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Luke 24



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In this detailed exposition, Steve Gregg examines the final chapter of Luke's Gospel, which concludes with the resurrection of Christ. Gregg analyses the historical data to establish the credibility of the resurrection and discusses the various accounts of Christ's appearances, including his meeting with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He also explores the significance of the women who played a crucial role in announcing that the tomb was empty and Jesus had risen from the dead. Gregg's insightful analysis offers a thought-provoking perspective on the events that formed the cornerstone of Christian faith.

Transcript

So now we come to the final chapter of Luke and the conclusion of the story of the life of Christ, as all the Gospels conclude it, with, of course, the resurrection of Christ. Every Gospel, after telling of the death of Jesus, has a chapter division that, in the next chapter, records the resurrection appearances. I should point out, we don't have any record of the resurrection.

We, because none, no one was there to see it. No one saw Jesus rise from the grave or walk out of the tomb, unless it was the guards, and they were paralyzed with fear, and they, they left no reliable report for us. They did go report to the chief priest, but then they were told what to say.

They were paid to lie. So we don't have a written report of the resurrection of Jesus, only the fact that the tomb was found empty and people did see him after he rose. And, and the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus is impeccable.

There's no, there's hardly any ancient historical event that can, that rests on better evidence than the resurrection of Jesus. And the very fact that none of the writers, obviously who fully believed in the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, none of them professed to describe it, simply shows these are honest people. If this was Greek mythology or something, they, they wouldn't have left out a description of this most important event in Christian history.

People who are the Christian preachers proclaiming the resurrection, certainly the temptation would be great if they were fabricating it to describe how, you know, this great light filled the room and, and, you know, it could be seen around the edges of the rock and the guards were terrified and, and they saw Jesus come bursting out and, and, you know, they ran or, I mean, we do read of an angel coming and opening the tomb with a stone, moving the stone. But that's, but once it's open, we don't read of any description of Jesus rising, only what people found there. Apparently, removing the stone by the angel was necessarily not so much for Jesus to get out as for the witnesses to get in and see that there was nothing there.

Now that Jesus rose from the dead is irrefutable to anyone who takes the evidence objectively. And it's interesting that everybody who does not believe in Christ and does not believe in his resurrection must necessarily take this chapter and the closing chapters of each of the gospels as fiction. Yet, these are not represented as fiction, they're represented as historical narrative.

And therefore, if you don't take it as such, you have to say these people are lying or delusional. And yet, everything you read about it is as, as much confirmed by the kind of historical data we want for any historical event as, as we can hope for. The only thing that would make someone discount this evidence would be an a priori rejection of the possibility of it being true.

In other words, the witnesses are reliable people, they died for their witness, they were convinced till their deaths that this is true. They recorded that they'd seen him. There's no good explanation for why the tomb is empty unless Jesus walked out of it.

Because anybody who could have removed the body would have no motivation for doing so, or if they did, they'd have no motivation for keeping it a secret afterwards. In other words, if somebody removed the body, it had to be one of three concerned parties. It had to be either the Romans, who were really in charge of the body, or the Jews, who were much more concerned about Jesus than the Romans were, or the disciples, who were more concerned still than any parties were about Jesus.

But the Romans and the Jews, very shortly after this, found the Christians a pest. They found them a nuisance. Certainly, if they could have disproved Christianity early on, they would quickly have done so.

And the easiest way to do that is to prove the Christians are lying about the resurrection. How could that be done? Easily. Show people the body.

If the Romans had moved the body, they would know where to find it. If the Jews had moved the body, they would know where to find it. And if they knew where to find it, they would certainly make it a public spectacle in order to simply debunk the testimony of the Apostles and end Christianity.

There would be no Christianity today, or even for five minutes. Well, maybe five minutes. Not five days, though.

Christianity would not have ever gotten off the ground if the enemies of Christianity had any idea where the body of Jesus was, and could present it as proof that he had not risen. The fact that they did not is absolute proof that they could not. And if they could not, it means they didn't know where it was.

And if they didn't know where it was, they didn't move it. That leaves only one possible answer, and that's the disciples took the body. If the disciples took the body, however, we have to deal with all kinds of questions.

Could they? Would they? Why would they? What interest do they have in taking the body? Now, someone who knows almost nothing about history or Christianity might say, well, you know, they did it to start a movement so that they could be important people and start a religion, you know. After all, didn't L. Ron Hubbard, the science fiction writer, when he was interviewed once, and someone said, what would you do if you wanted to make a million dollars? He said, I'd start a religion. And he did.

It's called Scientology. He started a religion, he made his millions of dollars. Lots of people might start religions for that reason.

Isn't that why Marjo Gortner preached? Because he got money for it? There's a lot of charlatans out there. Why couldn't the disciples be such? Well, a number of things. First of all, they weren't trained religionists.

