

Echoes of Scripture

Easter 3a ~ Luke 24:13-35

Summary of Luke 24:13-35

Jesus' followers saw his death on the cross as the end of their messianic hopes and dreams, despite what Jesus had told them or predicted. As two of the disappointed were heading home, Jesus plays "Undercover Boss". He appears and walks with them unrecognized along the road. He teaches them everything they should have known from the scriptures about the Messiah; helping them to understand the Messiah in a new way. Then as they share a meal together, Jesus takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them—the same way he had done before—and in that moment, their eyes are opened and they recognize him. And he disappears. Excited, they head back to Jerusalem to tell the others.

Suggested Course of Study

- Read 1 Samuel 16-19
- Read Judges 9
- Read Acts 8:26-40 (The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch)
- Read Luke 24 (The Resurrection and Ascension)

Immediate Context

Luke 23:26-49 The Crucifixion of Jesus
 Luke 23:50-56 The Burial of Jesus
 Luke 24:1-12 The Resurrection of Jesus

Luke 24:13-35 **The Walk to Emmaus**
 Luke 24:36-49 Jesus appears to his disciples
 Luke 24:50-53 The Ascension of Jesus

The Textⁱ

Luke 24:13–35 (NRSV)

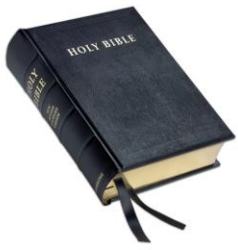
¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^f from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.^g ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth,^h who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.ⁱ Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not

^f Gk *sixty stadia*; other ancient authorities read *a hundred sixty stadia*

^g Other ancient authorities read *walk along, looking sad?*"

^h Other ancient authorities read *Jesus the Nazorean*

ⁱ Or *to set Israel free*



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necessary that the Messiah^j should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us^k while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Key Words

TWO OF THEM – Who are they? In Luke 23:50ff we see that several woman from Galilee had accompanied Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb of Jesus to see how the body was laid. They then went to prepare spices and ointments, but rested on the Sabbath day. At early dawn, they returned to the tomb with the spices (see Luke 24:1ff) and found it empty. Then two men in dazzling white appeared and told them that Jesus had risen. In this crowd of women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and “the other women” (see Luke 24:10).

When this passage says “two of them”, the context gives you two options. First, it would make you think that it is talking about two of the women. However, in the Greek, the word “them” is masculine plural.

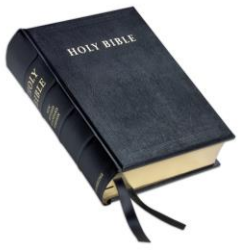
Second, it could refer to the people the women went back to tell: “the eleven and all the rest” (see verse 9 and 10. In verse 10 they are called the “apostles” (the eleven and the rest) who didn’t believe the women’s “idle tale”. Most likely the phrase “two of them” refers to two of “the rest” who were with the eleven when the women came to report about the empty tomb and the message of the angels.

One of them is named “Cleopas” Κλεοπάς (see John 24:18); which is a masculine proper noun that means “very renowned”. Many think that this is a shortened version of the Greek/Egyptian name Cleopatos (meaning “Illustrious Father” or “Glory to the Father”). Because the second person isn’t named, many assume that the companion of Cleopas was his wife (the masculine plural “them” doesn’t necessitate that both were men). If the other person was Cleopas’ son, who later became bishop of Jerusalem, many say that the son would have been named in this text. If it was another male “apostle”, wouldn’t he have been named? The assumption is that this “other” person was well known to the community for which this gospel was written and the wife of Cleopas makes sense.

More important than the identity of these two individuals is how they function representatively in the text. In many ways, they represent everyone who is confused, disheartened, or saddened by the suffering, arrest and death of the Messiah. The prophet that they had hoped to be the Messiah, instead of being embraced by the religious leaders, was rejected by some (not all) of the religious leaders of the nation. So these two represent anyone who continue to ask “Is Jesus really the messiah?” or “Why did Jesus have to die?” They represent

^j Or *the Christ*

^k Other ancient authorities lack *within us*



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anyone who has doubts about the resurrection or anyone who has lost hope that God is present in the world. Perhaps they are meant to represent all Christians.

A VILLAGE CALLED EMMAUS – The name “Emmaus” means “warm wells” in Hebrew. It is only mentioned here in Luke. An town called Emmaus is mentioned in 1 Maccabees 3:40, 57 and 4:1-15 (which is located 20 miles west of Jerusalem in the valley of Ajalon); a town that has two warm wells. But the distance is considerably further than 60 stadia (which is approximately 7.5 miles). If you look at the footnote on this verse, it does say that other ancient manuscripts say the village was 160 stadia away (approximately 19.5 miles) which makes the 1 Maccabees location sound plausible, even though the better manuscripts say 60 stadia. Based on the fact that the two offer Jesus hospitality, Emmaus was most likely their home. They were probably returning home from Jerusalem and the celebration of the Passover.

