



The Gospel of Luke - Chapter Twenty Four

Summary of Chapter Twenty Four

The women discover the empty tomb early on Sunday morning and are told by an angel that the Christ is risen from death. They return to tell the disciples, who initially don't believe them, so Peter, accompanied by John, runs to the tomb to check for himself.

Jesus appears before two disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They are kept from recognising him and he explains the scriptures to them as to why the Christ had to suffer and die. On arrival at their home, he reveals himself to them whilst breaking bread and then disappears. The disciples immediately return to Jerusalem to inform the others.

Having received news of the empty tomb, the apostles were in a locked upper room, discussing this amazing news, when suddenly Jesus appeared in their midst. Initially, the apostles thought he was a ghost but Jesus reassured them by showing his hands, feet and the wound in his side. He ate some fish and then spent some time with them, opening their minds to the scriptures.

He spent a period of about 40 days with the disciples, giving them final instructions. One day, while sharing time with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, Jesus ascended into heaven. The disciples then returned to Jerusalem, went into the temple and praised God.

VIII. Luke 24:1-53 - The Resurrection

Luke's Gospel began in the temple (Luke 1:5-23) and, after Jesus has risen from the dead, it will conclude in the temple as well.

VIII.a Luke 24:1-12 - The empty tomb

Returning to the tomb, the women find it empty and are told by two angels that Jesus is risen and they should tell the disciples. Hearing this, Peter, who was accompanied by John although this is not recorded by Luke, goes to the tomb and finds it empty.

¹ On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

Luke 24:1

All four Gospels state that on the first day of the week the resurrection took place, i.e. on Sunday Nisan 17. As with John 20:1, Luke brings the readers attention to the fact that, although it is the third day since the Crucifixion as foretold in scripture, it is also the first day of the week which signals a new beginning; a renewal of creation.

² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:2-3

The earthly Lord Jesus is no longer in the tomb. He is now the risen Lord, as confirmed by: <<For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand'>> (Acts 2:34), <<and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord>> (Romans 1:4).

⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

Luke 24:4

These two men were angels and this is confirmed by: <<There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it>> (Matthew 28:2), by: <<The angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified>> (Matthew 28:5), by: <<As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot>> (John 20:11b-12), and then by: <<They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them>> (Acts 1:10).

For the women, the empty tomb was at first perplexing. For Luke and his readers, it is proof of Jesus' resurrection and confirmation that Jesus' claims to be the Son of God were, in fact, true. This is confirmed in Luke 22:70 <<They all asked, Are you then the Son of God? He replied, You are right in saying I am>>.

⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, Why do you look for the living among the dead?

Luke 24:5

In their fright refers to fear that can lead to reverence, see v.37. The appearance of angels often produces such fear in people: <<As the flame blazed up from the altar towards heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manohah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground>> (Judges 13:19-20), <<When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear>> (Luke 1:12), and: <<Cornelius stared at him in fear>> (Acts 10:4).

For the living is confirmed in v.23. Similar confirmation can be found in Acts 1:3 <<After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God>>, Acts 3:15 <<You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are

witnesses of this>>, and in Romans 14:9 <<For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living>>.

⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

Luke 24:6

Remember how he told you. Using the scriptures, Jesus frequently tried to explain to the disciples that the Messiah had to die and be raised back to life. Examples of this are: <<And he said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life>> (Luke 9:22), <<Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men>> (Luke 9:44), and: <<He will be turned over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again>> (Luke 18:32-33).

⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again'.

Luke 24:7

Must emphasises the necessity of God's providential plan being fulfilled as noted earlier: <<And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" >> (Luke 9:22).

The third day has been discussed in Luke 9:22 and was later confirmed in Luke 18:33 <<On the third day he will rise again" >>.

⁸ Then they remembered his words.

Luke 24:8

They remembered his words, that is, his prophecies, refer to v.6 as noted earlier. We have an example of this when Jesus cleared the temple courts: <<When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me" >> (John 2:13-17).

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

Luke 24:9

It is now the Eleven because Judas is gone, having committed suicide because of his guilt and shame. This is confirmed in v.33 and in Matthew 28:16 <<Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go>>, and in Acts 1:26 <<Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles>>.

And to all the others includes the two disciples of Luke 24:13-25, and probably many of the church of 120: <<In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)>> (Acts 1:15).

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

Luke 24:10

It was Mary and the others indicates that at least five women went to the tomb and that they were the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection.

For a description of apostles we have: <<When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles>> (Luke 6:13).

