

# JESUS APPEARS TO TWO BELIEVERS ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS: AN IMMORTAL JOURNEY LUKE 24: 13–35

## *Introduction*

This is one of the most beloved accounts of the resurrection story. It is an account of Jesus' helping two ordinary persons who had lost hope and fallen into the pit of sadness and despair. Their experience was an immortal journey.

- I. Scene 1: taking a lonely but thoughtful walk (vv. 13-14).
- II. Scene 2: considering three critical questions (vv. 15-27).
- III. Scene 3: experiencing the burning truth — Jesus is risen; He is alive (vv. 28-32).
- IV. Scene 4: proclaiming the immortal witness (vv. 33-35).

## ***I. Luke 24:13–14 Hopelessness, Despair and Devastation***

The first scene was that of a lonely walk by two persons — two persons who were sad, despairing, and very thoughtful.

The day is important: it was “that same day” that the women discovered the empty tomb and reported it to the disciples (the resurrection day, Easter Sunday). The news had been received with skepticism, as utter nonsense. These two, Cleopas and his companion, had either been present or else had heard the news from some other source. As they made their way to Emmaus they were sad, gripped by a spirit of despair over the Lord's crucifixion. Their hope that Jesus was the promised Messiah had been devastated, dashed against the rocks of death. But in their despair, their thoughts were rushing wildly about, entangled, wondering about the report of the women concerning the empty tomb and the angels. What did it mean?

The point to note is their emotions and thoughts, their...

- sadness and despair (over the Lord's death).
- devastated hope (He is not the Messiah).
- rushing and entangled thoughts (over the reports of an empty tomb and angels).

***Thought 1.*** The scene is a symbol of the despair that grips so many in life. Their hopes are devastated, hopes for...

- family
- profession
- education
- acceptance
- meaning and purpose

In their sadness and despair, somewhere, they hear reports of the empty tomb and of the living Lord; but they do not know what the reports mean, not personally.

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**Job 10:1** *“I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.*

**Psa 31:10** *My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.*

**Psa 42:6** *My God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon — from Mount Mizar.*

**Psa 69:2** *I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.*

**Psa 73:2** *But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.*

**Psa 73:16** *When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me.*

**Psa 137:1** *By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.*

**Isa 49:14** *But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.”*

**Jer 2:25** *Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, ‘It’s no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.’*

**1 Th 4:13** *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [dead], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.*

**Eph 2:12** *Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.*

## LUKE 24:13 EMMAUS

The city and location are unknown. It was about seven miles out of Jerusalem, which would take somewhere around two hours to travel by foot. □

### II. *Luke 24:15–27 Three Critical Questions*

The second scene was consideration of three questions. Note the exact words as Cleopas and his companion walked along: “As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;” (sune-poreueto, imperfect tense). The idea is that they were so absorbed in their despair and talk that Jesus *was already* walking along with them when they noticed Him. But note: they did not know Him. His resurrected body differed enough that He was not recognized as Jesus without close observation (See *Resurrected Body of Jesus*, Jn. 21:1). In this particular instance, the Lord “kept” (restrained) their eyes from recognizing Him as well. Apparently He wanted them to more freely discuss the events with Him.

1. The first question: What are you talking about; what is it that is causing you to look so sad (skuthropoi)? The Greek word means gloomy, dejected, despondent, sullen, overcast. Jesus could see sadness and despair written all over their faces.

Cleopas was surprised that the stranger did not know. “How could anyone be in Jerusalem and not know why we are sad and despairing?” he asked. Terrible things had happened.

**Thought 1.** These two were seeking to understand the death and empty tomb of Christ. Christ was the subject of their conversation. They were seeking the truth; therefore, Christ drew near them.

**Mat 7:7-8** “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

**John 8:31-32** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

2. The second question: “What things? What circumstances could possibly cause such sadness and despair?” (v. 19-24). Cleopas answered, covering three subjects.
  - a. Jesus’ death.
    - => He was a great prophet.
    - => The rulers crucified him. (Note the whole world is implicated. The Jews delivered Him, and the Gentile Romans condemned and crucified Him.)
    - => We had trusted (elpizomen, hoped) that He was the Messiah, the One who was to save Israel.
  - b. Jesus’ prophecy of three days. There is significance in the term “the third day.” Cleopas was sharing how their *dead Master* had told them...
    - to watch for the third day, for some unusual event.
    - that He had spoken of “rising again on the third day,” whatever that meant.
    - that they thought the words meant that His triumph would take place on the third day.
  - c. Jesus’ empty tomb and perplexing reports from certain women, reports...
    - of an empty tomb of
    - of Jesus’ being alive
    - that Jesus was not seen
    - a vision of angels
    - that had been confirmed

**Thought 1.** World events and the terrible things that happen in life often make a person sad and despairing — such things as...