They were fishermen and peasants. They had no theological education apart from what they got from Jesus. And, although that would be good, they weren't necessarily men of a temperament who would want to start and run a religion.

What do they have to get out of it? There was no money in it. Jesus had always told them when they preached, freely you receive, freely give. You can't charge for this.

And they didn't. They lived lives of, you know, certainly not wealth. When Peter was wanting to help a beggar, he had to say, I don't have any money, but I can give you this.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. I don't have any money. I'd love to help you out, but I just don't care any money.

I don't have any. Silver and gold, I have none, he said. These men didn't make money off the ministry.

They lived holy lives and persecuted lives, and they all eventually were killed for their testimony. There's no way to suggest these were insincere men, that they didn't believe what they were preaching. If they did believe Jesus rose from the dead, then they didn't

steal the body, because they would know better than.

And if they had wished to do so, could they? This was a guarded tomb. There were soldiers there. Why were there soldiers there? You don't guard tombs with soldiers generally.

They were there because the Jews came to Pilate and said, this man said he's going to rise from the dead. Matthew tells us this in Matthew 27. The Jews said to Pilate, this man said he's going to rise from the dead the third day.

The disciples might steal his body and claim that he did. So let's set a guard there. So what did they do? They set a guard there to anticipate the disciples coming to steal the body.

Well, the disciples didn't come to steal the body. They didn't expect Jesus to rise. They weren't the least bit interested in starting a religion with them as the leaders.

They had no motivation like that. But even if they had, they would have found these guards waiting for them. They were expected.

Now, how would you get the body out without the guards there? Well, one possibility is they could overwhelm the guards. After all, there were 11 disciples and who knows, maybe less guards than that. But if they overwhelmed the guards, that would be by force, right? I mean, a guard would be put to death if he lost the thing he was guarding because of negligence.

They were there in order to protect the body from theft. If the disciples came to take the body, the guards wouldn't say, Oh, here, step aside. I'll step aside.

You take the body. They would fight. If there was fighting, there'd be blood.

There'd be injuries. There'd be casualties. There were none.

If there had been, the guards would have had a much better story than the one they circulated. They circulated the story that while they slept, the disciples came and took the body. But this doesn't make any sense at all.

First of all, a sentry who sleeps will be put to death. And therefore, most sentries won't. On rare occasions, a sentry is so overcome by tiredness, he does fall asleep at the great peril to himself.

But a group of guards would certainly not all sleep. Even if one fell asleep, you've got a group of guards there to guard. And if they did fall asleep, for some reason, wouldn't the moving of the stone wake somebody up? I mean, how could, and how could they testify as to what happened when I was asleep? If I said, when I was asleep, Tim came into my room and stole my wallet.

Well, how much credibility is there? How can I know what happened when I was asleep? How do I know it was Tim? How can I make any kind of claim, such and such happened while I sleep? Except, while I slept, I was dreaming. But in other words, there's no sensible answer to this empty tomb. There's no evidence of a struggle.

There's no motivation that can be assigned to the disciples. Or anyone else to steal and keep the body hidden. And, you know, the only story that makes sense to a reasonable person is the story's true about the resurrection.

And the person says, but it's not reasonable because those things don't happen. Well, that's prejudice. How do you know they don't happen? The only reason we know that any historical event happens is because someone saw it and reported it.

How do I know the Revolutionary War was fought? Well, I don't, except someone told me it did. Well, why should I believe that report and not this one? Well, because this one records miracles, and I've never seen a miracle. Well, I've never seen the birth of a nation either, but someone told me there was a birth of a nation a couple hundred years ago, and I believe that.

I don't have to see everything everyone sees in order to assess their reliability as witnesses. Obviously, the only honest answer is a dishonest one. We don't believe in miracles, we don't believe in resurrections, because we don't believe anything supernatural exists or happens.

That's really the only prejudice that could possibly compromise the credibility of these narratives. And yet, it is strictly prejudice. Say, we don't believe in the supernatural.

Well, you told us what your religious beliefs are. That's your religious belief. It so happens that the vast majority of human beings, educated and uneducated, Asian, European, you know, South American, it doesn't matter where, the vast majority of human beings have always believed there is a supernatural.

If you happen to be one of those small minority of prejudiced people who think everybody else is deluded, if you're one of those arrogant types, you can take that as your religious position, but it is a religious position. You can't prove there's no supernatural, so it's strictly a faith position. And your faith position is strictly a matter of prejudice.

And it's against the testimony of billions of people around the world who have seen supernatural things and testified to them. And this particular one is testified to by witnesses of the utmost credibility. Men who led a religion that condemns liars and proved that they weren't liars by dying and being tortured for nothing but the veracity of their testimony.

