

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 24- **Luke 24:13-35**
353- Were Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us?
Jesus Appearing After His Resurrection- Part 1

June 25, 2017

Luke 24:13-35

13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.

15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them.

16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

17 And He said to them, "**What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?**" And they stood still, looking sad.

18 *One of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "**What things?**" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,

23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

24 "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

25 And He said to them, "**O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 "**Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?**"

27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.

29 But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them.

30 When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them,

34 saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."

35 They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

To the Glory of God

Now there is much to be dismayed about concerning the modern Church. I have preached countless sermons about the worldliness and the materialism and the superficiality that seems to dominate much of American Christianity. I have cried out against the blatant compromise with biblical Truth, and against people whom I consider to be frauds and imposters, men who lay claim to hear from God and yet who preach and teach things that people in the early Church fought to defeat. And I routinely denounce the unbelievable cowardice that exists today in the Ministry.

Jesus called these people "hired hands" (John 10:12) and "false

prophets” (Matthew 7:15). Ezekiel cried out against the “pillow prophets” (Ezekiel 13:18&20 KJV), who deceived the people of God with messages of ease and comfort. In **Jude 4** Jesus’ half-brother warned us about them when he said:

... certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

... the Apostle Peter described these people and what they would do in **2 Peter 2:1-3**:

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

3 and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

According to Ministries Today magazine, a full 45% of all who lead in the modern Church reject the Virgin Birth, the sinless Life of Jesus, and the literal, physical, and bodily Resurrection. In my lifetime, movements that all came forth from the Reformation have minimized or outright rejected the very core issues that divided us from Rome in the first place such as:

- ✓ Unconditional Election (God’s Sovereignty in Salvation)
- ✓ The Authority of sacred Scripture (Sola Scriptura)
- ✓ Justification by Faith Alone (Sola Fide)

People, who not only *tolerate* but *celebrate* and eagerly *engage* in sexual perversion, are not only allowed to become members of mainline organizations in our day, but are assuming *leadership* roles in those groups. The God-given distinctions between men and women are either marginalized or condemned, all in the name of “equality”, while the scourge of pornography is running roughshod over the men of the

Church. Marriage is under assault like never before with record numbers of divorces as men have almost universally abandoned the Command of the Lord God to lead their families spiritually.

So, there is much to be dismayed over. In fact, if I thought for a second that the success of the Christian Church was dependent on my efforts or my own energy, I would faint. Thank God, that we have the Promise of Jesus Himself in **Matthew 16:18b**, Who said:

... I build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

... and in **Matthew 28:18b**

... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

So, in spite of all the compromise and the sin, we have the clear Promise of the risen Christ that because all Authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Him, He is going to build the Church for which He lived and died and rose again. And because it is none other than the invincible Christ Himself Who is going to build the Church, the very gates of Hades will not overpower it.

So, we have a Promise from a God, Who cannot lie, that not only is He going to *build* the Church, not only is He going to sovereignly *orchestrate* the ongoing *construction* of the Church by continuing to save lost sinners by what He alone does for them, but that this same Christ will also *keep* it, He will work tirelessly to *preserve* the Church that He builds.

But we have to understand that the "way" that Jesus keeps His Church, the "means" by which the Lord Christ preserves what He has built and is *continuing* to build, is by periodically stirring the hearts of His people to "burn within them". And when that "burning" happens, when God is Good to visit His people to set their hearts ablaze with Truth, not only will people be saved, but saved people will rise up and they will *proclaim* the Truth, and they will strive to *live* the Truth, and they will rise up in their righteous might to *defend* the Truth against any and all the "raging" of our defeated foe.

Many today will point to packed out stadiums and international television audiences as evidence that what I just related to you isn't true. They will direct you to amazing things going on in Africa and

Asia, and say that when someone like me gets on the radio to clearly and repeatedly cry out against the promotion of “human sensuality” over “biblical spirituality”, and against the rise in importance of the “self of Man” over against the Sovereignty of God and the absolute Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, that I am an alarmist and that I am blowing this up way out of proportion.

But, you see, I don’t believe that much of what we are witnessing in the world is an explosion of God-ordained passion and genuine “heart burning” in the modern Church. I don’t think that biblical Christianity is actually being propagated by much of what is going on. So, just what are we seeing?

