

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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Easter 2018 - The Lord teaches His disciples about His death: In Resurrection - His exposition from the Scriptures

We come to our third and final talk in this Easter series. We are going to consider two events in Luke 24. The first, in Luke 24:25-27, is towards evening when the Lord, as a stranger, meets two disciples going home to Emmaus. The second, Luke 24:44-48, is when the same two disciples return to Jerusalem with news of the risen Lord. As they unfold their wonderful news the Lord appears among the disciples.

The journey to Emmaus

We have this wonderful conversation in Luke 24:13-49 between the risen Lord Jesus and two disciples, probably husband and wife, returning home from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. It is late in the day as they walk this long road home. Deep in conversation about recent events, suddenly they are joined on their journey by Someone they think of as a stranger. If you are not familiar with Luke 24 then it will be worth spending a few moments after this broadcast to read the whole chapter.

The stranger on the road

As this stranger joins the two disciples He asks about their conversation and notices their sadness (Luke 24:17). One of the two, Cleopas by name, is amazed that the stranger is not aware of events that have recently taken place in Jerusalem (Luke 24:18). The Stranger said to them, *"What events?"* (Luke 24:19). So, the whole story of that morning is rehearsed for the stranger (Luke 24:19-24). But, from an earlier verse in the chapter, (Luke 24:11) it is obvious that the remarkable events of the angels and their message (Luke 24:4-7) had not truly penetrated the hearts of these two disciples.

The women's testimony

Let us read Luke 24:22-24, *"Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 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."*

It appears that this was the extent of their knowledge of events on that resurrection day. It seems that they had left Jerusalem to journey home before news of the Lord appearing to other disciples.

The Stranger's response

As they finish, the Lord Jesus speaks to them. Let us read Luke 24:25-26, *"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?'"*

This expression, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe"* is a mild rebuke from the Lord declaring that they were not understanding what had happened. Although the Lord speaks to them in this way it appears that they are not upset by His words. They were not remembering the Lord's own words to them, how He spoke time and again that He would die but come alive again.

Jewish people, even those who had come to believe in the Lord Jesus, were still conditioned to look for their Messiah as the One who would bring in a new glorious Jewish kingdom. A suffering and dead Messiah threw them into confusion and doubt. What could not be understood appears to be ignored instead of seeking to reconcile the two major thoughts. A suffering Messiah was necessary to deal with the world's greatest problem ever - sin. This would eventually be followed by the Messiah coming in glorious power to restore Israel to its Davidic glory days, and even more, exceeding the great kingdom established by King David! Further to Israel's restoration, the Gentile nations would also come under the authority and rule of great David's greater Son.

What should they have believed? *"All that the prophets have spoken!"*

First let us consider some events and the Lord's own words which He had brought to the attention of the disciples. In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus spoke many times of the fact that He would suffer and be killed. In John 3:14 the Lord Jesus uses the event in Numbers 21:5-9, when Moses had a serpent of brass placed on a pole and set up in the camp of Israel, as an illustration of Himself being raised up on a cross. Although Moses had the image made to meet a need, it is obvious from the Lord's use of that event that the serpent on the pole became an illustration of the Lord's mode of death.

Another illustration is from the life of the prophet Jonah. In Matthew 12:38-40 we read the following, *"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'"*

Further to the above illustrations from Jewish history, the Lord Jesus often spoke plainly to His disciples. One such occasion is found in Matthew 20:17-19, *"Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.'"*

Generations of religious conditioning had blinded the nation and to some extent the Lord's own disciples. Therefore prophetic illustrations and the Lord's own words were not fully understood. This explains the sadness of many of the Lord's disciples including those two sad and probably confused disciples walking to their home at Emmaus (Luke 24:13-49).

The question from the Lord Jesus, *"Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"* (Luke 24:26) was intended to challenge and wake up their understanding, to bring His words back to mind. The writer to Hebrews has a summary which I think is appropriate to remind ourselves about the Lord's journey, coming from the highest glory and returning back to that same glory, Hebrews 2:9: *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone."* Part of the Hebrews 2:9 is a quotation from Psalm 8:5-6.