You've got a hard slope to climb there if you want to say that the evidence of these

chapters is to be rejected while other evidence for other historical information is accepted. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, now who are they? Verse 55 of the previous chapter says, the women who had come with him from Galilee followed after and observed the tomb and how his body was laid. By the way, one of the silly beliefs that unbelievers have put forward about the empty tomb is that the tomb that was empty was a different tomb.

That the women and the disciples who reported that the tomb was empty had mistaken the tomb. They got the wrong one. They thought they were at an empty tomb for sure, and they thought that's when Jesus had been, but they mistook it for another one.

But here we read that the women watched him being buried. Are you thinking that if you had a relative or loved one buried that you wouldn't take note of where they were buried? And we're not just talking about a little tombstone, we're talking about a cave here. Furthermore, even if they had the wrong one, again, the enemies of Christianity could go to the right one and say, why are you looking at that tomb? This is the one he's in.

To suggest they were at the wrong tomb is just another lame, desperate attempt to explain the facts in any way other than believing what happened. So these women, on the first day of the week, in the early morning, came. Certain other women with them came to the tomb bringing spices which they had prepared.

Now, who are these women? I mentioned that all the Gospels have some reference to these women. Some names are given to us down in verse 10. It says it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them who told these things to the apostles.

We actually can fill in that list of those other women, maybe not entirely, but with some of the names we know were there. But the first question I want to ask is, who is Joanna? I believe she may be the same person as Salome. I'm not sure.

It's just that one of the Gospels mentions Joanna, this one does, and another mentions Salome. These could be two different women of whom we know very little otherwise. Or they could be different names for the same woman.

Salome is mentioned in Mark 16, 1 there. But it's probable that Joanna and Salome are not women that we otherwise know. Although Salome might be the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The reason for this is that in John 19, 25, which is John's list of the women, John 19, 25 says, Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, and these are probably the same ones who came the next Sunday morning, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Now Mary, the wife of Clopas, is not necessarily someone

we know. Mary's sister is not named.

Some people have misread this as if Mary, the wife of Clopas, was Mary's sister. But although Mary is a very common name, I seriously doubt that any parents name two of their daughters Mary. Although George Foreman has done something stranger than that.

Named all his kids George Foreman. That's a pretty unusual thing to do. It's not likely that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a sister named Mary also.

And so it was apparently Mary, the mother of Jesus, her sister, who remains unnamed, who might be Salome. And another Mary, who's the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Well, we know Mary Magdalene.

We have, in Luke 24, 10, it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and other women. Now Mary, the mother of James, might well be Mary, the wife of Clopas. So it could be that Mary.

In Mark, well let's go to Matthew. Matthew 27, just to fill in our list here. Matthew 27, 61, talking about these women, it says, And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

Okay. Now, in Matthew 28, 1, it identifies those two again. Matthew 28, 1. Now, after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

Now, there were a number of other Marys. Mary, the mother of Jesus being one of them. And Mary, the wife of Clopas, who might be also Mary, the mother of James.

All those could be the other Mary. We don't really know enough about these people who are obscure to say for sure. In Mark, chapter 15, in verse 47, it says, And Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, observed where he was laid.

And likewise, chapter 16, verse 1 of Mark, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome brought spices. So, here we have a partial list also. Mary, the mother of James.

Is that the same as Mary, the mother of Joseph? If so, why does Mark use Mary, the mother of Joseph, in one verse, and in the next verse, call the same woman Mary, the mother of James. Now, James and Joseph could have been brothers, and she could have been both of their mother, but what a strange thing it is to refer to the same woman and designate her differently and so near a space. Two different Marys here.

One of them might be Mary, the mother of Clopas, or not. There might be four Marys there, five Marys there. Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the wife of Clopas, Mary, the mother of James, Mary, the wife of Joseph.

Whole bunch of Marys going on. And then there's Joanna too, and Salome. And the sister of Jesus' mother.

Now, my guess is, since that's not named, but other women are that we don't know much about, either Joanna or Salome must be the sister of Mary. Anyway, just give you that to show you that there's different ways in which the names are grouped. I don't consider any of these passages to contradict any others.

I think they just give us a sample of the women that were there. And one even says, and other women. In Luke 24.10, these women and other women with them.

So it could have been quite a group, seven anyway. Or maybe not, if some of those Marys are the same Mary as each other. But at least seven different designations for them by name are given, and other women too.

It's a pretty big group of women. Now, they had not had the chance to do much to honor the body of Jesus because of the approaching Sabbath, the night he died and was buried. So they came back as soon as the Sabbath was over, Sunday morning.

And they brought spices because they wanted to anoint his body and so forth. Now, they found that the stone was rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here, but is risen. Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again? Now, it's interesting.

