the tomb early in the morning and they did not find His body. They came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. After that, others went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said; but they didn't actually see Jesus. The most important piece of empirical evidence – the body – was still missing. Once again the irony is apparent; they were perplexed about what happened to the body – the body that was walking along the road next to them.

The crucifixion and the empty tomb remained as barriers to understanding what had taken place. However, in some ways the disciples were close to knowing the truth. They had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel; that was a messianic hope expressed in cautious language to the stranger they had just met. And they had not totally dismissed the testimony of the women who said that angels told them that Jesus was alive. The problem was in understanding how the two fit together.

24:25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"

24:26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

24:27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

In verse 25 Jesus rebukes the disciples. This reminds the reader of the angels' rebuke to the women at the tomb in Luke 24:5-7. "Jesus does not rebuke the disciples for disbelieving the evidence associated with the resurrection, or for disbelieving the witness of the women, or even for not recognizing Himself. He rebukes them for reading the Scriptures without understanding and belief" (Edwards, 720-721). They should have known from their knowledge of the OT Scriptures that it was "necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory" (24:26).

Verse 27 says that "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets" Jesus "explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." The word "explained" is where we get the term "hermeneutics." It means to translate or interpret. Moses wrote the first five books of the OT; the last books were "the prophets." In short, Jesus used the OT, from beginning to end, to bridge the distance between the realities of the history of Israel and Himself; they came to see that the OT has Christ, His death, and His glory at its focus. Jesus will do the same thing for the rest of the disciples in Luke 24:44-47.

The veil covering the resurrection was being removed. The puzzle pieces were already in Scripture; the disciples just needed to look at them more carefully.

24:28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.

24:29 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.

24:30 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.

24:31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

The two travelers reached their destination as evening approached. Jesus left the impression that He was going to continue on; however, they *urged* Him to stay. The word means "urge strongly," or even "coerce" and expresses the importance of Middle Eastern hospitality that compels people to be guests (see Acts 16:15; Genesis 18:3; 19:2). Although the two disciples did not yet know who Jesus was, they wanted to be around Him longer.

They all sat down to eat dinner. Jesus, acting as the host, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began giving it to them. Immediately "their eyes were opened." As mentioned above, this is another "divine passive." The disciples were able to recognize Jesus because God revealed Him to them. "Their blindness was not their fault, and their perception is not their accomplishment. Both are the result of spiritual dimensions beyond human abilities and capabilities. The verb "to open" occurs six times *in Luke-Acts* (24:31, 32, 45; Acts 7:56; 16:14; 17:3) all with reference to divine revelation, and in all but two (v.31; Acts 7:56) of divine revelation via scripture or kerygma [the preaching of the gospel]" (Edwards, 724).

The One who appeared blind to the events in Jerusalem opened the eyes of the disciples (Edwards, 723).

Once they recognized Jesus He disappeared from their sight. Jesus was gone, but so was the loss, disappointment, and grief that was present earlier in their walk. The disciples knew that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. With that revelation His visible presence was no longer necessary.

24:32 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?"

24:33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them,

24:34 saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" is a rhetorical question that simply means, "Oh how our hearts were burning as He explained the Scriptures to us!" Jesus' exposition of the Old Testament caused them to burn with excitement.

Even though it had become dark, making travel difficult, they couldn't wait to tell the others what had happened. So they immediately headed back to Jerusalem from where they had just come. Finding the eleven gathered together they told them that they had seen the resurrected Lord. However, upon their arrival, they also learned Jesus had also appeared to Peter. The appearance to Peter is also recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:5.

This gives us insight into the appearances of Christ after His resurrection. It demonstrates that Jesus was not limited by normal modes of transportation. Peter had seen Him in Jerusalem, but Jesus had also appeared in Emmaus.

Verses 34 and 35 give two witnesses to the resurrection – Cleopas and Peter. The mystery of the empty tomb is solved.

24:35 They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

Even though they had seen Jesus, the mystery that surrounded His resurrection was not totally removed. They were confident that He had risen from the dead, but the fact that they had walked with Jesus for perhaps hours and didn't recognize Him was strange. Then it was just as odd that they both instantaneously recognized Him when He broke bread with them. Jesus had risen from the dead, but He possessed attributes beyond their understanding. This was the conversation when Jesus appeared among them.

24:36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you."

24:37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

While they were comparing notes about what they had experienced (24:35), Jesus appeared in their midst.

One might reasonably conclude that if Jesus can vanish (24:31) and appear suddenly (24:36), He had to be a spirit, perhaps even an angel like those who had appeared as men to the women at the tomb (24:4). Thoughts like that were running through the disciples' heads and Luke was concerned that the readers might be drawing the same conclusions. Therefore, he goes to great lengths to let his readers know that no matter what kind of phenomena surrounded Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, it should not be interpreted as Him being a disembodied spirit. His body was the same body that was crucified.