The apostles were specifically called by Christ and are those who would see the risen Lord Jesus. They established and governed the whole church under Jesus Christ, and they had authority to speak and write the words of God, equal in authority to the OT scriptures.

<<Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God>> (Romans 1:1), shows that Paul was called to be an apostle when Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road in Acts Chapter 9. The unusual timing of his call led Paul to conclude that no more apostles would be chosen after him: <<and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born>> (1 Corinthians 15:8). It also confirmed that he had the same apostolic authority as those who were eye witnesses of Jesus' ministry.

¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Luke 24:11

They, the apostles, did not initially believe the women.

The women were witnesses of the crucifixion, burial and empty tomb, as well as the message of the resurrection. The Gospels report that women were the first witnesses to Christ's resurrection and their report to the other disciples was courageous, since the testimony of women as witnesses was not always given credence in the 1st Century context, especially in a court of law. This is despite the way that Jesus treated women in the male disciples' presence.

¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Luke 24:12

Peter got up and ran. That John was with him is confirmed in these words: <<So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there>> (John 20:3-6).

Strips of linen lying by themselves. The linen cloths lying there were clear evidence that Jesus' body had not been taken by grave robbers, as the cloths were of more value than the

body! Neither had it been taken by the disciples, nor by his enemies; neither of whom would have taken the time to remove these cloths.

The Greek text simply says that the cloths were lying. Although it is sometimes suggested otherwise, nothing in the text indicates that Jesus' body passed through the cloths or that the cloths were lying in the shape of Jesus' body. The NT elsewhere affirms the real physical materiality of Jesus' resurrection body.

Most likely Jesus unwrapped these cloths from his body when he awakened from death and left them behind. It is possible that he had the help of angels, or they were divinely removed by the Holy Spirit.

He went away, wondering. The Greek word used can be associated with unbelief, surprise and wonder, as in Luke 11:38 <<But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised>>, or Acts 13:41 <<'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you'>>, but usually involves a positive response.

The fact of the resurrection is at the heart of our faith and is often the point most targeted by sceptics. As well as the biblical record and extra-biblical accounts in other historical records from the time that allude to Christ's resurrection, some key questions to get non-believers to consider would include:

- If Jesus did not actually rise from the dead, why did the disciples go from frightened, timid followers of Jesus before his death, to bold evangelists, willing to die, preaching his resurrection, if they had just really made the whole thing up and he was still dead?
- Why were the disciples willing to be tortured and killed for a known lie?
- Why would they make up the resurrection story if Jesus turned out to be a fraud?
- What was their motive?
- How could the disciples, who were just 12 ordinary people, pull off such a hoax?
- Why would thousands of people immediately convert, if Jesus didn't actually rise from the dead?
- Why did the disciples make themselves look incapable in the Gospels?
- Why did Saul of Tarsus, chief persecutor of Christians, convert to become the Apostle Paul and a passionate, convicted follower of Jesus, if he didn't really have an encounter with the risen Jesus?
- Why would Paul give up all his hopes, ambitions and dreams of becoming a very senior figure in the Sanhedrin and allow himself to become impoverished, suffer hardship, be beaten many times, risk death, be arrested and eventually martyred, if it hadn't actually happened to him?
- How could the disciples even steal the body in the first place, as the tomb was guarded by professional soldiers?
- If the Romans or the Jews stole the body, why didn't they produce it to put an end to all the speculation following the resurrection?
- If grave robbers took the body, why didn't they take the only items of value, that is, the grave cloths?

Sceptics of the Gospel often look to the scene portrayed above and say there are many contradictions in the four canonical accounts. How many women were there; just Mary Magdalene or more? Did Peter or Peter and John run to the grave? How many angels were there: one, two, more? If you list all the passages side by side you will find that the accounts are not contradictory but complimentary. Luke did not say only Peter went to the tomb but

that he did. Similarly, John does not say that only Mary went but he only talks of Mary's experience. It is sometimes good to look at all the facts in the accounts and then build up an image of all that has happened.

Paul records: <<After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep>> (1 Corinthians 15:6). The lives of these men and women were changed literally forever, many of them giving up everything, including their lives, to follow the teaching of Jesus. The apostle Paul was a fanatical Pharisee, who persecuted the church. He became an eye-witness to the risen Christ on the Damascus Road, gave up a promising career in the Sanhedrin, underwent great hardship, beatings, imprisonment and finally execution for the privilege of proclaiming Jesus as the Christ. Intelligent and well educated people do not do these things on a whim.