We do read of Jesus saying these very things to the disciples on three different occasions. We were not told the women were there to hear it, but the angel assumes the women were also there. So, in these stories about Jesus talking to the disciples, there were others listening in, too, and these women apparently among them.

So, they had all heard Jesus say these things. And the angel says, Don't you remember that? And says, Then they remembered his words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and all the rest.

Then it gives the names, as we saw. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. Now, the eleven, because Judas never rejoined the other apostles.

Matthew tells us that when Jesus was condemned, Judas went out and hanged himself. So, there were only eleven now instead of twelve. What this indicates is that the first

evangelists were women.

The message of Jesus' resurrection is the gospel, and the first people who were informed of it and commissioned to preach it to others, and no less than to preach it to the apostles themselves, were women. This is striking partly because in Jewish society, it's well known that women were not very much respected as witnesses. Most Jews had a very low view of women and thought them too excitable and too unreliable.

And actually, the Talmud would not allow women to bear testimony in court. Their testimony was just not considered good enough to decide a matter in court. Now, that's a Jewish prejudice.

The Bible doesn't hold that prejudice. It's the Jews who did. But since the Jews did, it's remarkable that all the Gospels record that the first persons who bore witness of the resurrection of Jesus were women.

Certainly, someone making the story up would not have added that feature. It would be considered a weakness in the testimony to the mind of Jews. And yet, they do give that.

Why did they say that? Because it's true. It really happened. That's why.

There can be no reason given why someone fabricating a story would include this feature. The first people are women testifying. In fact, the Apostles were evangelized by women.

This hardly makes it reasonable to forbid women to be evangelists. Now, Paul doesn't allow women in his writings. He doesn't allow them to be elders of the Church.

That's a different story, of course. But as far as preaching the Gospel, an angel from heaven commissioned him. This says there were two men.

Of course, he's talking about two angels. Two of the Gospels mention two angels there at the tomb, and two of them mention one. But it's very much like the two blind men outside Jericho or the two demoniacs in Gadara.

There were two, but some of the Gospels only mention one, the one that did the speaking. He's describing an announcement that was made, and it was made by an angel. Whether another angel was standing by or not is not relevant enough for him to report, but he's not denying it.

But this one mentions there were two. Now, when they reported it to the apostles, the apostles, it says their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. So the apostles were pretty much like most Jews, thinking you can't trust excitable women.

These are just idle tales, and they didn't believe. Now, Jesus is going to rebuke his

disciples for that later because they didn't believe the women. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb.

He didn't run to the tomb because he believed that Jesus rose from the dead, but he did believe the tomb was empty. That was a problem. What the women said was that the tomb was empty, and an angel told us that Jesus rose from the dead.

Well, apparently the disciples didn't believe that they'd really seen an angel or that Jesus really rose, but that the tomb was empty was easy enough to check on. Now, this business of Peter running to the tomb is found also only in the Gospel of John. And in John's Gospel, it actually is said that it happened when Mary Magdalene told the disciples that the tomb was empty, and Peter and John got up and ran to the tomb.

And John outran Peter, it says, but he didn't go in. Not initially. He stooped down outside and was looking in.

Peter came up behind and ran right into the tomb, impetuous as he was, and then John also went in, I believe, and they saw the grave clothes of Jesus. And it says that John believed at that point. Whether Peter did or not, the Gospel of John does not commit to.

The disciples were slow to believe in the resurrection, even when they saw the empty tomb. They weren't sure what to make of it, but the resurrection was not the first thing that came to their minds. But the grave clothes were interesting because they were lying in the same configuration as if there was a body in them, but there's no body in them.

The grave clothes were there, and the head wrap that they put around the head was there separately, as it would be. The impression is given that the body just kind of dematerialized and came out without disturbing the clothes. Certainly no grave robbers would do that.

I mean, if you're going to steal a body from a grave, especially from a guarded tomb, you're going to do it fast. You're just going to take it out. If you want to get rid of the grave clothes later, you'll do it later.

And you're certainly not going to take off the grave clothes, then reconfigure them, and then carry off the body, unless you're trying to force some kind of deception. But what grave robbers would want to do that? Anyway, it was interesting. It suggests that Jesus' body, though it rose, rose without disturbing the grave clothes that he had been in.

It also raises questions of how was he dressed now when he appeared to these women. He wasn't in his grave clothes. He must have been clothed with something.

But we don't know what. All right. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb.

Stooping down, he saw the linen clothes, or cloths, lined by themselves, and he

departed, marveling to himself at what had happened, but clearly not quite believing in the resurrection. Now we have a story, On the Road to Emmaus, a very famous story, though it's unique to Luke, except for one exception. Mark's gospel has multiple endings in different manuscripts.

