

Emmaus bound – error bound too!

a. The Disciples' Inadequate View of Messiah (24:13-27)

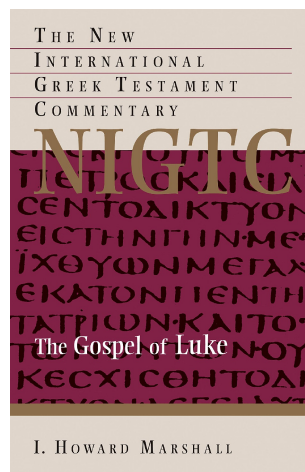
24:13-16 Notice the explicit explanation as to why even righteous Jews were unable to grasp the truth about Messiah

[1] It is well known that the difficulty of harmonizing the different accounts of the Resurrection given by the Evangelists and by S. Paul is great ; and this difficulty is perhaps at a maximum when the narrative of Lk. is compared with the others. Here, as so often in the Gospels, we have not sufficient knowledge to piece together the different fragments which have come down to us, and consequently the evidence for important facts is not what we might antecedently have expected or desired. But our expectations and wishes are not adequate criteria, and it is no paradox to say that the difficulty of harmonizing the various narratives is in itself a security for their general truthfulness. Dishonest witnesses would have made the evidence more harmonious. As it is, each witness fearlessly tells his own story according to the knowledge which he possesses, and is not careful as to whether it agrees with what may have been told elsewhere. **Alfred Plummer** *Luke* p. 546

[2] The literary quality of the story is exquisite, a feature shared with not a few other stories in Lk. It shows literary links with the account of the feeding of the multitude (Roloff, *Kerygma*, 256-258) and has some interesting features in common with the story of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40): journey motif; ignorance of Scripture; explanation of Jesus' sufferings from Scripture; request for the 'interpreter' to stay longer; 'sacrament' of baptism/eucharist; sudden disappearance of interpreter ... **I. Howard Marshall** *Luke* p. 890

[3] The history contained in these verses is not found in any

other Gospel but that of Luke. Of all the eleven appearances of Christ after His resurrection, none perhaps is so interesting as the one described in this passage. Let us mark, in these verses, what encouragement there is to believers to speak to one another about Christ. We are told of two disciples walking together to Emmaus, and talking of their Master's crucifixion. And then come the remarkable words, "While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." Conference on spiritual subjects is a most important means of grace. As iron sharpeneth iron, so does exchange of thoughts with brethren sharpen a believer's soul. It brings down a special blessing on all who make a practice of it. The striking words of Malachi were meant for the Church in every age;—"Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine saith the LORD, in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:16-17.) **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 498



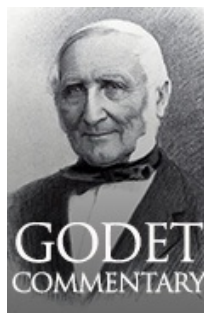
24:17-21 How do we see clearly their limited view of Messiah?

[4] Jesus generally interrogates before instructing. As a good teacher, in order to be heard, He begins by causing his auditors to speak (John 1:38). **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 506

[5] A temporal redemption of the Jews by a conqueror appears to have been the redemption which they looked for. A spiritual redemption by a sacrificial death was an idea which their minds could not thoroughly take in. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 500

Who might this second pilgrim be?

[6] [vv 13,18] ἰδοὺ, *behold* [v 13], prepares us for something unexpected. One of the two disciples was called Cleopas ... This name, of Greek origin, leads to the supposition that this disciple was a proselyte come to the feast. As to the other, it has been thought (Theophylact, Lange) that it was Luke himself – first, because he is not named; and next, because of the peculiarly dramatic character of the narrative following (comp. especially v 32). Luke 1:2 proves nothing against this view. For the author distinguishes himself in this passage, not from wit-



nesses absolutely, but from those who were witnesses from the beginning; and this contact for a moment did not give him the right to rank himself among the authors of the Gospel tradition. Jesus, by manifesting Himself to these two men, accomplished for the first time what He had announced to the Greeks, who asked to speak with Him in the temple: "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32-33). **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 505

24:22-24 Contrary to modern rationalizations about how credulous the disciples were, we see how reluctant were many of them to believe the earliest reports of eye witnesses

