



**Temple Baptist Church**  
**Wilmington, North Carolina**  
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**The Lord's Day, April 30, 2017**

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**“Fulfilled by the Risen Lord”**  
**Luke 24:13-49**

***Strange happenings . . .***

Their heads must have been spinning!

It was late that first Sunday, the first day of the week, after Jesus had been crucified on Friday. They knew He had really died. The soldiers had nearly beaten Him to death when they flogged Him. He had hung on the cross from 9:00 in the morning until He had died at 3:00 that afternoon. Some of the women who had followed Him had watched as Joseph of Arimathea had taken His body down, wrapped it in a linen shroud, and hurriedly placed it in a tomb before the Sabbath started at sundown on Friday.

Some of these same women—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some others—had been to the tomb early that first day, taking the appropriate spices and perfumes to anoint His body for burial, fearing that hadn't been done because of the haste of the burial. They had come back to the Eleven apostles telling them that they had found the tomb empty, and that two angels had told them that Jesus was not there because He had risen!

But the apostles didn't believe them, because it all sounded like nonsense, like an idle tale. Now they believed there would one day be a resurrection when God brought in the new age, but everybody knew that now *in this present age*, dead people just don't rise and leave their tombs!

Late that afternoon, one of the disciples named Cleopas, along with another disciple (maybe his wife?) had headed back from where Jesus' followers were gathered in Jerusalem to their home in the little village of Emmaus. As they made their way on their seven-mile walk, another traveler they didn't recognize joined them on the road. When the stranger asked them what they were discussing as they walked, Cleopas could hardly believe anyone would be discussing anything other than what had happened to Jesus. He summarized the events for the stranger, and then added,

“Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some 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.” (24:22-24).<sup>1</sup>

The stranger called them foolish and said they were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. He then led them through the Hebrew Scriptures explaining how the Messiah had to suffer and *then* enter His glory.

As they neared their village, they invited the stranger to stay with them. When they sat down for supper, something strange happened. Their guest assumed the role of host. He took the bread,

gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him—it was the risen Jesus Himself! And when they finally recognized Him, He disappeared from their sight.

They immediately got up and returned to Jerusalem. When they got there, they found the Eleven and those with them gathered together and saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then those two told them what they had experienced, and how Jesus was made “known to them in the breaking of the bread” (24:34-35).

The women had seen the angels who declared Jesus had risen. Jesus had appeared to Peter sometime later that day. And now these two disciples had spent several hours with Him. Their heads *must* have been spinning by now!

### ***Seeing Jesus . . .***

And then it happened. While they were talking about these appearances of the risen Jesus, all of a sudden, *there He was* among them, saying to them, “Peace be with you”!

Even though the angels had said He had risen just as He had told them He would, even though He had appeared to Peter, and even though He had revealed Himself to the two disciples from Emmaus, Luke tells us that they were all startled and frightened, and thought they were seeing a spirit—a *ghost*. At the moment, it was the only explanation they could think of, even though Jesus’ promise, the Hebrew Scriptures, and their own experience said otherwise! It was still so foreign to them!

He asked them why they were troubled and doubting, and told them, “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” (24:38-39). Then He showed them His hands and feet—where the nails had pierced them to hold Him to the cross.

They still didn’t believe, but now for a different reason—it was just too good to be true! So Jesus asked them for something to eat. They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He ate it. Why? Because everybody knew that ghosts and angels didn’t eat—only real, live beings ate!

Then Jesus said, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (24:44).

What did Jesus mean by that?

### ***Prophecies fulfilled . . .***

Jesus was drawing here on the ancient world’s belief in *prophecy* and *fulfillment*. It wasn’t just Christians and Jews who believed in prophecy and fulfillment; many pagans believed in them too. In his commentary on Luke, Charles Talbert tells us that in the ancient world the fulfillment of prophecy demonstrated a belief “that a divine necessity controls human history.” It also legitimated the religious or political status of the prophet or the person the prophecy was about, as well as other things the prophet had said, and established continuity and connection with the past. In our culture people tend to think what is newer is better. But in the ancient world, they believed that what was older was better and what was ancient was best. If something was prophesied long ago and was now fulfilled, that established a connection with the ancient and thus established the authenticity and authority of the subject of the prophecy.