The manuscripts that most scholars trust the most in Mark chapter 16 actually end at verse 8. The oldest manuscripts of Mark end at Mark 16.8. At that point, there have been no resurrection appearances at all. There's only the announcement of the angels to the women that Jesus rose, and then it closes, and they go and tell the disciples, and then the gospel ends there. Now there are alternative endings to Mark that are found in some other manuscripts, and there's a medium-length ending, there's a long ending.

And so apparently different authors have ended the book of Mark different ways, and there's some dispute as to whether the long ending is authentic or the medium-length ending. All scholars accept the ending up to verse 8, but the remaining 12 verses are open to question and much disputed. I accept them, by the way, but not all do, and probably the majority of scholars don't.

But there's a long argument, and we're not studying Mark right now. When I taught on Mark, I did go over the ancient manuscripts that contain it and so forth, and the church fathers who quote from it and all that. I believe that on balance, the long ending of Mark, which is what we have in our Bible here, in the New King James, is authentic.

And I make that point because simply the long ending of Mark is the only other place than Luke that contains these men on the road to Emmaus. Mark 16.10.12, 16.12 says, After that, he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.

Now this is interesting because this appears to be a reference to the two men on the road to Emmaus. However, this says that they went and told them and the disciples didn't believe. But Luke is going to tell us that when the men whom Jesus met on the road to Emmaus came and told the disciples, the disciples not only believed, but they actually said to the two men as they came in, The Lord is risen indeed and he's appeared to Peter.

We have no record of his appearance to Peter, but that is something that they testified to having had. The fact that these accounts are as confusing as they are in terms of the detail makes it very clear that these people didn't make up a standard story. They weren't making up a story.

If you were going to say, okay, Jesus rose, we're going to say Jesus rose from the dead. Of course he really didn't, but we're going to try to foist this on people. Let's make sure we get our story straight.

Okay, who saw him first? Mary? Okay, we'll say Mary saw him first. Then who? Peter? Okay, we'll have Peter do it next. And they make up this story about these alleged appearances after his resurrection.

Well, if they had done that, then they'd all give the same information. But actually the information is different in them. And I don't know if this is because different authors remember it differently, or if there is in fact a way to harmonize them all.

There is a challenge on the internet, some atheists have put up, challenging any Christian to take all the accounts of the resurrection appearances of Jesus and put them in some kind of consistent chronological order. Actually, I think this can be done, and I've done it myself, but I'm not going to say for sure that the chronology I've put together is the way it really happened. We have bits and pieces here and there, and the Gospels simply were not written in a way to allow us to do that with certainty.

However, it's not impossible to do. It can be done. There are suggested schemes, and I have one that I can present, and I do when I teach the other Gospels.

We don't have time to go into that now. But suffice it to say this story of the road to Emmaus occupies the majority of Luke 24. From verse 13 to verse 35, essentially, is this one appearance, and it's not recorded, certainly not in detail, in the other Gospels, except in the long ending of Mark, where there's a brief reference to it.

But it must have been important enough that even though the other Gospels didn't record it, Luke gave almost his entire space in speaking of resurrection appearances to this one appearance. And it's a familiar and great story. It says, Now behold, two of them were traveling the same day.

Now, two of whom? Just some guys. We're told one of them's name, and the other's name is not given to us. Cleopas is the name of one.

Two people, people who had been apparently obscure, disciples of Jesus, friends of the apostles, certainly, because they knew where to find them. But men that we otherwise have known nothing about. Two of them were traveling the same day to a village called Emmaus, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem.

So it would take about two hours and a little bit to make the walk. And they talked together of all these things that had happened. These two guys were talking about the crucifixion of Jesus and the significance of it, and trying to make sense of all that had happened with Jesus' ministry and so forth.

So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained so that they did not know him. Now, apparently these were men who knew him in his lifetime, but didn't recognize him at this point.

And this is one of the characteristics of most of the narratives about the resurrection appearances. There are statements that suggest that people didn't quite recognize him. Kind of did.

Mary Magdalene, who was very close to him, didn't recognize him at first, until he said, Mary. Then she knew it was him. Even at the Sea of Galilee in John 21, the disciples fishing there weren't sure of who Jesus was until... I mean, they did know it was him, but it says they didn't dare ask him who he was because they knew it was him.

Well, that's a weird thing to say if they were 100% sure. Why would the issue of them being bold enough to ask him such a question come up if they didn't want to ask? Who are you? But the point is, there was sufficient revelation given to these people, which included Jesus showing his wounds and so forth and speaking to them, that they, of course, came to have no doubt that it was him. But there's something about his resurrection body must have been somewhat different than ours.

I should say than his body beforehand, than our normal bodies and his normal body before that. They didn't recognize him. I think in depicting this in art, they sometimes have Jesus wearing a hood, you know, that's kind of down covering his face a little bit.

