



Jesus Christ is Risen from the Dead Luke 24

Introduction

No event in history has had a greater impact on the world, nor is any better authenticated, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Scoffers refuse to believe it. Critics propose alternate theories. Others spiritualize it. But believers down through the ages have celebrated it in the most literal sense. The literal truth of Christ's resurrection was the force behind the early Christian church and the message the apostles preached. Two thousand years later the message is unchanged. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Outline of Luke 24

- I. First Discovery of the Empty Tomb - Luke 24:1-12
- II. Five Appearances the First Day- Luke 24:13-43
- III. Five More Appearances in Forty Days - Luke 24:44-49
- IV. Final Appearance and Ascension - Luke 24:50-53

I. First Discovery of the Empty Tomb - Luke 24:1-12

- A. Women at Dawn - Luke 24:1-11; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-8

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.

1. Brought spices - Luke 24:1

The narrative continues without a break even though it is the beginning of a new chapter in all the gospels. The women had observed where Jesus' body was laid, then quickly went to buy spices before the onset of the Sabbath. They planned to wait and prepare Jesus' body for proper burial as soon as the Sabbath was over. Joseph and Nicodemus had hurriedly put spices in the linen body wrappings as a temporary measure to prevent odor. The fact that the women brought spices as soon as it was light enough to find their way on Sunday morning shows they were not anticipating a resurrection. Nor did the fearful disciples who were hiding.

2. *In the end of the Sabbath* (KJV) - Matthew 28:1

As the Sabbath ended and the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Let us not lose the traditional reading of these verses in the abundance of new translations, for it has had a peculiar significance for more than four hundred years in the King James Version. It was indeed the "*end of the Sabbath*". This was the last Sabbath under the Law of Moses as God's means of dispensing grace. On that last Sabbath, Jesus was buried. He had not yet risen, so the law was still in effect. Once risen, the law was fulfilled and its sway was ended, replaced by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as access to God. The Sabbath was the symbol of the law. The fourth commandment, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, is the only commandment not repeated in the New Testament.

The Law was given to Israel, not to the world. Christ died for the world. The apostle Paul best understood the completed role of the Law, the Old Covenant, and how it was replaced by the New Covenant. *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:19-23). See also Galatians 2:16, 3:10-13, 24-29.

3. Stone rolled away - Luke 24:2; John 20:1

The only question the women had was, "*Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us*" (Mark 16:3)? Their concern was legitimate. The stone was massive and it had been rolled down into a prepared groove to render it immovable. At the insistence of Jesus' enemies, the Roman governor Pilate had put his seal upon it and posted a guard beside it. Apparently they were the only ones to remember He had said He would rise again (Matthew 27:62-66). No one could remove the stone. *But there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow; and the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men* (Matthew 28:2-4).

4. Two angels in the tomb - Luke 24:3-6; Matthew 28:5-6; Mark 16:4-6

The women entered the tomb and in the predawn light saw two angels. Matthew and Mark record only one angel, which does not mean there were not two. Luke's later research found there were two. Since two includes one, there is no discrepancy. The women were terrified and bowed down to the earth. The angels asked them, "*Why do you seek the living among the dead?*"

5. Message to the disciples - Luke 24:7-8; Matthew 28:7-8; Mark 16:7-8

The angels reminded the women of Jesus' words in Galilee, "*The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*" *And they remembered His words.* The angels sent the women to the disciples with an astounding message, "*Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him.*" Mark notes that they were especially to tell Peter! Trembling with fear, astonishment, and great joy, the women ran to carry the news. Do you feel the urgency to tell people that Jesus is alive? What are you doing about it?

6. Mary Magdalene - Luke 24:9-10; John 20:2-3

Mary Magdalene seems to have been the one to tell Peter and John that Jesus' body was missing (John 20:2). "*They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.*" Perhaps she was so upset that she left the tomb before hearing the angels' message. She returned with Peter and John and remained after they left, amazed at what they had seen.

7. Disbelief of the disciples - Luke 24:11

Upon hearing the words of the women, *their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.* The other disciples did not believe the women nor did they investigate their story.

- B. Peter and John - Luke 24:12; John 20:4-10

John fills in the details of his visit to the tomb with Peter. Luke mentions only Peter. They both ran to the tomb. John, the younger one, arrived first but stopped before entering. The impetuous Peter ran directly into the tomb and John followed. What they saw staggered their minds and imaginations. The linen cloths were lying there, and the handkerchief, that had been around Jesus' head was not lying with the linen cloths, but neatly folded in a place by itself. The cloths which had wrapped the body were undisturbed but the body was

gone. No one had unwrapped the body and stolen it. This was the lie which the Jewish leaders paid the embarrassed soldiers to circulate (Matthew 28:11-15). John guessed what had happened, that the body had come right up through the cloths. He saw and believed. Peter saw and wondered at what had happened. He would know before long.