With the advent of more and more activities in the modern Church that are designed to entertain and tickle the ears, and to appease the sensual desire of the lukewarm and the unsaved to be “made much of”, people are not actually being set ablaze, but instead they are becoming even darker until they die. So, all the energy that you see coming forth from the endless music and the light shows and the smoke machines, and all of the carnal gimmicks being used today in the Church is a *manufactured* passion, a *humanly engineered* earnestness, a *contrived* fervency. And while those things have the power to make you jump up and down, they do *not* have the power to transform the human soul. And they do not set your heart ablaze. Jesus told Nicodemus in **John 3:6-7**:

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

The only thing that fallen human beings can bring forth in, by, and through their own efforts, is more fallen human beings. Flesh *cannot* produce Spirit. It doesn’t have the power. It never has and never will. Flesh can only produce more flesh. So, no matter how you try to “beef up” your programs, no matter how you try to make them “edgy” and more “intense” and culturally “relevant”, no matter how you package it, no matter how you seek to make it look “new” and “improved”, no matter how much effort you put into it, no matter how you try to sanctify it, flesh will never be anything other than flesh. And flesh will *never* produce Spirit.

Humanly engineered activities *cannot* take a dead, fallen sinner and transform him into somebody who is willing to die for Jesus. Humanly orchestrated motivation or manipulation *cannot* cause the human heart to burn with passion to hate sin and to love and serve the risen Christ. Only God can do that. And the Apostle Paul taught in **2Corinthians 3-4** that God does that through the supernatural Power of the Holy Spirit combined with the ongoing preaching and teaching of the biblical Gospel. And that combination results in the veil that is over the eyes being removed so that blind people can behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. So, to bring people from being self-centered rebels to broken and humble bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, requires a sovereign, supernatural Act of God. It takes the miracle of the New Birth.

Here, in **Luke 24:32**, these two men experienced everything we all need. These two men received the answer to every single problem that the modern Church faces. They were blessed to be able to behold the risen Christ. They were gifted to be able to spend time in His Presence. And their eyes, that at one time were closed, were opened as Jesus revealed Himself to them. And what was their response to all this?

Were not our hearts burning within us... ?

So, what is the real problem in the modern Church? What is the one thing that is the root Cause of all the compromise and all the sin and all the worldliness? Dr. Luke tells us in verse 16:

... their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

They could see the miracles and they could hear the Teaching and they could see the trial and the beatings and the crucifixion, but they couldn't see Jesus. So, whatever *else* they knew, whatever *else* they understood, whatever *else* they comprehended, whatever *else* they could recognize, they couldn't recognize Jesus! They couldn't see Him! Their eyes were closed to the only Person that matters!

But what is it that made men, who had spent time with Jesus, to be unable to see the Lord? What was going on in these men that made them blind to the Glory of the risen Savior? Two things that Jesus told them in verse 25, when He said:

... O foolish men and slow of heart to believe ...

... foolishness and a slow heart. But if that is true, then what is the answer? What is the answer to being “foolish” and “slow of heart”? What is the answer to blind eyes that easily see the bright lights and attractions of a fallen world but which cannot see Jesus? What is the answer to dead, cold, dry, and lifeless people? What is the solution to people just going through their “religious motions”? What is the remedy for a worldly and sin-sick Church? What is it that would allow for fallen human beings to genuinely delight themselves in God? What has to happen to the sons and daughters of Adam for them to find the fullness of Joy and the highest degree of personal Satisfaction in being broken before God, in striving to be obedient to what God said, and in trembling at His Word? What has to happen for us to see Jesus?

Several thousands of years earlier, after Job spent 41 Chapters protesting his own innocence, here is what he said in **Job 42:5**:

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;

... so at that point, Job’s eyes were open and he could see the God that he had heard about his entire life. And what was the result of one of the most upright man on earth at that time being gifted with the ability to behold God?

Job 42:6

Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.

Now the modern Church-growth gurus have a program they will be happy to sell to you that promises to add energetic new bodies to the pews of your Church. There seems to be no end to the tools and resources and gimmicks and ideas out there that promises to have the remedy for hearts that have grown cold and lifeless. But, if we were to boil all of them down, if we were to focus on *one thing*, we might simply ask a simple but profound question:

What has the power to cause the human heart to be set ablaze with the Majesty and Wonder and Beauty and Awe of God?

... what has the ability to take a spiritually dead soul and make them live, and that will make them sing about and rejoice in and thrive in and enjoy God? What has the ingredient that we need to no longer be amazed and to wonder after things that have been made and that are passing away but to burn in our hearts toward God and the things that bring Him Glory? What can open our eyes so we may behold Jesus?