So you have to find some way that people who knew him didn't know it was him while they walked for two hours talking to him. He either looked very different or he was, you know, looking down or something. But it seems to be really hard in a conversation like this, walking with people for a few hours to conceal your face by a hood or something the whole time.

That would certainly raise suspicions. Why is this guy not letting us see him? So I think he must just have been, their minds were blinded to it. They couldn't recognize him.

There's something supernatural going on there, it seems to me. Their eyes were restrained so that they did not know him. And he said to them, what kind of conversation is this that you have been having with one another? You walked and you're sad.

And the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to him, are you the only stranger in Jerusalem? And have you not known the things that have happened there these days? Apparently, everybody was talking about Jesus, not just them. And they were surprised to find someone who would wonder what they're talking about. What does everyone talk about? Aren't you the only people? You're the only one who never knew about or doesn't talk about these things, don't know what's going on.

And he said, what things? Jesus is toying with them. You know, he's playful. He could easily have just said, yeah, I know all about it.

Look who I am. It's me, Jesus. Here's my hands, my feet.

He eventually made himself known to them, but he toyed with them a little bit, I think. I mean, I don't mean to say it was frivolous, but it was interesting. What things are you talking about? You know, plain ignorant.

And they said to him, the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty indeed, and word before God and all the people. This much they still acknowledge he was a prophet. They thought he was the Christ, but now they weren't so sure, but they couldn't deny at the very least, he must have been a prophet.

And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. That is, we were hoping it was the Messiah, but that was then, this is now, you know.

We can say he was a prophet, but we're not really hoping anymore that he's the Messiah, obviously, he's dead. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company who arrived at the tomb early astonished us when they did not find his body.

They came saying that they had seen, also seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see. Now, consider this.

These guys were present with the apostles when the women came and gave the report. Now, later in the day, they're walking probably home to Emmaus, seven miles away. But they were there when they heard the women report it.

And they were also there when Peter came back, said, yeah, it's like they said, the tomb's empty. Didn't see any angels, but I saw the empty tomb. In other words, these guys have heard the gospel.

Jesus has risen. And they don't believe it. It's funny because they're still sad.

You'd think they were thinking, you'd think they'd be more hopeful. Wow. I wonder.

Why is the tomb empty? Were there angels there? Why do these women think this is true? But they report that the women had told him these things, but they're obviously giving it no serious credence. And he said to them, oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Of course, they were slow in heart to believe what the women had spoken, but he's saying the prophets have said the same thing these women said.

Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he had expounded to them in all the scriptures, meaning the Old Testament scriptures, the things concerning himself. Now, I don't know how long that talk was. They could have had as many as two hours together on the road.

I couldn't expound all those things in two hours, but maybe he was not as verbose as me. After all, his Sermon on the Mount, his longest sermon, probably didn't take him more than 20 minutes to deliver. He was not so verbose as me, but he'd have to be really quick to go through all the things Moses and the prophets said about him, although he might have summarized a lot of it.

In any case, they got a great exposition of the scriptures from a great expositor on the greatest subject in the scriptures. And they recognized it later. Wow, that was a good Bible study.

They didn't say so at this time, but later when he disappeared and they knew he was there, oh wow, didn't our hearts burn in us when he did that, when he expounded the scriptures like that? And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he indicated that he would have gone farther. Kind of typical of Jesus to play with them again. He was like, ah, see you later.

I'm on my way. Oh, no. They tell him to come stay.

It's sort of like when he was walking on the water and the Bible says he would have gone past them, but they said, no, come get in the boat. It's like he's going to act like he's not, like he's going to do something else and not go and talk with them further or get in the boat with them. It's just some funny things in the narrative that maybe tell us that Jesus had a certain playfulness about him with his disciples, leading them on a little bit, maybe.

So they constrained him, saying, abide with us, remain with us, for it is a tort evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the scriptures to us? So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, that's seven miles back, another couple hours. They were running this time, probably took less than two hours this time, and found the eleven, and those who were with them gathered together, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.

That is to say, these two men who had just met Jesus, as they entered the room where the apostles were, they were told by the other disciples, Simon saw him, Peter saw him. He's risen. But you know, it says that some still doubt it.

It says that in Mark, it says they weren't believed. Now obviously, someone believed, some of these disciples were persuaded, but some were not. One of those was Thomas.

Remember? Now, at this particular point we're reading about, Thomas wasn't present. It

says they came to the eleven, but it would really be ten, because Thomas was somewhere else at this time, according to John's gospel, and didn't see Jesus when he appeared on this occasion, but saw him eight days later. But in Mark's gospel, saying they didn't believe, it may not mean that none of them believed, but Thomas didn't, and maybe some others had their doubts too.

It's hard to say. But, in any case, it was when he broke bread with them. Some people want to make that sort of a Eucharistic thing, you know, in taking the Eucharist, he revealed himself to them, and sort of there's an analogy in that of Christ revealing himself to us in the breaking of bread in the Eucharist, and so forth.