[7] If we accept the view which recognises Luke himself in the companion of Cleopas, we shall find ourselves brought to this critical result, that each evangelist has left in a corner of his narrative a modest indication of his person: Matthew, in the publican whom Jesus removes by a word from his previous occupations; Mark, in the young man who flees, leaving his garment at Gethsemane; John, in the disciple designated as he whom Jesus loved; Luke, in the anonymous traveller of Emmaus. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 507

24:25-27 For the first time the disciples are given explicit instruction about the correct view of prophecy – the TWO advents of Messiah, first as the Suffering Servant, afterwards as the glorious King of kings (Isaiah 52-53, cf. Isaiah 9:6,7; Psalm 72)

[8] Let us mark ... in these verses, how full the Old Testament is of Christ. We are told that our Lord began "at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Let it be a settled principle in our minds, in reading the Bible, that Christ is the central sun of the whole book. So long as we keep Him in view, we shall never greatly err in our search for spiritual knowledge.

J.C. Ryle

How shall we explain these words? In what way did our Lord show "things concerning himself," in every part of the Old Testament field? The answer to these questions is short and simple. Christ was the substance of every Old Testament sacrifice, ordained in the law of Moses. Christ was the true Deliverer and King, of whom all the judges and deliverers in Jewish history were types. Christ was the coming Prophet greater than Moses, whose glorious advent filled the pages of prophets. Christ was the true seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head,—the true seed in whom all nations were to be blessed,—the true Shiloh to whom the people were to be gathered,—the true scape-goat,—the true brazen serpent,—the true Lamb to which every daily offering pointed,—the true High Priest of whom every descendant of Aaron was a figure. These things, or something like them, we need not doubt, were some of the things which our Lord expounded in the way to Emmaus. Let it be a settled principle in our minds, in reading the Bible, that Christ is the central sun of the whole book. So long as we keep Him in view, we shall never greatly err in our search for spiritual knowledge. Once losing sight of Christ, we shall find the whole Bible dark and full of difficulty. The key of Bible knowledge is Jesus Christ. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 501

b. Recognizing Him in the Breaking of Bread (24:28-35)

24:28-31 Another instance of the risen Christ appearing in a seemingly normal human form – but able to perform superhuman feats, both spiritual and physical (John 20:19)

[9] He was evidently in human form, as would be appropriate for a supernatural being appearing on earth; there is no necessary discrepancy with Paul's insistence on the spiritual character of the resurrection body. The disciples, however, did not recognise that it was Jesus. **I. Howard Marshall** *Luke* p. 893

[10] When Jesus *made* as if He would continue His journey, it was not a mere feint. He would have really gone, but for that sort of constraint which they exercised over Him. Every gift of God is an invitation to claim a greater (χάριν ἂντὶ χάριτος [‘grace upon grace’], John 1:16). But most men stop very quickly on this way; and thus they never reach the full blessing

(2 Kings 13:14-19). ... No doubt the influence exercised on their heart by the preceding conversation and by the thanksgiving of Jesus, as well as the manner in which He broke and distributed the bread, had prepared them for this awaking of the inner sense. The sudden disappearance of Jesus has a supernatural character. His body was already in course of glorification, and obeyed more freely than before the will of the spirit. **Frederic Godet** *Luke* p. 507

24:32-35 Opened eyes and burning hearts – the evidence of a Divine work, whether from the Scripture, the Spirit or the personal appearance of the Risen One (as here to Peter, Cleopas and ??)

Legend, fable, tall story – or simply eye-witness report?

[11] For R. Bultmann (*HST* 286 [in dependence on H. Gunkel]) this episode "has the character of a true legend"— Christ appears as the unknown traveler, as God of old (see Gen 16:7-14; 18:1-22) liked to walk among men, in simple human form (motifs known in Greek and Chinese literature). H. D. Betz ("The Origin") seeks to rescue the characterization of the episode by presenting it as a "cult legend" in the form of a narrative so that the reader will appreciate the principal teaching, that Christian faith must be understood as faith in the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth. That there is a resemblance in the episode to legends of this sort is undeniable; but whether that is all there is is another matter. A reader in the twentieth century may well ask whether there is a basis in fact for such an episode: " ... there seems to be no good reason why the story should not be founded on fact" (J. M. Creed, *The Gospel [according to St. Luke]*, 290). **Joseph A. Fitzmyer** *Luke* p. 1556