

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Luke 24:13-35

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, March 31, 2013
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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 31, 2013**, is from **Luke 24:13-21, 28-35**. **Luke 24:22-27** are added to the commentary below for further background study and teaching. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive [International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#). The weekly [International Bible Lesson](#) is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at <http://InternationalBibleLessons.org> and in [The Oklahoman](#) newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Luke 24:13-21

(Luke 24:13) Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

Jesus Christ rose from the dead early in the morning on the first day of the week. On that very Sunday afternoon, two of Jesus' followers (not 2 of Jesus 12 disciples) were walking to the town of Emmaus from Jerusalem – walking 7 miles. They were not doing anything special; they were not praying for Jesus to appear to them or show himself to them unexpectedly. They would never guess that the One they would be speaking to on the road had been crucified only three days earlier. If Jesus had only been resuscitated instead of resurrected, He would not have had the strength to walk seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

(Luke 24:14) and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

These two travelers became two witnesses to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. According to Jewish law, two witnesses were needed to establish a fact in a court of law. They naturally talked about all they had heard about Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection appearances. These two "had hoped that Jesus was the one to redeem Israel," and Jesus appeared to them to convince

them that they had hoped correctly, and that they could tell others about Him and the reality and truth of their hope.

(Luke 24:15) While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,

Jesus was not resuscitated. No one removed Him from the tomb and revived Him (as some unbelievers have falsely charged in their attempts to discredit the resurrection of Jesus from the dead). A resuscitated person could hardly walk 7 miles after having been crucified and buried in a grave with armed guards securing the tomb door. After Jesus' sleepless night and long ordeal of suffering, if He had only been resuscitated or physically "patched up," He could not have come near these two disciples and walked to Emmaus without being recognized as a sickly, crucified man. He appeared to them as a regular person in good health taking a journey, just as they were doing.

(Luke 24:16) but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Because she probably had her head down, weeping with grief, Mary did not recognize Jesus until He revealed himself to her when He spoke to her. A recently crucified man who had only been resuscitated could hardly have spoken in a recognizable way when he was thought to be dead. Jesus spoke to her recognizably with the strength of the risen Lord. His resurrected and glorified human body did not show the stress and damage that the crucifixion had done to Him because he was so changed; though He still bore the marks of crucifixion in His hands. In order for Jesus to have the time to teach these two witnesses about himself from the Scriptures, He had to keep them from recognizing Him at first. Otherwise, they would have been so overjoyed that they would not have had the mental concentration to carefully consider what He would teach them in a reasonable fashion from the Scriptures.

(Luke 24:17) And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

Their sadness demonstrated that they did not yet believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus knew the answer to His question, but He needed to open the doors of their minds to conversation about His purpose for coming into our world. They needed to confess aloud what they did not yet believe, what they had heard, and what they had hoped. After telling Jesus what they had heard, Jesus could conversationally build upon their understanding, teach them from the Scriptures, and give them new hope when He revealed himself to them as their risen Lord.

(Luke 24:18) 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?"

Cleopas' name was remembered and recorded because he was an eyewitness to this unexpected meeting with Jesus. We know they did not recognize Him because they called Jesus "a stranger." To them, what had happened to Jesus was so vitally important to so many that they could not imagine anyone not knowing about Jesus and what had happened to Him.

(Luke 24:19) He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

In telling Jesus about himself, they confessed what they knew and believed about Him. Jesus was identified by his hometown. Only one "Jesus of Nazareth" had said and done what He had said and done. They called Jesus a prophet and affirmed that Jesus had done many things a prophet of God was expected to do. They affirmed that God had confirmed Jesus' teachings through His mighty deeds. They told Him that many people had witnessed these truths about Jesus. In His conversation with them, Jesus did not need to teach them what they already knew.