THEIR EYES WERE KEPT FROM RECOGNIZING HIM – It is strange that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. The verb is passive and so the intent is that God is keeping them from recognizing Jesus. See Luke 9:45 (Jesus tells his disciples that he will die but they are kept from understanding) and 18:34 (where Jesus speaks about his death and resurrection but the disciples are kept from understanding his words again). God is assumed to be the one who keeps them from knowing. Naturally, we wonder why. Why would God want this/do this? What purpose does it serve?

When it comes to echoes of scripture, we are reminded of 2 Kings 6:1-23 (the story of Elisha praying that his servant could see and that the Aramaeans would be blind) and Numbers 22:22-27 (the story of Balaam and his donkey). Divine intervention is involved in preventing and allowing people to see the truth of the situation.

In scripture we also have several instances where God hardens people’s hearts: see Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4; 14:17; Deuteronomy 2:30; Joshua 11:20; Isaiah 63:17; John 12:40 (where Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10); Acts 28:26-28; Romans 1:24,28; 9:18; 11:7, 25; 2 Thessalonians 2:11. In most of the texts above, the characters involved had already turned from God (they demonstrated a hardening of their own hearts).

In 1 Samuel 16-19 we also have an instance where God takes away his spirit from Saul and sends an evil spirit to torment him (see 1 Samuel 16; 18:10-12; 19:9; 28:15. And we are reminded of the animosity (an evil spirit sent by God) between the citizens of Shechem and Abimelek (See Judges 9:23).

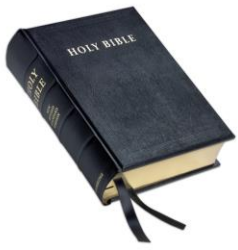
What are we to make of this, especially when we also read the following verses:

Ezekiel 33:11 – ¹¹ Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

1 Timothy 2:1-4 – ¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

See comments on OH, HOW FOOLISH YOU ARE for more on this.

“WHAT ARE YOU DISCUSSING WITH EACH OTHER WHILE YOU WALK ALONG?” THEY STOOD STILL, LOOKING SAD – Notice the footnote on this verse. Jesus said either “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” or “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along, looking sad?” Clearly the source of their sadness was that Jesus, whom they believed to be the messiah, was dead. But were they sad



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already while walking and talking, or, did the question by Jesus make them sad? In other words, Jesus could be asking, “What’s wrong little campers? What’s making y’all so sad?” They respond with shock that this person traveling with them hasn’t heard what had happened to the one “everyone” was talking about, Jesus of Nazareth. They are amazed that he hasn’t been captivated by the story.

WE HAD HOPED THAT HE WAS THE ONE TO REDEEM ISRAEL – This is one of the most important lines of the passage. It highlights the disappointment and sadness of not only these two, but the other disciples of Jesus as well. “We had hoped” ἠλπίζομεν the imperfect active indicative first person plural form of ἐλπίζω meaning “to look forward with confidence, to expect with desire, to hope”. μέλλων “to be about to” and λυτροῦσθαι subjunctive aorist middle third person singular of λυτρόω “to redeem, ransom, deliver, set free.” They had hoped the powerful prophet would do something significant. For them, redemption would be liberation from Roman rule. For Jesus, redemption came through his blood. See Luke 1:68; 2:38; 21:28 and 22:20; though check the footnote carefully at 22:20. See also Isaiah 59:20.

YES, AND BESIDES ALL THIS, IT IS NOW THE THIRD DAY SINCE THESE THINGS TOOK PLACE – Jesus had told his disciples repeatedly that on the third day, he would rise again (see Luke 9:22; 13:32; 18:33; see also Luke 24:7; Acts 10:40; 1 Corinthians 15:4). They should have expected it. And yet they had lost hope. Even after hearing the story from the women who had gone to the tomb, they dismissed their story of the two angels as an “idle tale”.

OH, HOW FOOLISH YOU ARE AND HOW SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE DECLARED! – It is interesting how Jesus reacts to their disappointment and loss of hope. “How foolish you are!” ἀνόητοι (meaning “mindless, brainless”). The root of this word is the same root for the word “to repent; to change one’s mind”. Here it means to be without mind. They should have known! How slow of heart! But, if we consider the fact that their eyes were kept from recognizing him, why should Jesus be critical of their slowness of heart? Could it be that their eyes were kept from recognizing him because of this slowness to believe? Remember, these two were probably there when the woman returned from the tomb to tell them what they had seen with the angels. And rather than produce belief, the report of the women produces criticism and disbelief. So perhaps Jesus’ criticism is justified.

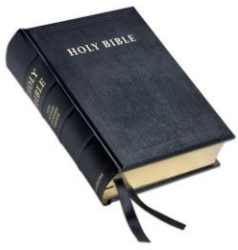
Jesus uses a similar word, “fools” ἄφρων (“without understanding”), at 11:40 when criticizing the Pharisees looking clean on the outside while being dirty inside and 12:20 in the parable of the rich fool.

