

## **Luke 24:13-35 — How Can I Know Jesus Is Alive?**

**April 15, 2017**

Welcome to CrossWinds Spirit Lake campus. It is great to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. He has risen! (*He has risen indeed.*) This week we had a great event for our community at the Dickinson County Expo Center called Experience the Passion. Many of you had a chance to make it. It was a chance to taste, hear, feel and see the last 18 hours of Jesus' life as he suffered and died for our sin. I especially liked the numerous Bible passages on the wall to help guide us in understanding what Jesus went through. This week was extremely powerful. A number of you asked if we are planning on doing this next year. I am sure we will.

While we focused on Christ's death earlier in the week, this morning we focus on Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Today we are going to Experience the Resurrection. In addition, we are going to learn how we can be confident that Jesus is alive. Let's jump in.

### **Experience the Resurrection**

People from miles around packed into Jerusalem for Passover. The entire city was filled to capacity and bursting at the seams. This Passover was different because of Jesus. Crowds worshipped him at the beginning of the week when he entered town in a triumphal entry. At the end of the week, those same crowds turned and were calling for his death. The priests manipulated the Romans to do their dirty work so they could eliminate Jesus by death. The Romans tortured Jesus then killed him on a cross. All had not gone according to their plan.

After being tried by a kangaroo court during the night, Jesus was dragged before Pilate early in the morning at approximately 6 a.m. Pilate found no guilt in him. He tried to pass the buck. He handed Jesus over to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, to be tried at 7 a.m. When Jesus refused to answer Herod's questions, Herod returned him to Pilate at approximately 7:30 in the morning. Between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. Pilate tried to release Jesus. He even had Jesus tortured and beaten beyond recognition to try and satisfy the blood-lust of the Jewish leaders. That wasn't enough. They insisted Jesus be crucified. So around 8:30 a.m., Pilate gave the order. From 8:30 until 9 a.m. Jesus was mocked and tortured again by the Romans soldiers in the Praetorium. They drove a crown of thorns into his skull and covered him in a robe so the blood would coagulate in the cloth and they could tear it off, painfully reopening his wounds. By 9 a.m. Jesus was carrying his cross through the streets of Jerusalem. Sometime before noon he was crucified. The soldiers gambled for his one-piece garment while the crowds mocked him.

It was then that their plans started falling apart. The Bible tells us that from noon until 3 p.m. darkness came over the land. It was darkness without the light of a moon or stars. It was pitch blackness during the center of the day as Jesus became sin for us. It was at 3 p.m. that Jesus voluntarily died and gave up his spirit. The Bible tells us as he did this there was a violent earthquake, rocks split in two, and God tore in half the curtain that separated the presence of God in the holy of holies from everyone else in the temple because Jesus' death paid for our sins and made a way for us to God. In addition, graves opened up and saints

came back to life. They began walking around the city. It was a little like an ancient version of a zombie attack, except it wasn't dead bodies walking. It was dead people living, like Lazarus coming back to life. At approximately 4 p.m. Jesus' body was taken down by Joseph of Arimathea. He and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus' body in strips of cloth with spices. Joseph of Arimathea then laid Jesus in his own tomb.

Friday night and Saturday things were silent. The problem is everyone knew Jesus' death was no ordinary death. Even the centurion in charge of his execution, when he saw the way Jesus died, the darkness, the earthquake and people coming back from the dead said, "Surely, this man was the son of God."

It was Sunday at first light when things began to change again. At dawn, three women — Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James — went to Jesus' tomb to add spices to his body. Even while walking there, they had no idea how they would roll back the stone. To their surprise, the stone was already rolled away. When they entered the tomb, the body of Jesus was gone! Maybe even more amazing was the strips of linen and the spices were still there. It was as if the body vanished right through them. The face cloth that was wrapped around Jesus' head was different. It was set to the side and neatly folded. There were two men in the tomb that the Bible says *dazzled*. That means they glowed with light. They were angels. They said to the women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen." Then they added, "Remember how he told you that he must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and rise on the third day?"