(Luke 24:20) and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

Though they did not yet believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they certainly knew that He had been crucified, had died, and had been buried. After sharing with Jesus a summary of what they knew about Jesus that was of vital importance, they told Jesus what had happened to Him. These two disciples were Jews, as was Jesus and His disciples, and they said that their Jewish leaders had arranged for Jesus' death. These religious leaders had handed Jesus over to the Roman authorities (they did not need to say this directly) because only Roman authorities could legally condemn Jesus and crucify him. The Jews executed people by stoning them to death, as in the case of Stephen the first martyr, but this was against Roman law and was done in a fit of rage by the Jewish leaders.

(Luke 24:21) But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

Next, the two affirmed their faith and hope in Jesus, a faith and hope that Jesus words and mighty deeds had inspired. They had probably hoped that Jesus would redeem them from Roman oppression; so, from the Scriptures, Jesus needed to teach them that in his first coming he needed to die to "redeem" or "free them" from the oppression of Satan and slavery to sin to make them fit for heaven through the gift of eternal life.

Luke 24:22-27

(Luke 24:22) Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

These two followers of Jesus had obviously been with Peter, John, and the women who had found that the tomb of Jesus was empty. The women had expected to find the body of Jesus in the tomb so they could anoint Him for final burial. They went early on Sunday morning, following the Sabbath (Saturday), and found that His body was gone.

(Luke 24:23) 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.

The disciples who heard the report of the women were astounded, because they too expected the women to find Jesus' body to prepare it with their spices. Instead, they received a report that the women had seen two angels, who told them that they should not look for the living among the dead, because Jesus had risen from the dead.

(Luke 24:24) 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."

At least two women testified that the tomb was empty, and then Peter and John (two more witnesses) went to the tomb to verify that it was indeed empty as the women had reported. They had as evidence of His resurrection, the empty tomb, the vision of the angels, and Jesus' prior teachings from the Scriptures that He would rise from the dead. At this time, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus may or may not have known about Mary seeing Jesus at the tomb.

(Luke 24:25) Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

With all of the evidence before them and the testimony of reliable witnesses, Jesus said they were foolish not to believe. They had received enough evidence from enough eyewitnesses in order to believe and give good reasons why they believed Jesus was risen from the dead. They were "slow of heart" or "slow to allow the evidence to convince them of the truth." They were slow to believe what the Old Testament Scriptures taught about Jesus and His first coming and His sacrificial death and His resurrection. They had the Bible and eye witnesses, but they were slow to accept them. On the Day of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter presented Old Testament evidence for Jesus' resurrection and the testimony of eye witnesses to His resurrection.

(Luke 24:26) Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"

Jesus indicated that there was no other option for the Messiah other than to suffer and die on a cross in fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Yes, some would accept His teachings, repent of their sins, trust in Him as the Messiah, but enough would oppose Him that He would be crucified according to the Bible's prophecies. Then, He would be raised from the dead and ascend into heaven.

(Luke 24:27) Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Jesus could teach a great deal from the Scriptures during a 7 mile walk to Emmaus. He would have their undivided attention, and people sometimes walk slower and slower when discussing important ideas. Jesus could begin with Genesis 3:15, and also talk about how Jacob's prophecy regarding the lion of the tribe of Judah in Genesis 49:8-12 applied to Him. He taught about what Moses prophesied. He could have also taught about the prophecies of David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others. Then, these disciples would teach these truths to the other disciples, probably teaching some of these truths before Jesus appeared to them again in the upper room. Certainly, they would tell many times what Jesus taught them from the Scriptures on the road, and the Holy Spirit would help them remember what Jesus taught them as they taught. The Holy Spirit would also protect them from making any mistakes when they taught what Jesus had taught.

Luke 24:28-35

(Luke 24:28) As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

The omitted verses in the Uniform Lesson series (Luke 24:22-27, see above) revealed some of what Jesus taught them about himself from the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus would have walked on, but they chose to invite Him into their lives and into the place they planned to stay in the village. They probably wanted to learn more about Jesus from the Scriptures as He confirmed and strengthened their faith.

(Luke 24:29) 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.