Jesus criticizes them for not believing what the prophets have declared about the messiah suffering these things and then entering his glory. Our question is: “What did the prophets say?”

See Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Psalm 2; Psalm 118; Isaiah 53-62; Daniel 7; Hosea 6; and Amos 9:11.

BEGINNING WITH MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS HE INTERPRETED TO THEM THE THINGS ABOUT HIMSELF IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES – This is equally the most important line of this passage. Jesus interpreted the scriptures for them so that they could understand his role as messiah in a new way. He helps them see all of scripture in light of God’s redemptive work on the cross and the raising of Jesus from the dead. Although Jesus has opened their eyes to what the scriptures have said, they still don’t recognize him yet.

AS THEY CAME NEAR THE VILLAGE THEY URGED HIM STRONGLY, SAYING “STAY WITH US” – This story has echoes of the story of Abraham in Genesis 18:1-15 where Abraham provides hospitality to three men and was told that Sarah will have a son. See also Hebrews 13:2. The word for “urged him strongly” is παρεβιάσαντο. It’s made up of the prefix παρα meaning “to the point of” and βιάζω meaning “to force or impel (sometimes with violence)”. Literally, they had to “twist his arm” to get him to stay.



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HE TOOK BREAD, BLESSED AND BROKE IT, AND GAVE IT TO THEM – λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον (he took the bread) εὐλόγησεν (blessed it) καὶ κλάσας (and broke it) ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς (gave it to them). This is reminiscent of the last supper (see Luke 22:19) where Jesus καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον (and he took bread) εὐχαριστήσας (gave thanks) ἔκλασεν (broke it) καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς (and gave it to them). This is also reminiscent of the feeding of the five thousand (see Luke 9:16) where Jesus λαβὼν δὲ τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας (and he took the five loaves and the two fish) ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (he looked up to heaven) εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς (he blessed them) καὶ κατέκλασεν (and broke them) καὶ ἐδίδου (and gave them) τοῖς μαθηταῖς παραθεῖναι τῷ ὄχλῳ (to the disciples to place before the crowd).

THEN THEIR EYES WERE OPENED, AND THEY RECOGNIZED HIM AND HE VANISHED FROM THEIR SIGHT – Now you see me... now you don't! The resurrection appearances almost make it seem as if Jesus is playing a game of Peek-a-boo with his disciples.

WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING WITHIN US WHILE HE WAS OPENING THE SCRIPTURES TO US – Notice the contrast here: they go from being “slow of heart” (verse 25) to having “hearts burning” (verse 32 referring to their experience of verse 27). Is there an echo that will carry through to Pentecost here? (see Acts 2) with the spirit, tongues of fire, etc. Notice the footnote on this verse.

THAT SAME HOUR, THEY GOT UP AND RETURNED TO JERUSALEM – Καὶ ἀναστάντες (and they got up) αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ (the same hour) ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ (returned to Jerusalem). The word ἀναστάντες is used throughout Luke's gospel to refer to people who stand up after sitting or lying down. But this same word also means “to raise” as in “being raised from the dead or raised on the third day” (see Luke 16:31; 18:33; 24:7; and 24:46; note, however, that it is not the word used in Luke 24:5/6—that word is from ἐγείρω).

In Luke, everything leads towards Jerusalem. Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee. Jesus then heads towards Jerusalem where he will suffer and die. In the post-resurrection appearances, the focus is on Jerusalem. This is where the disciples have gathered and this is where they are told to remain until he sends the Holy Spirit to clothe them with power from on high. In Acts, the action will pick up again in Jerusalem and then lead outward into the world.

THEY FOUND THE ELEVEN AND THEIR COMPANIONS – Apparently the disciples didn't travel alone.

THEY WERE SAYING “THE LORD HAS RISEN INDEED, AND HE HAS APPEARED TO SIMON!” – It's interesting that they mention that Jesus has appeared to Simon when thus far, Jesus hasn't appeared to anyone but these two. The story of the appearance to Simon isn't mentioned in this gospel. Two men in dazzling clothes appear to the women at the tomb, Jesus appears to the two along the road, and then Jesus appears to the disciples as these two are telling the story of how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

ON THE ROAD – ὁ ὁδός “the way, path, road.” I am not sure whether or not this is an intended here, but it is interesting that the Christian's would later be called the people of “The Way” (ὁ ὁδός); especially in the book of Acts – see Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25-26; 24:14. To understand a little more about what “The Way” would have meant to the early Christians see Genesis 18:19; 32:8; 2 Kings 21:22; Psalm 18:21; 25:8-12; Psalm 119; 138:5; 139:24; Psalm 143:8; Proverbs 2:20; 4:11; 6:23; 8:20; 10:29; 21:8, 16; 23:19; Jeremiah 5:4; 7:23; Hosea 14:9; and Malachi 2:8. By the time of Jesus, the Torah (living according to Torah) had become known as “the way, the truth and the life”. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

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