The women ran to tell the disciples but it says the disciples thought this was an idle tale. They thought the women were making it up. Nobody rises from the dead. The only people who partially believed were Peter and John, who ran to the grave to find it empty but that is all they found.

That brings us to our text for the morning in the Gospel of Luke. It is about the risen Jesus appearing to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus that same day. It is interesting that Luke immediately jumped to this story and he spent a lot of time describing what happened. I think he did this for a reason. There is an important message in this story that Luke wanted us to remember. Let's read this story together.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 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 happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:13–27 (ESV)

Two of Jesus' disciples, one whose name was Cleopas, were on their way to Emmaus. Most likely they were returning home to Emmaus after the Passover.

It was a seven-mile trip, which is a two- to three-hour walk. With the streets packed full of returning travelers, I am sure the walk was longer rather than shorter. As they were walking, they were talking about everything that happened. They couldn't get over the unexpected crucifixion of Christ, the earthquake, the darkness during the day, and dead saints coming to life. In the Greek it describes their discussion as intense and animated. Of course, they were also talking about the women's claim of an empty tomb, which seemed to them like nonsense.

Casually, Jesus — in his resurrected body — joined them in their walk on the road. The Bible says their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Jesus nonchalantly joined the conversation and asked, "What are you talking about?" They stopped in their tracks to look at him. They asked him, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem that doesn't know what happened with Jesus?" Cleopas told Jesus a bit of what happened, then he added these words, "We hoped he was the one to redeem Israel. We hoped he had come to save us and our nation. He is dead."

I love Jesus' response. He said, "You are foolish and slow of heart to believe." Don't you love when some of Jesus' first words to somebody after his resurrection are that they are slow and foolish? That gets me every time.

He told them, "It was necessary for Christ to suffer these things before entering his glory." Then beginning at Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them the Scriptures concerning himself. I don't know about you, but that is one message from Jesus I wish we had in the Bible. A two- to three-hour Bible study

from the resurrected Jesus where he explained how the Old Testament pointed to him would be my favorite sermon.

While we don't know exactly what Jesus said in that message, we do know its subject. He was showing how all of the Old Testament points to him. In particular, it points to him suffering and coming to life after three days. While we don't know which parts of the Old Testament Jesus pointed out to them that day, we know passages that point to Jesus are all over the Old Testament. Let's look at some of the ways we see the Old Testament pointing to Jesus.

### **Passover**

In the book of Genesis we read of how Israel ended up in Egypt for 400 years. During that time, Pharaoh turned against the Israelites and enslaved them. He began killing their sons. He was literally working them to death. If you think healthcare costs are killing you, trust me, this was worse. God sent Moses to free his people. Through Moses, God sent plague after plague on the nation of Egypt. There were plagues of gnats, flies and hail. The last plague was the death of the firstborn. Before that plague, the people of Israel were instructed to slaughter a lamb and put the blood on the sides and top of their doors so the angel of death would pass over their houses and their firstborn would be spared. That night all the firstborn in Egypt died, but the firstborn in Israel were spared by the blood of a lamb. Every year after that, the Jews celebrated Passover. They sacrificed a lamb remembering the angel of death passing over their houses because a perfect lamb died in their places.

In the Gospel of John, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, what did he say about Jesus? He said, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away

the sin of the world.” John the Baptist saw Jesus as the true Passover lamb for the world. If we study the chronology, do you know what time Jesus died on the cross? He died at the exact same time the Jews slaughtered their Passover lamb during the holiday of Passover. The Passover points to Jesus. It is Jesus’ blood that covers our sin so the angel of death passes over us. Do you see how the Old Testament told them Jesus came to die for their sin and that Jesus was the true Passover lamb to which all other Passover lambs pointed?

## Prophecies

Right after sin enters the world in Genesis we read Genesis 3:15.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

Here is what I find interesting. God said there would be a battle between the offspring of a woman and Satan. The woman’s offspring would crush Satan’s head and give him a fatal wound while Satan would only bruise his heel, that means give him a painful but not life-threatening wound. Did you notice this prophecy talks about a male child born of a woman but no father is mentioned? This is the first hint of a virgin birth. In addition, all genealogies in the Bible are patriarchal and male-based. This is the only one that is matriarchal, because the male offspring of a woman that had no earthly father would crush Satan’s head.