That would be reading into it far more than Luke identifies as its meaning. He seems to be not talking about the Eucharist, but just having dinner. And why it was at that point that their eyes were opened, and not before.

Obviously, their eyes had been miraculously restrained, and now miraculously they recognized him, but why at that point, I don't know. In any case, it's also curious to know that why, when they suddenly knew him, he disappeared. He could have stayed around and talked with them more, but he just disappeared.

And so, they run back to Jerusalem, and they find out that they're not the only ones who have seen him. Of course, Mary Magdalene had seen him by this time, according to John's Gospel, but they weren't in the mood to believe women about this. But Peter had seen him, too, by this time.

We don't have any record of the time when Jesus appeared to Peter, but it's mentioned here, and it's also mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, when Paul is recording the resurrection appearances of Christ, he mentions that he appeared to Peter early on. And now we read confirmation of that here. Now, verse 36.

Now, as they said these things, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said to them, Peace to you. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.

Handle me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, they didn't dare believe, lest they find out later that it was a hallucination, they just couldn't bring themselves to hope for that, that it was really real.

And they marveled. He said to them, Have you any food here? So they gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb, and he took it and ate in their presence. Now, they thought it was a spirit.

Obviously they believed in ghosts. The Sadducees didn't, but the Jews who were not the

Sadducees did believe in spirits, human spirits, that people that died, they had a spirit still, and in some cases apparently haunted. It's even possible that some of the demons that possessed people were in the minds of the group identified with the spirits of relatives or something that have died.

We don't know very much about that, we're not told. But it's clear that the disciples assumed there were spirits. They had also assumed this earlier.

When he came walking on the water to them on the Sea of Galilee, they thought it was a spirit. And he said, No, it's not a spirit, it's me. Apparently they had belief in ghosts, and belief in spirits.

And since Jesus was known to be dead, they assumed this was his ghost. And it was hard to persuade them that he wasn't a ghost. But it was important to do so.

Some people doubt that Jesus' resurrection was actually physical. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, say he wasn't physically resurrected, it was a spirit creature. But Jesus is at pains to point out, No, this is my body, look, here's the scars.

And you see, I have flesh and bones. Spirits don't have flesh and bones like this. And when they still were having trouble with it, he said, Give me some food.

And they ate the food and said, Oh, he must be physical, he's eating food. You know, he has teeth, he can chew it up and stuff, it's physical. So Jesus made all of these concessions to them, trying to prove to them that he was physical.

And he was physical. But one might easily have wondered when he kept disappearing into thin air. You know, I mean, that's more like what a spirit might be thought to do.

And all we can say is that his resurrection body, apparently, though it was the same body, and that's why the tomb was empty, by the way, if they had just seen a ghost, there would be no reason for the tomb to be empty. Presumably a ghost haunts a house even though the body of the person is buried somewhere. Jesus' tomb would not be empty if it was just his ghost.

His body came out and they already knew the tomb was empty. That had been verified before. And now he verifies that he is physically resurrected by proving him in all these different ways.

Then he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me. Now he had given that Bible study already to the two men on the road to Emmaus. He doesn't give that study here.

He just says, you know, everything they wrote about me had to be fulfilled, and there

was a lot there apparently. And he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Now this is, of course, a really important statement because we have to depend on these apostles and their testimony about their interpretation of Old Testament Scriptures.

And a lot of times in the writings of the New Testament, an apostle whose writing will interpret a Scripture in a rather bizarre way. They'll say, This fulfills such and such a Scripture, and they'll quote the Scripture, and you look back at the original place and think, Well, I don't know if I would have gotten that out of it. And probably you wouldn't.

But Jesus opened their understanding so they could understand the Scriptures. That is the Old Testament. And it's very possible.

I mean, there's two ways this can be understood. It could be that Jesus bestowed upon them the supernatural ability to understand Scriptures so that whenever they read it, it made sense in a new way to them. That the true meaning of it was revealed to them in their study thereafter.

That he just imparted them a gift of this sort at this time. Or it's possible that he actually explained the Scriptures and opened their understanding that way. That he actually started to go through the Scriptures like he had with the road men on the road to Mason.

He actually went through the Bible explaining what these things are about. In any case, this tells us that the Apostles understood the true interpretation of the Scriptures. Which apparently the rabbis did not.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 says that the Jews who are not believers don't understand their own Scriptures. He says there's a veil over their minds that keeps them from understanding it correctly. He said in 2 Corinthians 3 verse 13 he says unlike Moses who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

But their minds, that is the Jews of Moses' day, were hardened. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament. Because the veil is taken away in Christ.