At some point, we're all going to have to understand that the language that speaks about human hearts that are set "on fire" for God isn't "christianese", it is the language of the Bible. The terminology that portrays people who "hunger and thirst after Righteousness", and who "pant after God like a deer pants after the water brooks", and that searches through the city at night "to find Him Whom my soul loves" is the language of God the Holy Spirit. It is the language of people who have been gifted with having their eyes open so they can see the Lord! So, the heart that burns is the result of having the eyes opened so Jesus is seen.

And that means that the first thing to having a heart that is ablaze is *not* the heart that is ablaze. That is the *Result*, not the *Cause*. In order for people to genuinely delight themselves in the Lord, God must sovereignly open our closed and blinded eyes so we may see Jesus. And in order for God to do that, He must *overwhelm* our foolishness with His Wisdom, and He must take out of us the heart that is slow to believe and give us a heart that may believe quickly and easily.

So, it is the beholding of Jesus that creates the burning heart. It is the beholding of Jesus that causes the faithfulness. It is the beholding of Jesus that causes the fruitfulness. It is the beholding of Jesus that causes a strong, vibrant, godly, and holy man to love and lead and order his home. And it is the beholding of Jesus in that family that will transform the visible Church. And it is the beholding of Jesus in that Church on an ongoing basis that will transform the culture. And it is the beholding of Jesus in that culture that will transform the Nation.

But that means revival, or spiritual awakening, or hearts burning within us doesn't start in Washington D.C. or with politics or with Supreme Court judges or with laws. Revival starts with God sovereignly doing what only God can do to rescue us from being "foolish" and "slow of heart" and to open our eyes so we may see Jesus.

And that is what happened with that motley crew of the most unqualified men that the world had ever seen that turned them into the steadfast “spiritual giants” who became the very Foundation of the Christian Church. Jesus called them “Apostles”, and they saw the risen Christ. They beheld Jesus in His Glory. Their eyes were open to the Beauty and Magnificence of the Darling of the Trinity. And their hearts burned within them and they changed the world.

The Passage that Brother Andy just read to you contains one of the most beautiful moments in Jesus’ entire Ministry, the account of two despondent disciples who are radically and eternally transformed by an encounter with Jesus as they walk together on the road that led to a city called “Emmaus”. Look again at verse 13:

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Now Dr. Luke is very clear that this event happened on “**that very day**”. So, this event occurred on Sunday, the very day that Jesus rose from the dead. And that tells us that they were Jews, who had rested on the Sabbath, and now, the day after the Sabbath, they were on their journey. Now just why these two men were traveling to that village called Emmaus has been lost to us. Maybe they lived there, I don’t know. But we are told that where they were going was “**about seven miles from Jerusalem**”. And from that we know that both of these two men had been *in* Jerusalem, and were now *leaving* Jerusalem and heading toward Emmaus.

So, they had been in the city that David had called “the Habitation of Peace” during the time that God’s chosen people, the Jews, had categorically *rejected* the incarnate God, and had goaded Pilate and the Romans to have Him murdered. So, it is very possible that both of these men were genuine believers and that they had just witnessed a Man, Whom they considered to be the long-awaited Messiah, taken and beaten and then crucified. And we know that because of what Luke tells us next:

Luke 24:14

And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.

... so, they were relating together all the things they had seen and heard over the last several days. Now there is no doubt in my mind that they were personally invested in all of this. So, this was not just an academic discussion about events outside themselves. This was personal. They had just watched their Savior die. So, now what are they supposed to do? How should they process all this? What is the next step? It is very possible that their journey back to Emmaus was similar to Peter's journey back to his fishing business. Everything they had hoped for and invested in and believed and trusted was now shattered. Jesus was dead and they were going to go home and get back to the lives they had abandoned and just try to forget it all.

And as they were walking they began to go over everything. And about that time, something happened that Luke tells us about in verses 15-17:

15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them.

16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad.

So, the resurrected Jesus just walks up to them and acts like nothing is going on. And He asks them what they're talking about. And Luke is faithful to tell us two things about these men:

1. Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus
2. They were sad

Now look at what Luke wrote next:

Luke 24:18-24:

18 One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

Now I mentioned a few weeks ago that some biblical scholars say that the name "Clopas", that is found over in **John 19:25** where it says "Mary [the wife] of Clopas" (Κλωπᾶς), and this "Cleopas" here in **Luke 24**, is the same man. Some say that "Clopas" is simply a *Hellenized* form of an Aramaic name "Qlopha" (קלופא), and that Cleopas' name (Κλεόπας) is an abbreviated form of "Cleopatros", a Greek name meaning "glory of the father", and is most famously known in its feminine form as "Cleopatra".¹

Some teach that "Clopas" or "Cleopas" was the brother of Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, while others teach that "Clopas", or "Cleopas", or "Cleophas" (KJV) are just different renderings of the name "Alphaeus", which would make this man, here in **Luke 24**, the father of the Apostle who was called James, the "son of" Alphaeus.