24:38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

24:39 "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."

Jesus first wanted to get the disciples to calm down, recognize who was present, and think about what it meant. Thus His question, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" That is, "Why do you question that it is Me? Why do you think I am a spirit?"

First, He told them to look at His hands and feet. He emphasized they are HIS hands and HIS feet – the same hands and feet that were on the cross (Jn. 20:25) and in the tomb. Early Christians saw the nail marks as fulfilling Psalm 22:16. According to John, Jesus showed them His side as well (Jn. 20:20).

He then offered further empirical evidence: “Touch Me and see that I have flesh and bones.” If the disciples knew that Jesus was made of flesh and bone, they would also know that He was not spirit for a spirit doesn’t have flesh and bones; a spirit by definition is incorporeal. Touching Jesus’ body was evidence that it was really Him; the words, “it is I Myself” emphasize this in the strongest way.

In summary, the disciples thought that Jesus was a spirit because they could not conceive of how something material could suddenly appear or vanish. Those characteristics, they assumed, can only be attributed to something immaterial, a spirit. But they were wrong. Jesus was not a spirit floating around without a body, nor was His spirit joined to a body that was unrelated to the one He had before. It was the same body He had from birth, the same body that had been beaten and crucified. What the disciples didn’t understand was that in the resurrection, Jesus’ body had been fit for an eternal existence.

In 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 Paul contrasted our earthly body to the resurrected body. He said, “It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 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.”

Although we cannot define precisely what a spiritual body is, when words are used antithetically, the meaning of the one enables us to determine the meaning of the other. We can, therefore, learn what the word “spiritual” means, from what we know of the meaning of the word “natural.”

A natural body is an earthly body, made of the dust of the earth, and while living, has constant need of being repaired; it must be sustained by the oxygen of the air, by the chemical elements found in food, and by the water that God provides. It is a body animated by the soul. It is alive, but it can get tired, die, and decay. A spiritual body is the opposite of that. It is a body dominated by the Spirit and sustained by the life of God Himself. It is imperishable, glorious, and powerful. It is a spiritual body.

“Spiritual” (πνευματικός) is an adjective that means “pertaining to the spirit” and is used of a spiritual person, spiritual thing, spiritual gift, etc. For example, in 1 Corinthians 12:1 it is used to describe God-given abilities or “*spiritual* gifts.” In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul said, “I, brethren, could not speak to you as to *spiritual* men . . .” Paul was not saying “I, brethren, could not speak to you as ‘spirits’ or ‘as spirit-men’”; he was saying that he couldn’t speak to them as men governed by the Holy Spirit; they were still thinking as they did before they were saved.

In the same way, 1 Corinthians 15:44 is not saying that people are raised as spirit bodies; that would be a contradiction in terms – a spirit is not made out of matter. Rather, in contrast to our present body, we will have a body animated by and consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit; it will bear the image of a heavenly person and be fit for an eternal existence.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul likens his earthly body to a tent that is to be abandoned for an eternal dwelling. In 1 Corinthians 15:47-49 he says, "The first man (Adam) is from the earth, earthy; the second man (Christ) is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly." In Philippians 3:20-21 he says that Christ "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." All of these verses describe the spiritual body we will receive.

This is the body the disciples saw in Christ. Jesus' post-resurrection existence had taken on new capacities that the disciples had mistaken as characteristics of a spirit. But Jesus was not a spirit; God had done a miraculous work, giving Christ a body that was immortal, glorious, and powerful.

John remembered these things vividly. In 1 John 1:1-2 he writes, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands . . . we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us –"

24:40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

24:41 While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

24:42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;

24:43 and He took it and ate it before them.

Their disbelief (24:41) was not unbelief, but the inability to fully comprehend what had happened. The disciples were overwhelmed with the realization that the Savior had risen from the dead. They were full of joy and amazement.

Jesus solidified the reality of His physical nature by eating in front of them. Ghosts don't eat. The meal, by yet another means, shows that He was not a ghost. It also reinforced the fellowship of humanity He shared with them.

After Jesus had calmed their fears and demonstrated that He wasn't a spirit, He opened the OT Scriptures up so that the disciples could see how He had fulfilled what was prophesied just as He had done for those He met on the road to Emmaus (24:26-32).

24:44 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."

24:45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

Jesus is the topic of Scripture:

- Acts 13:29-30: "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead"

- John 5:39: [Jesus said] "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."
- John 20:9: "For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead."

To underline the comprehensiveness of the testimony of Scripture regarding Himself, Jesus refers to all three divisions of the OT: the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets.