In the first clause, the writer of Hebrews shows the power of faith, *"We see Jesus..."* Then he recounts the journey made, *"...a little lower than the angels..."* Their creator stoops lower than angels by becoming a man. Angels, mighty in power, see their God in manhood form. It had never been seen before. What amazing grace is seen in His "coming down"! What was the prime purpose of this descent? *"...For the suffering of death..."* The Son of God became man in order that as man He would die. That death was on the cross. Finally, the eye of faith sees that same glorious precious person in an entirely different situation, *"we see Jesus ... crowned with glory and honour."*

Old Testament Prophets' testimony

This stranger, now with utmost patience towards these two sad disciples commences to talk, *"and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."* We might say, what were those things? Let us consider some possible Scriptures that the Lord Jesus might have considered.

Genesis 3:14-15

"So the LORD God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel'" (Genesis 3:14-15).

These words were spoken by the LORD God after failure, disobedience and sin had entered God's fair creation (see Genesis 3:1-7). The serpent is cursed. Satan, the serpent, became the enemy of the woman. He would cause damage to her "Seed", Christ as man, but Christ will eventually be totally victorious forever over Satan. When hopelessness seems to be the result, then God steps in and proclaims hope for mankind and victory both for God and faith.

Psalm 22 - The Crucifixion Psalm

Psalm 22 is the first in a trilogy of Psalms, Psalm 22, Psalm 23 and Psalm 24. These psalms are sometimes referred to as "The Cross, The Crook and The Crown". Psalm 23 is the Shepherd Psalm, *"The LORD is my Shepherd"*.

Psalms 24 draws attention to the King of glory coming to take up His rightful place in the city of the great king. But let us focus on Psalm 22 which is mainly concerned with the cross.

The words in Psalm 22:1, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ spoken from the cross (see Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). We not only have the words that came from the lips of the Saviour, we have the crowd and crucifixion portrayed in this psalm.

Psalm 22:6-8 tell how the Lord was despised. He was mocked and the crowd said, *"Let us see if He will be delivered from this death"* The words in Psalm 22:8 are used by the crowd, see Matthew 27:43.

Psalm 22:14-15 are considered a fairly accurate description how crucifixion would affect a person. Psalm 22:18 is prophetic of the soldiers dividing the Lord's clothing among themselves (see Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34 and John 19:24).

The Lord Jesus was not delivered from the cross; a sin offering was necessary. Man was the sinner and God demanded a perfect Man to pay the price. But, because He was perfect and had no sins to answer for himself, God raised Him from among the dead.

From Psalm 22:22 to the end of the psalm we have a confident assertion of triumph: *"I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You"* (Psalm 22:22). Turning to the last verse of the psalm, *"They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this"* (Psalm 22:31). Some Bible translations change *"that He has done this"* to *"that He has finished it"* (God's Word to the Nations [2004/06/16]). They are the Lord's words from the cross after the work of salvation was complete, see John 19:30. These are words of victory and triumph - words that every Christian should cherish!

The Sacrificial Lamb

The prophet Isaiah has many references to Christ, from His birth to His death. We will look at a well-known section in this prophetic book, Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Let us commence with Isaiah 52:14, *"Just as many were appalled at You - His appearance was so disfigured that He did not look like a man, and His form did not resemble a human being"* (Holman Christian Standard Bible [2006/01/02]). From Isaiah 52:14 we see how brutally the Lord Jesus was treated by Jew and Gentile alike. As the Lord Jesus was led to the cross this is how His disciples, Mary and her family would remember Him apart from the actual crucifixion.

Turning to Isaiah 53 we have a summary of the Lord's life, death and resurrection. Isaiah 53:2 is the Lord growing up. We must remember that the Lord lived His life before His God and Father, and to Him alone Jesus lived a life of perfection, *"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him"*, John 8:29. The Lord Jesus could justifiably say these words. His Father also said about Him, *"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'"*, Matthew 3:17.