- being misunderstood
- being betrayed
- hopelessness
- being opposed
- helplessness
- divisiveness
- being deserted
- death
- loss
- fear
- injustice

Christ is concerned. He wants to know what it is that causes so much sadness and despair. He wants us to share our problems with Him.

**Thought 2.** The problem with the two from Emmaus, as it is with so many today, was their *short-sightedness* and *unbelief*.

**Thought 3.** There is one major reason why men refuse to accept a risen Lord. A risen Lord means that a man must subject himself to the Lord and obey and serve Him.

**Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

**Acts 5:31-32** “God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

**Phil 2:9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.

**Thought 4.** Every man should be engrossed in the death of Christ, but he should also believe and be engrossed in the resurrection of the Lord.

**Rom 4:25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

**Rom 8:34** Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

**Heb 7:25** Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

3. The third question: “Did not the prophets predict Messiah’s death and resurrection?” (vv. 25-27). Note several facts.
  - a. Jesus rebuked the two disciples for being dull and slow to believe. He called them *foolish* (anoetoi), which means that they were dull and slow to believe. More was expected of them: they should have known more than they were indicating. They were without excuse, for their minds and hearts were capable of more. Therefore, Jesus rebuked them for being...
    - slow to believe.
    - slow to believe *all* the prophets had spoken.
  - b. Jesus shared that the death and resurrection of the Messiah was a necessity. The words *did not* (ou-chi edei) are strong. They mean there was a constraint, an imperative, a necessity laid upon the Messiah to die and arise. He had no choice. His death and resurrection had been planned and willed by God through all eternity. Therefore, He had to fulfil the will of God, for God had ordained. ..

- that the Messiah suffer these things.
  - that the Messiah enter into His glory. God’s plan was not defeated. He conquered through the death of His Son, the Messiah.
- c. Jesus explained the Scripture to the two disciples, taught them book by book, showing them the things concerning the Messiah in each book. Note the words “all the Scriptures.” Prophecies of Christ are found in all the Scripture; therefore, Jesus carried the two disciples through the Scripture in a systematic way, book by book, showing them how God’s purpose was fulfilled in the death of the Messiah. The two disciples could now be saved eternally, not just during an earthly reign of an earthly Messiah.

**Thought 1.** The two disciples were feeling hopeless and perplexed, full of sadness and despair for one very simple reason: unbelief. They had *symbolized* or *spiritualized* the Scripture and the clear predictions which Jesus had given his disciples before His death. Therefore, they could not see *beyond* Jesus’ death. They were willing to accept and admire a *dead Saviour* a great prophet who had been martyred, but they had great difficulty in accepting a risen Lord. They would not believe the reports of the women, the glorious news of the living Lord.

**Luke 24:11** *But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.*

**Heb 4:11** *Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

**Heb 12:3** *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

### III. **Luke 24:28–32 A Burning Conviction and Conversion**

The third scene was experiencing the burning truth – Jesus is risen and alive forevermore. Note three important points.

1. The two disciples *sought* to hear more. They invited Jesus to stay with them. The words “acted as if” do not mean Jesus was play-acting. He never pretends. He would have gone on. for He never enters a life or a home without a personal invitation. The two were seeking the truth, so they wanted Jesus to enter their home and to share more with them. (How unlike so many today!)

Jesus did enter, and He sat down to have dinner with them. He was also asked to give thanks for the meal.

2. God opened the eyes of the two disciples. They immediately knew the Lord. But note why: they had invited Jesus into their home. If they had let Him pass on, the likelihood is that they would never have known it was the Lord.

3. The two disciples had experienced a burning conviction within their hearts.
  - a. The Word of God being proclaimed is what had stirred the conviction and the burning.

**Jer 5:14** *Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says: “Because the people have spoken these words, I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes.”*

**Jer 23:29** *“Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?”*

- b. Their response to the conviction — inviting Christ into their home — led to their coming to know Him personally.