In Isaiah 7:14 we read:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

The Old Testament told us a virgin would conceive a son and this son would be Immanuel, which means God with us. This is a pretty important hint that

a young virgin girl would give birth to a man who is God, the man Genesis 3:15 says would crush Satan's head. So Isaiah said hundreds of years before Jesus arrived that we should be looking for a young virgin girl that would give birth to a man who is God. Are you starting to see Jesus in the Old Testament?

In Isaiah 35:5-6, which was also written hundreds of years before Jesus' arrival, we read about what Jesus' life would be like.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert... Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)

This is a perfect description of Jesus' life and the miracles he performed. He opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. Jesus rolled back the crushing effects of sin in people's lives everywhere he went.

Another great prophecy Jesus fulfilled is Isaiah 53:4-6. This prophecy tells us what Jesus did as he died on the cross. It tells us what happened in the three hours of darkness.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:4-6 (ESV)

Here was Isaiah, hundreds of years before Jesus came, prophetically describing what would happen on the cross when Jesus took on our sin and suffered the death we deserved. Cleopas was missing this. Cleopas didn't believe Jesus was alive because he couldn't believe Jesus' death was part of God's good plan. The reason he didn't believe Jesus' death was part of God's



plan is because he hadn't spent time looking for Jesus in the Old Testament. If you read the Old Testament closely, the Bible shows us it was always God's plan for Jesus to suffer and die for our sin.

### Three Day Types

Many of us are familiar with the event of Passover and the prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament I just read. There are approximately 40 additional prophecies about Jesus' death and resurrection after three days in the Old Testament with which many of us are not familiar. They are called three-day-types prophecies. Let me show you a few.

#### Isaac

One of the famous stories in the book of Genesis is about the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac's birth was promised early in Abraham's life, but it was a long time in arriving. In a similar way, Jesus' coming was promised in Genesis, but it also felt late in arriving. Isaac's birth was supernatural because he was born to Sarah in her old age when her body was as good as dead. Jesus' birth was also supernatural because he was born to Mary in her young age when she was still a virgin. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah. Mt. Moriah is modern day Jerusalem. Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice in Jerusalem. Isaac and Jesus were to be sacrificed in roughly the same place. Genesis tells us Isaac carried his own wood up the mountain to die. Jesus carried the wood of his cross up that same mountain to die. Isaac voluntarily let himself be bound to be killed as the sacrifice because he trusted his father. Jesus let himself voluntarily be bound to be killed as the sacrifice for our sin because he

trusted his father. The book of Hebrews tells us Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead if he killed him. Jesus believed God the Father would raise him from the dead if he died. Isaac lived three days under a sentence of death as he traveled to the mountain and climbed to the top before he was miraculously freed when God provided a ram caught in the thicket as his substitute. Jesus also lived three days under the sentence of death before he was miraculously freed when he was raised to life. While Isaac avoided death because God provided a substitute in his place, Jesus didn't avoid death. He faced death. That is because he became our substitute.

Isaac was under a sentence of death for three days as Abraham and Isaac traveled to Mt. Moriah before God released him. In the same way Jesus was under sentence of death for three days before God released him.

Do you see how this foreshadows the death and resurrection of Christ after three days?

### Daniel

In Daniel 6, we read the story of how the satraps that ruled with Daniel becoming jealous of him and conspired to kill him. They could find no fault with him other than the faithfulness of his prayers to God. They tricked King Darius into signing a proclamation that nobody could pray to anyone but Darius for 30 days. The moment that decree was signed, Daniel was a dead man. The second day after the proclamation was signed, Daniel was caught by his enemies in prayer. He was condemned to death in the lion pit. A stone was rolled over the entrance of the pit, and it was sealed. Does that sound familiar? On the morning

of the third day the pit was opened and Daniel was found alive. It says not one of his bones were broken. It as if Daniel was raised to life after three days because he trusted in his God.