VIII.b Luke 24:13-35 - The road to Emmaus

This is the first of the three resurrection appearances recorded in Luke and is one of the longest stories in the Gospel.

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Luke 24:13

That same day, the day of Christ's resurrection, is the first day of the week, i.e. Sunday, see v.1.

Two of them of which one is unnamed and the other is Cleopas (v.18).

They were going to Emmaus, possibly after having celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem. The location of Emmaus is uncertain but it was in Judæa, seven miles, literally sixty stadia or about 11km from Jerusalem. A stadion was about 607 feet or 185m.

¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

Luke 24:14

Everything that had happened refers primarily to Christ's Passion and is explained in vv.20-24.

¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognising him.

¹⁷ He asked them, What are you discussing together as you walk along? They stood still, their faces downcast.

Luke 24:15-17

But they were kept from recognising him by God. We see this in other verses such as: <<But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it>> (Luke 9:45), <<The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about>> (Luke 18:34), <<At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing

there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus>> (John 20:14), and: <<Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus>> (John 21:4).

¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?

¹⁹ What things? he asked. About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

Luke 24:18-20

Prophet: <<They were all filled with awe and praised God. A great prophet has appeared among us, they said. God has come to help his people>> (Luke 7:16). A great prophet is a correct description of Jesus but an inadequate one unless we add: Christ, Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Lord of all creation, God, etc.

Powerful in word and deed is shown in his casting out of demons, performing healing and nature miracles, his divine authority to forgive sins and his extensive teaching with divine authority.

Before God and all the people (v.19) stands in contrast with the chief priests and our rulers (v.20). It also reminds us that what Jesus did, he did openly so that it could be well attested to: <<"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret" >> (John 18:20), and Paul gives an account of it to King Agrippa: <<The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner>> (Acts 26:26).

Handed him over or delivered him up. What Judas did in delivering Jesus over to the chief priests and rulers, they in turn did by delivering him over to Pilate: <<Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate>> (Luke 23:1). All of it was ordained by God.

They crucified him. While the physical act of crucifixion was by the Romans, Luke's account from the eye witnesses places the human responsibility of Jesus' crucifixion primarily on the religious leadership.

²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

Luke 24:21

But we had hoped contrasts the people's view of Jesus with that of the religious leadership.

²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.

Luke 24:22-24

Some of our companions went to the tomb assumes that after Peter's visit other disciples went and also found it empty. John 20:2-10 records only John and Peter from the male disciples visiting the tomb but that is not to say others did not do so.

²⁵ He said to them, How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Luke 24:25

How foolish you are. 'O foolish ones' is a more precise translation than 'O foolish men' as offered in some translations, because the Greek text does not specify whether these were two men or a man and a close female relative, perhaps a husband and a wife, or a man with his mother, sister or adult daughter walking together.

In Matthew, Jesus tells us not to call anyone a fool or the consequences will be dire: <<But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca', is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell>> (Matthew 5:22). What he is saying is that we should not do so in order to insult someone but it may be used, as here, for appropriate reproof.

²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?

Luke 24:26

Did not the Christ have to suffer refers to the fact that the entire OT had shown how God brought his chosen leaders first through suffering and then to glory. No doubt Jesus would have focused on Isaiah Chapter 53 and Daniel Chapter 9 as part of his reasoning.

Therefore, the Messiah himself, in fulfilment of this extensive pattern and in fulfilment of many prophecies, would also first suffer before entering his glory: <<And he said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life>> (Luke 9:22), and confirmed in v.44. His glory is foreshadowed in Luke 9:32 <<Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him>>, and comes at his resurrection; and then more fully at his ascension into heaven. This is seen in the following texts: at his trial Jesus said: <<But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God>> (Luke 22:69), at Pentecost Peter said: <<Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear>> (Acts 2:33), shortly before being martyred: <<Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God>> (Acts 7:55), Paul's account of his conversion: <<About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting', he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. 'Get up', the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do'. My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me>> (Acts 22:6-11), Christ's example of remarkable humility, as given by Paul to the church in Philippi: <<And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the

highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father>> ([Philippians 2:8-11](#)), and part of the introduction given by the author of Hebrews: <<The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven>> ([Hebrews 1:3](#)).