Isaiah 53:3-6 remind us of the Lord's suffering from both Jew and Gentile. But we also have plainly stated that it was for our failures, our sins and our rebellion against a holy God. The judgment fell upon our Saviour and Lord so that we might be delivered and set free.

Isaiah 53:7 tells of the Saviour who spoke not a word when faced with the unjust accusations from the Jewish religious leaders and their supporters (Matthew 27:12, Matthew 27:14). Pilate marvelled at the quiet dignity of the Man Christ Jesus (Mark 15:5).

Isaiah 53:9 tells of the judgment that Jesus would be given: a grave with the wicked, but God the Father had other plans for His Son. The rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (see Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-54 and John 19:38-42), a secret disciple came at the right moment to claim the body of Jesus, took it down from the cross and placed it with care and love in his own unused tomb, *"with the rich at His death."*

Isaiah 53:10-12 are lovely verses combining both God's view of the mighty and yet complex sacrifice with the clear fruits of victory. They state, *"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail [labour] of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

It was a mighty work for who else, but the Lord Jesus, could be a sacrifice that survived God's righteous judgment and shout aloud, *"It is finished!"* It was a complex sacrifice in that Jesus bore the judgment and died for others. In

Isaiah 53:10 it states, *"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him..."* To bruise is an agricultural term when grain goes between the two mill stones. The grain is bruised, it no longer looks like grain it is crushed and shattered under the intense pressure to release the flour inside. This tells of the intensity of the judgment, but how glorious Jesus did not shatter, He triumphed as we have already stated.

The details in Isaiah 53:10 as to what it was like to be made an offering for sin is followed by triumphant statements, *"He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."* This sacrifice had positive results; there was purpose to this sacrifice. Again, in Isaiah 53:11-12 we are told of positive outcomes and it is all because He bore their iniquities, the sin of many and He made intercession for the transgressors. In this situation, those who had transgressed had no one to intercede for them until the Lord Jesus made it possible through His sacrifice. As Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5 states, *"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."* There are repeated statements in the Bible that clearly show how to be right with a holy God, the Lord Jesus Christ is always the solution. No other person and no other activity will satisfy God. It is so simple, *"Believe and be saved"* (see Acts 16:31).

The Lord appears

Moving on to our second Scripture, we will read from Luke 24:44-48, *"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'"*

The two Emmaus disciples have returned to the other disciples in Jerusalem. As they arrive and recall their encounter with the Lord Jesus, He suddenly appears in the room (see Luke 24:34-43). Luke 24:44-48 are part of the conversation the Lord has with His disciples. The Lord Jesus refers to what has been said, but more than that, the Lord opens their understanding. The Lord refers again to the prophetic word, *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day"* (Luke 24:46). This was an action of grace to the disciples who were having a difficulty in understanding what was happening.

Now the Lord gives the disciples a commission. The disciples, who now understand, are to go forth and preach as "first hand" witnesses that the Lord Jesus is risen and alive. The Gospel message was a straight forward message that *"repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47). This Gospel message is still the same basic message for today. Repentance is still the essential primary element. To truly believe and gain salvation there is the need to repent. Repentance has been described as turning completely around and heading in a totally new direction. There is much teaching in the New Testament that the old life is completely replaced by a new life dedicated to serving the Lord Jesus Christ. The guide to live this life is God's Word, especially the New Testament, with nothing added, taken away or modified (see Revelation 22:18-20). It is all Scripture. Once there has been true repentance, then a saved person knows that their sins are forgiven. Salvation changes people. If there is no change then there is no salvation.

Here are the words of a well-known chorus, abbreviated:

*I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.*

*The world behind me, the cross before me,
No turning back, no turning back.*

*Though none go with me, I still will follow,
No turning back, no turning back.*

*Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
No turning back, no turning back.*

Anon

Thank you for listening. May the Lord bless and encourage you today.

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