So a Jew who doesn't believe in Christ has this veil that prevents them from seeing what the Old Testament means. But when a person turns to Christ, that veil is removed. And they can understand it.

But even to this day when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. So Paul says that the Jews and this would include the rabbis who expound on the law, they don't know what it means.

But Jesus opened the understanding of the disciples so that they did understand what it

means. So we have to assume that when the apostles in their writings quote the scriptures, they are quoting them quite in the right context. And they have quite the right interpretation.

Jesus assured them of that. Jesus gave them that. If what they saw is something I wouldn't have seen, maybe that's because I know better than the rabbis.

I see only as a man sees. I see only naturally. I have only natural understanding.

But Jesus, supernaturally I believe, revealed to the disciples what these scriptures all mean. Verse 46 Then he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

Now, this is very much like what Jesus is recorded as saying in the beginning of the book of Acts, which is written by the same author. It's as if he closes his gospel with this conversation and then opens his book of Acts with it. However, it's hard to know where the chronological break is.

Because the words similar to these that Jesus is recorded as giving them in Acts chapter 1, especially in verses 5 through 8, in Acts chapter 1, they occur 40 days after the resurrection. According to Luke, the same author, Jesus gave this kind of a commission to them 40 days after he rose from the dead. And therefore, it seems to me that we may have him saying these things 40 days after the resurrection.

And yet this chapter was only a few verses ago talking about his meeting them in the upper room the night of his resurrection, the first time he appeared to the 12 or the 11. So somewhere there's a break. And Luke knew about it because he recorded it.

It's actually Luke himself who wrote Acts, who said that Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples after the resurrection teaching them the things concerning the kingdom of God. This is in Acts chapter 1 and verse 3. It says, to the disciples he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, like eating with them and showing them his hands and feet and so forth, being seen by them during 40 days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And verse 4 goes on to talk about the day he ascended into heaven, which was after those 40 days.

So somewhere between the day he rose and the day he ascended, you've got 40 days. Luke doesn't in his gospel tell us where those days are. I think very probably they probably are between verse 45 and verse 46.

You could put them somewhere else. But I believe that in Luke 24, 44 and 45, where he

opened their understanding to understand the Scripture, that probably happened the day he appeared to them right after his resurrection. Then, verse 46, you know, at a later time, and I would think this is after the 40 days had passed, he told them these things in verse 46, and one reason I say it is because he told them there to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes.

Now, it's important to note, they didn't remain in Jerusalem right after his resurrection because we read of them fishing in Galilee in John 21. In Matthew, it actually closes with him appearing to them on a mountain in Galilee. So we know that after his resurrection, they didn't stay in Jerusalem.

They went to Galilee and he appeared to them a couple times there too. Then they came back to Jerusalem and that's where they were when he ascended. So, the fact that we read here in these instructions he gives them in verse 49, tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power on high.

This must have been the day of his ascension that Luke is also recording in Acts chapter 1. They didn't leave Jerusalem after that. And he could tell them that at that point. It was 10 days after he ascended that the Spirit came.

So, I believe these words have to be on the day of his ascension. And some of the early material is obviously the day of his resurrection. And somewhere there's a gap.

It's possible the gap is between verses 43 and 44. But I think it's more likely to be between 45 and 46. Because what he begins to say in 46 does not really end until 49.

So, that's all one long statement. And it does presuppose they would not leave Jerusalem after this particular statement. So, their trips to Galilee must have been before verse 46.

Verse 50, And he led them out as far as Bethany, that's on the Mount of Olives, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass while he blessed them that he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

Amen. Now, he gives the same information at the beginning of Acts chapter 1. And it's clearly the same author. No one has ever doubted that it's the same author.

But he tells the story in one abbreviated form here at the end of Luke and in another abbreviated form in the beginning of Acts. In Acts, it tells that while they watched him, he ascended up and a cloud received him and he disappeared into the clouds. And then two angels were standing there and they told the disciples he's going to come back someday in the same way that he left.

Luke is more brief here. He doesn't mention those details here. And he saves those for

volume 2 of his work.

So we end where he ends here. Now, when he does begin the book of Acts, writing to the same man, Theophilus, he begins with the words of the former account, and he means the Gospel of Luke, I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day in which he was taken up. Now, that's Luke.

It goes all the way up to the time Jesus was taken up. But Luke in Acts refers to that book as only what Jesus began to do and teach. By implication, the book of Acts is going to give us what Jesus continued to do and teach.

But through his disciples, through his body, after his departure. Luke, which has the entire story of Jesus from before his birth until his ascension, is only the beginning in Luke's mind. That's what Jesus began to do and teach.

But in the book of Acts, he continued to do and teach stuff. And he continues to do so as long as his body is on earth. And so, that of course naturally sets up our study for the book of Acts.

Which will have to come at a different time than this. We are done with our study of Luke.