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

[Luke 24:27](#)

[Moses and all the prophets](#) refers to the entire OT, also summarised as [all the scriptures](#). He may have started as early as Genesis 3:15 to show just how soon the OT pointed to the battles between the Christ and Satan. Jesus explained to them how, not only the explicit prophecies about the Messiah, but also the historical patterns of God's activity, again and again, throughout the OT, looked forward to Jesus himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over. So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

[Luke 24:28-30](#)

There are other resurrection appearances associated with eating, such as: [eating broiled fish with the apostles in vv.41-43](#); [the breakfast of the beach](#): <<When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead>> ([John 21:9-14](#)), and [Peter's account given to Cornelius](#): <<He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen – by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead>> ([Acts 10:41](#)).

Jesus gave the impression he would have travelled on alone until they invited him to enter their home: [stay with us](#). Jesus does not impose himself upon us but waits to be invited, and will always come when requested. There are occasions when he will knock at the door but again waits to be invited in: <<Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me>> ([Revelation 3:20](#)).

[He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them](#). There is striking similarity between this, the Last Supper: <<And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" >> ([Luke 22:19](#)), or: <<For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do

this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes>> (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), and: the feeding of the five thousand: <<Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people>> (Luke 9:16).

³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight.

Luke 24:31

Their eyes were opened when Jesus broke the bread suggesting that they recognised him as the crucified one who died for the redemption of Israel, see v.21.

Jesus disappeared or vanished. In v.36 he similarly appeared just as miraculously. We read of two accounts, just as dramatic, in John 20:19 and 26, where Jesus appears two weeks running in the locked upper room. We have a similar account of Philip disappearing after baptising the Ethiopian eunuch: <<When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus>> (Acts 8:39-40a). Azotus was some distance away up the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and seems to imply some form of supernatural transposition.

In Luke Chapter 3, in considering the location of heaven, I mentioned that modern science now believes there are at least 12 dimensions to our world although scientists cannot prove the existence of most of them. Jesus disappearance may have been his ability to interact with an unseen, spiritual dimension that the disciples could not see or even discern. As noted before, we are expected to accept the unseen by faith.

³² They asked each other, Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?

Luke 24:32

Were not our hearts burning within us? Even before the two disciples recognised Jesus, the fact that he opened and interpreted the scriptures (v.27), gave them hope and began convincing them of the resurrection. This is to be expected of any believer standing in the very presence of Jesus, but also indicates that the Holy Spirit was at work in these believers even before Pentecost. We see this confirmed during Paul's visit to Thessalonica: <<As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ, he said>> (Acts 17:2-3).

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.

Luke 24:34-35

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. Despite the late hour, their emotional state and probable physical tiredness, some news just cannot wait and has to be shared with the utmost urgency.

The Eleven. Judas is no longer alive and a replacement has yet to be divinely anointed to reinstate the group to its full complement of those who were eyewitnesses throughout Jesus ministry, death and resurrection: <<Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection>> (Acts 1:21-22).

After being told by the Eleven that the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon, which is also confirmed in Mark 16:7 <<But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'>>, and 1 Corinthians 15:5 <<and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve>>, the two people tell how they met the Lord who was recognised when he broke the bread. That is, they understood that the risen one was also the one who poured out his life for them.

VIII.c Luke 24:36-49 - Jesus appears to the disciples

This account emphasises the actual physical reality of Jesus' resurrection body (vv.36-43), and the necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection taking place in fulfilment of God's providential plan (vv.44-49).

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you.

Luke 24:36

Jesus himself stood among them. We looked at Jesus' ability to appear and disappear in v.31. This was at least the fifth appearance of Jesus on the day of his resurrection. He appeared to Mary Magdalene in the Garden (John 20:14), to the women on their way to tell the disciples what the angel had said (Matthew 28:9), at some undisclosed point to Simon Peter but referenced in v.34 and 1 Corinthians 15:5; by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; and now to the eleven. We have confirmation of this meeting in John 20:19.

Some interpreters understand the doors being locked to imply that Jesus miraculously passed through the door or the walls of the room, though the text does not explicitly say this. Since Jesus clearly had a real physical body with flesh and bones after he rose from the dead, one possibility is that the door was miraculously opened so that the physical body of Jesus could enter, which is consistent with the passage of Peter leaving prison through a locked door a few years later. Alternatively, as implied with Philip in Acts 8:39-40, Jesus supernatural powers may have made it possible for him to simply appear in the room.

Peace be with you is the same saying recorded in John 20:19. Peace is the Hebrew word shalom and has a much deeper meaning than the English word does, as previously noted.

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?

Luke 24:37-38

In light of what Jesus says in vv.39-40, their doubts at least includes some confusion about the actual physical reality of Jesus' resurrection body and continuing questions about the reality of the resurrection itself. But Jesus will prove that it is really he who has risen from the dead by appealing to their sight, i.e. they can see him; their hearing, i.e. they hear him talk; and their sense of touch, because he invites them to touch him to determine that he is real.