**Rev 3:20** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

**1 Cor 1:9** *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

**Mat 18:20** *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

**Thought 1.** The two had heard the Scripture explained, and they had heard much. But they had to respond, to invite the Lord into their home before God could open their eyes and bring them to a knowledge of Christ.

#### **IV. Luke 24:33–35 The Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

The fourth scene was proclaiming the immortal witness. The scene was dramatic. It was night, but the two rushed back to the apostles. When they arrived, they found the apostles and some other disciples already gathered together.

They were all bursting with excitement. To the shock of the two from Emmaus, the group had the same immortal witness to share: “The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” As they listened to Simon’s experience, they were bursting at the seams, hardly able to contain themselves, waiting to share their own experience.

Finally, their time came to share their experience and the very same immortal witness: “The Lord has risen indeed.”

**John 15:27** *And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

**Acts 22:15** *You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.*

**Acts 10:39-40** *“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.” ■*

## JOHN 21:01 THE RESURRECTED BODY OF JESUS CHRIST

“Jesus Christ appeared again.” The purpose of His appearances was to prove that Jesus was not a spirit, vision, phantom, hallucination, or any other figment of man’s imagination.

He was the risen Lord – bodily. He was not someone else. His body was none other than the body of Jesus, the Carpenter from Nazareth. He had been raised from the dead – physically raised. His body was real. It differed, yes; but it was His body – perfected, no longer subject to the limitations and frailties of the physical universe and its laws. It was His body which was now transformed into a spiritual body by the power of God’s Word (see Rom. 1:3-4).

How did the Lord’s body differ since His resurrection? Some idea can be gleaned by looking both at His resurrection body and at the glorified body promised to the believer.

1. The resurrected body of the Lord was His body, but it was radically changed. It had all the appearance of His physical body, yet it was not bound by the physical world and its material substance.
  - a. It looked like the same material body, the same “flesh and bones,” not some other body. It was a body that bore the marks of the nails in His hands and feet (Jn. 20:20, 27). It was a body that appeared and looked like a body and that occupied space.
  - b. It was a body that could travel and appear any place at will or by thought, a body unhampered by space, time, or physical substance. When He appeared, it was suddenly, even behind locked doors (Lk. 24:36; Jn. 20:19).
  - c. It was a body that differed enough from the earthly body that it was not clearly recognized, not at first, not until it was closely observed.

=> Mary Magdalene thought He was the gardener (Jn. 20:15).

=> The two disciples walking toward Emmaus thought He was a traveller (Lk. 24:31).

=> The disciples who were fishing did not recognize Him standing on the seashore (Jn. 21:4).

However, after close observation, the Lord was recognized in all these instances. This probably indicates that our heavenly bodies will look like our earthly bodies, differing only in that they are perfected.

2. The resurrected and glorified body that is promised to the believer gives some additional insight into the kind of body Jesus now has. One of the most wonderful promises ever made to man is given in the words:

=> “Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21; see Mt. 13:43; Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4; Rev. 22:5).

=> We will be “conformed to the likeness of His Son” (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18.)

=> “We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2).

The body of the believer is to undergo a radical change just as the Lord’s body was radically changed. Several changes are promised the believer.

a. The believer will receive a spiritual body.

**1 Cor 15:44** *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

Note that the *spiritual body* (*soma*) is still a body just like the *earthly body* (*soma*). The spiritual body still retains the qualities of the earthly body. The difference lies in its nature: it will no longer be a natural (soulish) body; it will be spiritual. What does this mean? In essence, the body will be perfected and glorified: no longer subject to aging, deterioration, death, decay, pain, tears, sorrow, or crying (Rev. 14:4).

=> “The body that is sown is perishable [corruptible], it is raised imperishable [incorruptible].”

=> “It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory.”

=> “It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.”

=> “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”

Note the strong, emphatic declaration: “*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body*” (1 Cor. 15:42-44).

b. The believer will receive a body that is *not flesh and blood*. Flesh and blood are corruptible, they age, deteriorate, die, and decay.

**1 Cor 15:50** *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

**Acts 13:36-37** *For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.*

**1 Cor 15:42** *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable.*



*Eccl 3:20 All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.*

*2 Cor 5:1-2 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.*

- c. The believer will receive a body that will be radically changed.

*1 Cor 15:52-53 In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.*

- d. The believer will be given a body that will not need reproduction for continuing the (redeemed) human race.

*Mat 22:30 “At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.” □*