They gave Jesus good reasons for Him to stay with them. After a 7 mile walk, a meal, a place to refresh, a place to rest, and a place to sleep were parts of their appeal for Jesus to stay with them. These two disciples had learned from Jesus' teaching to be servants of others in need, and they followed the example Jesus had left to His disciples, especially at the Last Supper (Passover) when He taught about His coming as a servant and that they should be servants of others too.

(Luke 24:30) When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

When we read this verse, we naturally think of Jesus' Last Supper. These two may or may not have been at Jesus' Last Supper (which we think of as exclusively for the 12 disciples, because of many paintings of the Last Supper). As their teacher on the road, Jesus would have naturally offered a prayer and broken and distributed the bread at their meal. They would have seen Jesus do this on other occasions when He fed His disciples or fed the crowds. They would have recognized His hands as His hands, just as we recognize the hands of a loved one when we have seen them used often. Luke does not tell us if they saw the marks of crucifixion on His hands or not, but perhaps they did.

(Luke 24:31) Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

God opened their eyes and the eyes of their understanding in Jesus' manner of breaking the bread and praying. The very moment they recognized Jesus, they would have tried to detain Him and talk more to Him, but His time of visitation was over and He had taught them all they needed to know at that time; so, He vanished from their sight. As God, He could stay with them invisibly and be with others at the same time. As God, He could give them the strength to walk 7 miles back to Jerusalem that very night.

(Luke 24:32) They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

The two disciples immediately reflected on their experience with Jesus. Now they knew the stranger who had touched their hearts and had opened the Scriptures to them. Now, they knew that the stranger was no stranger at all, but Jesus himself. Now, they knew that all they had learned about Jesus and His resurrection were true facts. He confirmed that their faith in Him was valid.

(Luke 24:33) That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

As they discussed their experience with Jesus, they quickly finished their meal. In less than an hour, they began their 7 mile walk back to Jerusalem. If Jesus had not convinced them that they had seen and talked to Him, as exhausted as they were, they would never have walked back 7 miles in the dark. What they had experienced and learned they could not contain within themselves, and they could not wait to share it; therefore, we have good evidence of their sincere transformation from men of sadness to men of gladness.

(Luke 24:34) They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"

They knew where the 11 disciples were staying with other believers (Judas had already murdered himself). Immediately, they learned more good news about Jesus from those in the room “the Lord has risen;” “he has appeared to Simon!” Their faith and spiritual experience with Jesus was confirmed by others. Specifically, they learned that Jesus had appeared to Simon, who was there to confirm and explain the fact. The 11 could not restrain themselves and felt compelled to share this good news with the 2 who had been on the road to Emmaus. Likewise, the 2 who had been on the road to Emmaus confirmed the faith of the 11 disciples and all the others in the room that Jesus had risen from the dead.

(Luke 24:35) Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

We can only imagine how these two must have felt as their hearts filled with joy when they heard from other witnesses the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. Then, with joyful hearts, they were able to tell what they had experienced on the road. They could describe how Jesus broke the bread, as they all knew well, and how they recognized Him when they saw Him break the bread in His usual way. Thus, Jesus used a variety of witnesses and circumstances to fill His followers with joy and build up their faith and trust in Him. Likewise, these two disciples told everyone in the room exactly how Jesus had interpreted the Scriptures to them, why He had been crucified, and why they believed He had risen from the dead.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Other than the fact that Moses’ law required two witnesses to a possible crime or event, what are some other advantages for there being two or more witnesses at a time to Jesus’ resurrection appearances (with Mary in the garden and Paul on the road to Damascus being two notable exceptions)?
2. What reason does Luke give for the two on the road to Emmaus being sad?
3. Why was it important for Jesus to point the two eye witnesses on the road to Emmaus back to what the Bible had taught about the Messiah and His coming?
4. Why did Jesus begin with Moses and proceed to explain what all the prophets and all the scriptures said about Him?
5. Why do you think Jesus appeared and disappeared when He chose, and not because (or when or if) people called Him to appear to them?

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