³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

Luke 24:39

Look touch me and see. We see this in the moving portrayal when Thomas encounters Christ for the first time after the Resurrection: <<So the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord! But he said to them, Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it. A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you! Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe>> (John 20:25-27), and John again so elegantly refers to touching Jesus in his first epistle: <<That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life>> (1 John 1:1). Jesus is not a disembodied spirit.

It is I. Jesus had used this phrase before to reassure his disciples when they thought they had seen a ghost: <<When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid" >> (John 6:19-20). The risen Christ and Jesus of Nazareth are one and the same person, although the resurrected body of the risen Christ is gloriously different from his pre-resurrection body. His body may still bear the marks of his crucifixion but it is now fully healed and strong. He is no longer subject to the death and decay of the flesh, see 1 Corinthians 15:1-19, 50-58.

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, Do you have anything here to eat?

Luke 24:40-41

He showed them his hands and feet to confirm that, although he now had a glorified body, he still bore the marks of his crucifixion and death. The prophet speaks of these wounds: <<And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends>> (Zechariah 13:6 - KJV), and in John 20:27 he asks Thomas to: <<Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe>>.

Do you have anything here to eat? Jesus proves the corporeal nature of his resurrected body by eating and allowing his disciples to touch him, for disembodied spirits cannot eat or be touched, as noted in v.39.

⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Luke 24:42-44

What I told you refers to Jesus' teaching concerning his death and resurrection. During his ministry, Jesus clearly teaches the Twelve that his role as God's anointed Messiah or Christ involves suffering and death. That Jesus must suffer refers to the necessity of God's providential plan being fulfilled in his death.

While I was still with you indicates that Jesus of Nazareth and the risen Lord Jesus Christ are one and the same.

The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms refers to the three divisions of the OT in Jesus' day. Psalms is an example of synecdoche in which one of the books in the Writings represents the whole.

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24:45

He opened their minds so they could understand. True understanding of the scriptures is so important if one is to truly understand how all of redemptive history fits together. It is so clearly a gift of God's free grace. The disciples had struggled with this throughout Jesus' ministry: <<But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it>> (Luke 9:45), and: <<The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about>> (Luke 18:34). Although Jesus earthly ministry is coming to a close, he still wants to make it clear to his disciples throughout all ages just how important it is to spend time understanding God's written word.

⁴⁶ He told them, This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

Luke 24:46

The Christ will suffer repeats v.26 and emphasises that Jesus' death and resurrection were necessary in order to fulfil God's providential plan.

⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:47

Repentance and forgiveness of sins does not imply that people can be saved without having faith in Christ as Saviour, because the need to believe is implied both in the command to repent and also in the command to 'be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins'. The willingness to submit to baptism is an outward expression of inward faith in Christ.

The Gospel can be summarised in different ways. Sometimes, faith alone is named as the one thing necessary for salvation and, at other times, repentance alone is named, then sometimes both are named. Genuine faith always involves repentance and vice versa. Repentance includes a change of mind that ends up with us trusting God.

In his name. To be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ is no different from being baptised 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Even though different words are used in Acts, the meaning is the same because in biblical usage a person's name represents the

person's character, that is, everything that is true about the person. The name, that is, the character and attributes of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, is the same as the name, i.e. the character and attributes of Jesus Christ. In fact, in Matthew 28:19, which is often referred to as The Great Commission, the Greek word for name *onoma* is singular indicating that Father, Son and Holy Spirit share one name, i.e. one character and set of attributes.

To be baptised into that name is a sign of identifying with that name and taking on Christ's character, as well as committing to live one's life from that point on as a representative of that name.

To all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Jesus gave this command to the apostles just before his ascension: <<But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth>> (Acts 1:8).

Jesus' ministry in Israel was to be the beginning point of what would later be a proclamation of the Gospel to all the peoples of the earth including, not only Jews, but also Gentiles. The name, which is singular not plural of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is an early indication of the Trinitarian Godhead and an overt proclamation of Jesus' deity.

⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:48

As witnesses of these things, the disciples served as guardians of the Gospel tradition, taking us back to the very beginning of Luke's account: <<Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word>> (Luke 1:2).

⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

Luke 24:49

What my Father has promised refers to the Holy Spirit, who had been promised by the Father. The coming of the Holy Spirit had been announced by John the Baptist as a sign that the Messiah had come: <<The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire>> (Luke 3:15-17).