II. Five Appearances the First Day- Luke 24:13-43

- A. First Appearance: Mary Magdalene - John 20:11-18

1. Conversation with the angels - John 20:11-14

After Peter and John left the tomb, amazed and awed, Mary Magdalene remained. Bewildered and weeping, she peered into the tomb where she saw two angels, one at the head and one at the foot where Jesus' body had lain. They asked her, "*Woman, why are you weeping?*" She answered, "*Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.*"

2. Conversation with the risen Lord - John 20:15-18

As she turned back, she saw someone standing there. He asked her the same question, "*Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?*" She supposed him to be the gardener and asked, "*Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.*" Jesus spoke her name, "*Mary.*" She responded in Hebrew, "*Rabboni*" (Teacher). Sensing the desire of her heart, Jesus said, "*Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to My God and your God.*"

In this way He taught her that it was a new day with a new way of relating. He was more than her Rabboni; He was her God. She had known Him as a human being, a very special human being to be sure, but now she needed to understand that He was her Lord. We see that she began to understand because she went and told the disciples she had seen the Lord.

- B. Second Appearance: The Other Women - Matthew 28:9-10

As the other women hurried from the tomb to tell the disciples the message from the angels, Jesus Himself met them and greeted them, "*Rejoice!*" *So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.* Jesus responded, "*Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.*" He allowed them to touch Him and later also invited Thomas to do so.

C. Third Appearance: Two on the Emmaus Road
- Luke 24:13-32

1. Walking and talking - Luke 24:13-14

Two people were walking away from Jerusalem toward Emmaus, a village seven or eight miles northwest of Jerusalem. Older Bibles, commentaries, and artists assume these were two men, however, it could have been a married couple. There is nothing to controvert this view. The language demands no gender for the second person, and the two invited Jesus for a meal, which is more consistent with a couple. One was named Cleopas. Why could the other not have been the wife of Cleopas?

2. Accompanied by the risen Christ - Luke 24:15-16

Jesus Himself joined them. The prophet Malachi says, *those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them* (Malachi 3:16). How much of your conversation is about the Lord? Are you aware of His presence when you speak about Him? The Lord hears. Will you draw near to Him, put your trust in Him, and declare His works. See Psalm 73:28.

3. Conversing with the Lord - Luke 24:17-24

Jesus joined their conversation. He asked what they were talking about and why they were sad. Cleopas, whom Luke probably interviewed, answered, *"Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"* Jesus drew them out, *"What things?"* They briefly recited six facts:

- The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people.
- The chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.
- His followers had hoped it was He who was going to redeem Israel.
- It was the third day since these things happened.
- Certain women had arrived at the tomb early and did not find His body, but claimed they had seen angels who said He was alive.
- Their friends had gone to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, *"but Him they did not see."*

4. Old Testament affirmed by the Lord - Luke 24:25-27

Jesus said, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"* And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. What a Bible lesson that must have been! From Moses to Malachi, Jesus pointed out prophecies, types, and shadows that pointed to Him, to His suffering, and to His glory. Would you like to know the Scriptures like that? The Scriptures open wide with glory when you look for Jesus in them. Indeed, you will find Him in every book of the Bible. In fact, A. B. Simpson, a nineteenth century preacher and theologian, said we can find Christ on every page (Christ in the Bible Commentary).

5. Breaking bread and hearts burning - Luke 24:28-32

As they drew near to the village where they lived, the couple asked Jesus in, for it was evening now. He accepted their invitation and when He blessed the bread and broke it, *their eyes were opened and they knew Him*. Then Jesus vanished, but they said, *"Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us in the road, while He opened the Scriptures to us?"* The most exciting Bible knowledge you receive is from the Lord through His Word, not from commentaries, useful as they are. Will you apply your mind to the Bible, pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate it for you, and willingly be taught? The results will be exciting. Your mind was made for the Bible, and the Bible was made for your mind.

6. Report to the disciples - Luke 24:33-35

Once they knew it was Jesus, the couple hurried seven or eight miles to find the eleven disciples and tell them the news. Word was traveling like wildfire and the disciples were saying, *"The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon."* The couple from Emmaus shared their meeting with the Lord *and how He was known to them during the breaking of the bread*. How could they argue with what the two eye-witnesses said? To share your own experience of Jesus is still powerful, as long as the attention is centered on Him and not on you.

D. Fourth Appearance: Simon Peter (Cephas) - Luke 24:34

He was seen by Cephas (1 Corinthians 15:5). Sometime that day, Jesus appeared privately to Peter. The women had been told to give Peter the good news and that

Jesus would meet him in Galilee. Peter had run to the tomb and seen the empty grave-cloths. By the time the Emmaus couple returned to the disciples in Jerusalem that evening, they knew of Peter's private conversation with the risen Lord. Paul records it in his letter to the Corinthians where he lists proofs of the resurrection. In fact, it leads the list and is given before the appearance to the twelve.