There are many OT passages that reference Jesus directly or indirectly, through prophecy, types, patterns, and parallelisms. Christ fulfilled the OT by being the focal point of all it contained and the goal of what it was trying to achieve. He filled out the content of what was revealed in it. According to Matthew 11:13, the whole OT had a basic prophetic function that anticipated Christ.

First, the OT pointed to Christ by direct prophetic statements (as in Matt. 2:6 and Micah 5:2). Psalm 2:7; 16:8-11; 110:1; 118:22-23 and many other passages found in Peter's sermon in Acts 3:12 ff. and elsewhere are fulfilled in Him.

The OT also pointed to Christ through the history recorded there. Often the events in Jewish history became prophetic pictures that paralleled events in the life of Christ. For example, in Deuteronomy 8 Moses reminded the people that they were tested in the desert for forty years where God allowed them to suffer so that they would learn that man does not live by bread alone (Deut. 8:3). In the same way, Jesus was tested for forty days in the wilderness and when tempted by Satan, He replied, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Another example of how Jesus fulfills the history of the Old Testament is John 3:14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." The historic event where Moses lifted up a brazen serpent (Num. 21) was also a foreshadowing of what was to come. Likewise, in John 6 the Jews ask Jesus for a sign like Moses gave to Israel in the wilderness, namely, the miraculous manna (6:30). Jesus answers, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven . . . I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger." (6:32, 35). Again Jesus fulfills the Old Testament by offering in Himself as that substance that gives life – only in a far greater way.

Lastly, the OT pointed to Christ through its festivals, ceremonies (Heb. 9-10) and the sacrificial system (Heb. 9:8f; 10:1f.). Jesus was the reality of that which was only seen in symbols and shadows prior to His arrival.

Or, look at the focus on Jesus from the OT divisions themselves:

In the **Law** the Messiah is the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15) and the One who brings to completion the promise that in Abraham all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3). His redemption is pictured in the exodus imagery (Exodus); His sacrifice is foreshadowed in the sacrificial system in Leviticus. The temple symbolized His person as the dwelling

place of God (Jn. 1:14; 2:19). He is the prophet like Moses who would come to lead God's people (Deut. 18:15–19).

In the **Writings** His redemptive work is foreshadowed by the kinsman redeemer in Ruth. He is the eternal heir of the Davidic throne in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (cf. Isaiah 9:6-7).

In the **Prophets** He is the One who inaugurates the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-28 by His blood (1 Cor. 11:25). Also see Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 53; Daniel 7:13-14; and Micah 5:2 for well-known prophecies concerning Him.

24:46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

24:48 "You are witnesses of these things.

24:49 "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."

Verses 46-49 constitute Luke's version of Christ's "Great Commission"—Jesus' commissioning of the disciples to proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ and repentance for forgiveness of sins to people of every culture, gender, age, race, and religion. All Christians are commissioned to do this, but the disciples were to testify *as eyewitnesses*.

Gentile salvation had always been a part of God's plan and purposes. The angel at Jesus' birth announced, "I bring you good news of great joy which will be *for all the people*; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-12). In Luke 2:30-32, at the dedication of Jesus at the temple, Simeon declared, "my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared *in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the gentiles*, and the glory of Your people Israel." In Luke 17 Jesus crossed ethnic borders healing a man in Samaria. In Luke 10 He used a Samaritan in a parable to exemplify godly behavior. In Luke 8 women are introduced as part of the band of Jesus' disciples. In Luke 18:16 Jesus said, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." In other words, Jesus embodied the disciples' mission. He reached out to the lame and sick, the rich and the poor, the religious and sinners, male and female, Jew and gentile, young and old.

Verses 47-49 mention (1) the starting point of the evangelistic endeavor as Jerusalem, (2) the disciples' role as witnesses, and (3) the promise of the Father (the Holy Spirit) – all elements that are repeated in Acts 1 and 2.

The progression can be traced in more detail in Acts, Luke's companion volume:

- Acts 1:4 "He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised. . ."

- In Acts 1:5 Jesus said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
- Acts 1:8 "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- Acts 2:1, 4 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
- In Acts 2:33 Peter declared, "having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."

The promise of the Father is the Holy Spirit promised in the New Covenant: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezek. 36:27). The Spirit would clothe Jesus' followers with power to be able to testify and guarantee that their testimony would bear fruit.

24:50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

24:51 While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

24:52 And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

24:53 and were continually in the temple praising God.

Jesus lifted His hands toward heaven, blessed the disciples and departed. Acts 1:9-12 says, "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away."

The scene has changed from despair to ultimate joy. The Lord has risen! He has given tangible evidence that He has conquered death. He has opened the Scriptures so that the puzzle pieces fit. The disciples are blessed.

They returned to Jerusalem with great joy and awaited the coming of the Spirit; while they were waiting they were continually in the temple praising God.