The Holy Spirit would enable the disciples to fulfil their commission as Jesus' witnesses: <<But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth>> (Acts 1:8). The futuristic present 'I am sending' emphasises the certainty of the Spirit's coming. Thus God the Father first gave the promise that the Spirit would come in a greater, more powerful way to accomplish his work in people's lives as indicated in Peter's quote from Joel Chapter 2 in Acts 2:17-21 <<'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to

blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' >>.

But stay in the city until is later confirmed in Acts 1:4 <<On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about>>.

In Mark 16:7 <<But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'>>, Jesus did say he would see them in Galilee and he did indeed, as confirmed in John Chapter 21. We must remember that Jesus remained on earth for 40 days following his resurrection, which was plenty of time for them to go to Galilee and then return to Jerusalem in time for the Ascension and Pentecost, and thus the receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts Chapter 2.

In addition to receiving the Spirit in Jerusalem, it was the place where they must first start to preach the Word according to Christ's Gospel: <<The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem>> (Isaiah 2:3b), and: <<On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem>> (Zechariah 14:8a), which more accurately reflects the Holy Spirit but that is contained in the preaching of the Gospel.

The terms spirit and power are frequently associated, for the Holy Spirit imparts power for ministry.

VIII.d Luke 24:50-53 - The ascension

Luke's Gospel ends with Jesus bestowing a blessing upon the disciples and ascending into heaven and the disciples going to the temple and praising God.

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Luke 24:50

Jesus led them out to the vicinity of Bethany on the Mount of Olives.



A view of Bethany

As discussed earlier in this Gospel, Bethany is well identified as being 2 miles or 3.2km from Jerusalem and is the Bethany most commonly mentioned in the Gospels but it is different from the Bethany mentioned in John 1:28, where John the Baptist was initially working.

⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Luke 24:51

While he was blessing them indicates the blessing of v.50 lasted for a period of time,

he left them and was taken or was carried up into heaven. This is confirmed in Acts 1:9-11 <<After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from

their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven>>, and in Acts 1:22 <<beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection>>. He departed this world with a blessing, just as Jacob had done to his sons and Moses to the twelve tribes of Israel. This was an act of love.

In John 20:17, Jesus states that he was ascending to his Father: <<Jesus said, Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'>>.

It was from the Mount of Olives that Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem: <<As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them>> (Luke 19:29), and it was from there that he left the world to return to the Father. It seems probable that this will be the place of his return: <<On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives>> (Zechariah 14:4).

Elsewhere in scripture a cloud is often associated with a manifestation of God's presence. This was not an ordinary rain cloud but the cloud of Glory that surrounds the very presence of God. This visible ascension of Jesus into heaven indicates that Jesus retains a physical, human body as a man, although he is exalted to the right hand of God, i.e. given direct executive rule in God's spiritual kingdom: <<Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me>> (Matthew 28:18).

When coupled with Acts 1:11, where the angels proclaimed: <<Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven>>, it also indicates that he will someday return in the same physical body. The amazing miracle of the incarnation is not only that the eternal Son of God took on human nature and became a person, who is simultaneously God and man, but also that he will remain both fully God and fully man forever.

⁵² Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Luke 24:52-53

Then they worshiped him. They have finally come to a full understanding that Jesus is one with God, as Jesus indicated in his prayer: <<I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one>> (John 17:6-11).

The Gospel ends where it began with God's people at the temple blessing God with great joy: <<for he has visited and redeemed his people>> (Luke 1:68).

During his final evening, Jesus told his disciples that he was going away and that would fill them with grief but he prophesied that this unhappiness would turn to great joy when they see him again (John 16:22). This is exactly what happened during his appearances and finally here at the ascension.

The Glory of Christ is the great joy of all believers, even in this world; how much more so when we are with him in a New Jerusalem.

Jesus earthly ministry is thus at an end. Many commentators believe it lasted three and a half years, which is an interesting period of time according to the bible:

- It was the duration of the drought in Elijah's time (Luke 4:25; James 5:17).
- It is the half week that Messiah was to confirm the covenant (Daniel 9:27).
- It is the period of time represented by times, times and a half times (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:14).
- It is the 42 months for the Gentiles to trample the holy city (Revelation 11:2).
- It is the 1,260 days for the two witnesses to prophecy in sackcloth (Revelation 11:3).

If you have benefitted from this study then why not take a look at its sequel 'The Acts Of The Apostles'; the second work by the author Luke.

God's Word will always remain alive in the hearts of those who read it and believe.