E. Fifth Appearance: The Disciples - Luke 24:36-43; Mark 16:14; John 20:19-25

1. Evening of that day - John 20:19

At the end of that resurrection day, Jesus met with his frightened disciples. Luke diagnosed their condition as *terrified*. Jesus' appearance did not reassure them, for they supposed they had seen a spirit. The disciples had shut the doors tightly for fear that the Jews would come after them, and they were having a meal, perhaps the first in three days. It was just a week since the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when they were on top of the world. Now they were cowering behind locked doors.

2. Message of peace and rebuke - Luke 24:38; Mark 16:14

After His greeting, "*Peace be to you,*" Jesus gently rebuked the disciples for their unbelief, hard hearts, and not heeding the reports they had heard of His resurrection. He had told them repeatedly that He would rise on the third day, but they did not believe it even when they saw Him standing before them. Are you ever that slow and obstinate about believing the Scriptures?

3. Proofs of His resurrection - Luke 24:39-43; John 20:20

We can be glad they were so obtuse, because it led to Jesus giving them proofs of His resurrection. These proofs have never been refuted and are the basis of apologetics used throughout the centuries to debate Christianity with unbelievers. Our faith rests on solid facts, not on mysticism, traditions, or leaps in the dark. As Peter himself wrote, *We did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty* (2 Peter 1:16). The proofs of the resurrection have led several sceptics and scoffers to faith, such as Lew Wallace, author of Ben Hur and C. S. Lewis. What are these proofs?

a. Eyewitness accounts

The disciples were not deluded men who would have laid down their lives for a myth or conspiracy. Even skeptics

agree that, based on the reports of the apostles, all the early Christians believed in a literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, to be an apostle one had to have seen the risen Christ in the flesh. The apostle Paul defended his apostleship on this account more than once (Acts 22:6-8, 26:12-15; Galatians 1:11-16).

b. His wounds

"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have." Jesus invited the apostles to inspect His wounds and even touch them. He denied being a spirit only.

c. Ate broiled fish

Jesus asked for something to eat. *They gave Him a piece of broiled fish. And He took it, and ate it in their presence.* He was in a physical, functioning body. The difference was that it was glorified and not subject to the physical laws that govern our world. He could go through walls and doors, and go back and forth to heaven. The evidence convinced the disciples. It is still convincing for those with open minds.

d. Power for their preaching - John 20:21-23

The Lord commissioned them. This was the first of three times He would do so. He said, *"Peace to you; as the Father has sent Me, also I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit; If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; If you retain the sins of any, they are retained."* He breathed on them as a preliminary gesture that they would receive the Holy Spirit and His power to follow through. These verses are controversial and an explanation goes beyond the scope of this study. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states, "What our Lord here commits to His disciples, to His Church, is the right authoritatively to declare, in His name, that there is forgiveness for man's sin, and on what conditions the sin will be forgiven" (Charles F. Pfeiffer, editor).

4. Doubting Thomas - John 20:24

One apostle was missing, who has become known as doubting Thomas. When he heard that he had missed the Lord, he remained adamant in his disbelief of the resurrection. *"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."* Missing the meeting hardened Thomas' heart. But Jesus loved him and gave him a second chance. However, Thomas had to wait a week while the others rejoiced.

III. Five More Appearances in Forty Days - Luke 24:44-49

A. The Apostles a Week Later - John 20:26-31

After eight days, or the next Sunday, the eleven were together, including Thomas (1 Corinthians 15:5). Jesus appeared in their midst, through closed doors, and invited Thomas to "*Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it in My side; do not be unbelieving, but believing.*" Thomas' doubt melted away and he made the highest confession of all the disciples, "*My Lord and my God.*" For a monotheistic Jew, this was a giant step of faith. Do you call Jesus Christ your Lord and your God? Jesus said, "*Because you have seen Me you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.*" This includes all believers from then until now who have not seen Jesus in the flesh. Are you included in that blessing? If not, why not?

B. Seven Disciples Beside the Sea of Galilee - John 21

This is a beautiful scene, reminiscent of the early days with Jesus when He told them where to fish. They had returned to Galilee and to their fishing. Jesus, on the shore, called to them in their boat, "*Children have you any food?*" *They answered Him, "No"* (John 21:5).

They recognized Him and impulsive Peter jumped from the boat and swam to shore. They all shared breakfast and afterward, in the presence of the other disciples, Jesus restored Peter. He asked Peter three times if he loved Him, to expiate the three denials, and told Peter to feed His sheep.