In a similar way, Jesus was imprisoned due to the envy of the religious leaders. Just like Daniel, Jesus prepared himself for his trial by three seasons of prayer. Jesus was also condemned to death and sealed in a tomb but on the third day he came out of the grave alive because he trusted in God the Father. Just like Daniel, not one of his bones were broken.

### **Marah**

When Moses led Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness, the Bible tells us the Israelites went for three days in the desert without water. They were dying of thirst. They finally came to a place of water on the third day called Marah. They couldn't drink the water because it was bitter. When Moses called to God in prayer, God showed him a tree to put into the waters that would make the bitter waters sweet so they wouldn't die of thirst. On the third day Israel was delivered from death without water by a tree that made what was bitter sweet.

After three days, Jesus' tree-of-death took away the bitterness of Jesus' death for us and made it life-giving and sweet. Jesus' tree of death became our tree of life.

### **Creation**

In the creation account, God made the heavens, he made light and he made the earth but on which day did God create life on the dead earth? The third

day. In a similar way God brought life out of death for Jesus when he came out of the tomb on the third day.

### **Aaron's Rod**

In the book of Numbers, it tells of a time when there was a rebellion among the Israelites in the wilderness. The nation rebelled against Aaron and claimed he shouldn't be God's sole chosen priest. God told Moses to get the staff from each of the leaders of the tribes and inscribe the name of the tribal leaders on their staffs. Then they were to take their dead staffs and put them before the presence of the Lord. God would show which one he chose to be the priest. It was after three days when Moses went into the presence of the Lord to get the twelve dead-wood staffs. The dead wood of Aaron's staff budded, flowered and even produced almonds. God showed his chosen priest to go between God and the people by bringing life from death after three days.

In the same way, Jesus was in the grave for three days but God showed us Jesus is God's chosen priest to atone for our sins by bringing him back to life after three days.

### **Jonah**

Another parallel is Jonah. Jonah was thrown into the sea and was swallowed by a great fish. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. It was on the third day that Jonah was cast up onto dry land. Jonah figuratively came back from the dead after three days. The Hebrew text of Jonah 2:2 tells us that when Jonah was swallowed by the fish that he went to the grave. He died. Jesus said it this way:

But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just 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. Matthew 12:39–40 (ESV)

In my research, I found about 40 passages in the Old Testament that talk about God bringing life from death after three days. All these passages have points that parallel the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Now that we know what Jesus might have talked about, let’s return to the Emmaus road.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:28–35 (ESV)

While Cleopas and the other disciple started their trip to Emmaus not believing the women’s testimony that Jesus was alive, it was after Jesus showed them in the Old Testament that Jesus’ death and resurrection after three days was God’s plan and that God spoke about it throughout the Bible that their hearts became warm to the truth that Jesus is alive. As they arrived at Emmaus, Jesus acted like he was planning on going farther but they insisted he stay for dinner. I am sure they wanted to know more about how Jesus’ death and resurrection after three days was God’s plan. They wanted to see even more of it in the Old Testament to continue building their faith that it is logical that Jesus is alive.

That night, as they sat down for dinner, it was Jesus who broke the bread and acted as the host. It was only after they saw Jesus resurrected in the Old Testament that he opened their eyes to recognize him. Then, he vanished before their eyes.

Why did Luke spend so much time on this story? While the resurrected Jesus continued appearing, talking and even eating with his disciples for the next 40 days to crowds of up to 500 people, after those 40 days, he went back to heaven. Nobody sees the resurrected Jesus today. How can we know he is alive?

The Emmaus road tells us there is another way for us to know Jesus is alive besides seeing him with our eyes. It is by seeing his life, death and resurrection in page after page of the Old Testament that describe Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection after three days that is pictured and prophesied in events, holidays, prophecies and historical stories. The more we see these details about Jesus on page after page of the Old Testament, the more we become convinced that Jesus did indeed die for our sin and rise from the dead.

If your faith is on the fence this morning because you are not sure if Jesus really is alive, I hope some of the events, prophecies and three-day-types we looked at this morning were used by God to open the eyes of your heart to see that even the Old Testament is about Jesus. The more we see him there, the more our faith and confidence that he is alive is built.



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