So by showing how Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures, the early Christians pointed to their ancient roots. And by proclaiming that Jesus had foretold what would happen to Him, including His resurrection, they pointed to how He was right. As Dr. Talbert says, “Taken together, having

roots and being right would be highly persuasive.”<sup>2</sup>

Now Old Testament prophecies usually dealt in some way with their original hearers and their situation. The prophets were speaking an immediate word to the people. Yet many Old Testament prophecies also had a future orientation. Based on how Jesus dealt with the Old Testament, early Christians saw Christ as fulfilling those prophecies that were regarded as Messianic, and others as well. They believed the events in the New Testament have continuity with God’s revelation in the Old Testament, and fill the prophets’ messages full with even greater meaning!

So what were those Scriptures that had been fulfilled in Jesus’ life, suffering, death, and resurrection? Luke explicitly points out only a few of them. The most notable is in Luke 4:16-21, where Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue at Nazareth:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Then He said, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Now Luke tells us that as Jesus talked with those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He began with Moses and all the Prophets and “he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (24:27). Then in verse 44 Jesus said, “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”—all three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures.

What Jesus said implies that there are many more Old Testament passages that speak of Him than just those Luke explicitly pointed out.

Passages like Genesis 3:15, where God tells the serpent that deceived Eve that her seed will crush his head.

Or Genesis 12:3, where God tells Abraham that all the families of the earth will be blessed through him.

Or Numbers 21:9, where Moses’ putting the bronze snake on a pole so that anyone who had been snake-bitten could look at it and be healed actually foreshadowed how Jesus would be lifted up on the cross so that all who look to him in faith would be saved (John 3:14).

Or Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses said that the LORD would raise up a prophet like him from among their own brothers.

Then there’s 2 Samuel 7:16, where God promises David that He will establish David’s house and throne forever.

And Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet tells how the virgin will bear a son who will be called Immanuel, which means “God with us.”

And what about Isaiah 9:1-7, where the prophet tells how the people walking in darkness would see a great light, and the one to rule on David’s throne—the one called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”—would be born and would rule.

And we can’t neglect those moving “suffering servant” passages in Isaiah, especially Isaiah 53 that so powerfully portrays Christ’s atoning sacrifice (Isaiah 53:3a, 4-6):

He was despised and rejected by men;

a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . .  
Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The Psalms speak of Him as well—Jesus referred Psalm 118:22-23 to Himself:

The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the corner stone;  
This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.

On the cross, He quoted from Psalm 22 when He said “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and from Psalm 31:5 when He said, “Into your hand I commit my spirit.”

There are more passages as well, but these suffice to show us what Jesus was talking about, don't they?

### ***God's plan***

What happened to Jesus—His rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection—was not Plan B. It was no surprise to God, no adjustment of His plan and purpose. It wasn't just an afterthought about how to rescue a botched mission. *God had no other plan.* It was the continuation of what He had been doing all along, and the fulfillment of His divine will and redemptive purpose!  
*Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection fulfilled God's plan as He had revealed it in Scripture!*

And that evening, Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (24:45). He summarized it all by saying, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead . . .” (24:46). But He didn't stop there; He went on: “and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (24:47-48)!

What they had experienced with Christ was grounded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They were witnesses—they had seen His life and His death, and now they had seen Him *after* He had been raised! He had *fulfilled* what was written about Him!

But did you catch it? The fulfillment is *still taking place*. He started it, but it's being carried on by His followers. His early followers bore witness and preached in His name in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and throughout the Roman world of their day, and even to India. Later believers carried the gospel to northern and eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and eventually the Americas, Australia and New Zealand, and even Antarctica.

*He has fulfilled what was written about Him; now He is fulfilling through us what is written about His followers,* as repentance for the forgiveness of sins is preached in His name to all nations! He has *no other plan!*

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®.

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 263-269.