C. The Five Hundred - Matthew 26:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; 1 Corinthians 15:6

Matthew relates the Galilean appearances whereas Luke concentrates on the Jerusalem appearances. In Galilee where the bulk of His ministry took place, Jesus met on a mountain with the disciples. The apostle Paul says that He appeared to over five hundred believers at once, most of whom were still living when Paul wrote. On that occasion, Jesus gave what is known as The Great Commission. Actually, it is the second of three commissions. The first was to the ten disciples on the first Sunday evening (John 20:22). The third was just before His ascension (Luke 24:4-48; Acts 1:8). The Great Commission makes three statements.

1. Sufficient authority - Matthew 28:18

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." In Him we have the power to do anything He asks us to do.

2. Sufficient mandate - Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The field is the world (Matthew 13:38). The target is all nations. The goal is to disciple all we can and baptize them in the name of the Triune God. "*Name*" is singular but includes the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a sound statement of the Trinity. Discipling is explained as "*teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.*" Teaching is by lip and by life. How do your lips and your life teach others?

3. Sufficient promise - Matthew 28:20

"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." We are not left alone to do this monumental global task. Jesus is with us as Leader and Friend. He also made provision for our equipping and power as promised in the last commission.

D. James, the Lord's Brother - 1 Corinthians 15:7

A private appearance to James is recorded by Paul in 1 Corinthians.

1. Identity of James

Jesus had half-brothers who did not believe in Him as Messiah or Son of God during His earthly life (John 7:5). James was one (Mark 6:3). He was probably next to Jesus in age. He became head of the Jerusalem Church, the mother church, after James the apostle, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded by Herod (Acts 12:2). James is named as the Lord's brother in Galatians 1:19. He chaired the first church council in Jerusalem and wrote a letter concerning the Gentiles that was read in all the churches (Acts 15:13,20).

2. Conversion of James

We do not know how or when James believed in Jesus as Savior, but he became a pillar of the early church and, according to Josephus, was martyred as were the apostles.

E. Another Appearance to Disciples in Jerusalem - Luke 24:44-49

Not everyone agrees that this is a separate appearance. In Luke it reads like a continuation of the first Sunday evening appearance. However, the content seems to have been given on another occasion, and is more closely related to the ascension scene with which Luke closes his gospel.

1. Opened their understanding

The risen Lord reminded His disciples of all He had told them about what was going to happen so the Hebrew Scriptures, "*all things...written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me,*" might be fulfilled. Then He did for them what He will do for you. He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* (1 Corinthians 2:14). The unbelieving, unregenerate person, no matter how well educated, can read the Bible all day every day and it will not make sense to him or her. The simplest believer finds the Bible to be a fascinating, open book because the Spirit of God illumines the text and enlightens their minds. Jesus did that for His disciples even before He sent the Holy Spirit.

2. Preparation for mission and Holy Spirit

Jesus explained that in fulfillment of the Scriptures, "*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.*"

This commission reads like a composite of the others. Are you willing to fulfill these great commissions? With God's presence, Christ's authority, and the Holy Spirit's help will you say, "Yes, Lord, I'll go where you want me to go and be who you want me to be?" Be encouraged by the prophet Isaiah who responded to God, "*Here am I! Send me.*" (Isaiah 6:8).

IV. Final Appearance and Ascension - Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:4-11

The final appearance of the risen Christ was on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). There He met His disciples for the last time, walking with them from Jerusalem to Bethany, a short two-mile journey.

A. His Blessing

Luke continues his narrative in the Book of Acts. The disciples asked Him if He was going to restore the kingdom to Israel "*at this time*" (Acts 1:6). Without the Holy Spirit, they still did not understand the spiritual nature of His kingdom. He replied, "*It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*" Instead of looking for the kingdom, they were to wait for a wonderful event, the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus blessed them and was taken up into heaven.

B. Great Joy

The disciples *returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.* Luke ends his gospel with the promise of the Holy Spirit and the ascension of Christ in full view of His disciples. He begins the Book of Acts at the same point. The progressive endings of the gospels has been noted by many, that Matthew ends with the resurrection, Mark with the ascension, Luke with the promise of Pentecost and John with the return of Christ (John 21:23).

Applications

1. Do you rejoice in knowing the risen Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and unfailing Friend? If you have not come to know Him personally through the study of Luke, will you speak with your discussion leader and ask for a Disciplers Assurance Letter which explains how that can be possible.
2. Are you yielded to the indwelling Holy Spirit? How are you working in His power for the kingdom of God within your circles of influence?
3. In what ways are you fulfilling the commissions of our Lord to make known the forgiveness of sins and to disciple all nations? How can you begin to do that in your own family and neighborhood?
4. Will you let God know right now that you are willing to answer His call? Will you join Isaiah in telling Him, "Here am I! Send me?"