Now this Gospel Record was written about AD60 or 61, which would have been about 30 years after all these things happened. And Luke tells us back in Chapter 1 that he took the time to write an "orderly account" of everything that Jesus said and did. And we know that the good doctor interviewed many of the witnesses so that he could give Theophilus and us a reliable Account.

So, one of the reasons that Luke would have mentioned Cleopas by name here is that he might have interviewed this man to get this Account, which is why it is found nowhere else. Another reason would be that by the time Luke wrote this Gospel, Cleopas would have been someone whom most of the people of the Church would know or know about.

Now the fact that Cleopas called Jesus a "prophet" in verse 19 may indicate that at that time he really didn't believe that Jesus was God. But using that word may simply be *part* of what Cleopas believed about Jesus and *not* that he was denying Christ's Deity. But in any event, look at what Cleopas told Jesus in **Luke 24:21**:

¹ Richard R. Losch *All the people in the Bible: an A-Z guide to the saints* 2008 Page 279 "Clopas (Κλωπᾶς) is the Hellenized form of the Aramaic Qlopha (קלופא), while Cleopas (Κλεόπας) is a common abbreviated form of the Greek name Cleopatros (Κλεοπατρος)."

But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

Now this shows you the depth to which the men who had spent time with Jesus, and who supposedly believed, still didn't understand. Cleopas and this other man still thought that the Messiah was going to *militarily* "deliver" or "save" them. So, to them "Salvation" was a *natural* and *physical* event that had nothing to do with "saving" them from their sins, but would "rescue" them from their Gentile enemies. And this tells us that even now Cleopas had bought into the Jewish false teaching that they were "spiritually saved" by being born Jewish, rather than by Grace through Faith.

Now this gets me in trouble when I say this, but this false belief about Salvation is actually very prevalent in many Jews today. They honestly believe that they are Abraham's seed "by birth", and therefore, they are "right with God" by virtue of their *ethnicity*, and have no need whatsoever to repent and put their trust in Jesus to allow them to pass through God's Judgment.

So, it is their firm belief in a Salvation that comes about through their physical and natural birth as Jews that *prevents* them from seeking the Salvation that comes about through Jesus Christ in the miracle of the New Birth. So, until the Jew is brought by God to the place where they can utterly *abandon* their man-made religion, they have no hope. And this is why I tell you that Jews today do *not* worship the one, true living God. They are *not* following the teachings of the Old Testament. Judaism, as we know it today, is utterly pagan and entirely man-made, and it is completely wrong about Salvation. And there is *nothing* that is taught in modern Judaism that would lead any sinner to faith in Jesus Christ.

And because they were deceived about their own sinful condition and God's Requirement for Salvation, faith in a dead and risen Messiah meant nothing to them. So, when they saw Jesus die, all hope that He was the One was destroyed. But now look at how they related to Jesus the testimony that they had heard from the women who had experienced the resurrected Lord just a few hours earlier:

Luke 24:22-24

22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,

23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

24 "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

Now by mentioning this to a man that they assumed didn't know anything tells us that the testimony from these women had quite an impact on them. And so, their words may have been mixed with a measure of hope as they related what the women had told them. In verse 22, Cleopas told Jesus that what the women had told them:

... amazed us ...

... and by saying:

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said...

... so, verse 24 tells us that Cleopas and the other man had actually been with the Apostles and the genuine disciples, when the women came back from the Tomb. And Dr. Luke tells us that it was at this moment that Jesus then spoke up and said,

Luke 24:25-27

25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Now what Jesus is saying here in verse 25 is that these two Jewish disciples of Jesus really didn't understand or believe what the Old Testament Prophets said concerning the Messiah. Evidently, what

the OT Prophets had prophesied about the Messiah was either too amazing or too far-fetched for them to believe.

And some of this has to do with the fact that Old Testament believers had a very vague and unspecific understanding about the Trinity. So, for example, their rock-solid belief that the one, true, and living God, Who was revealed in the 39 Books of the Old Testament, was "one" (**Deuteronomy 6:4**) actually *prevented* them from grasping the Truth that the promised Messiah would also be fully Deity.

And this is why we need to never be satisfied with the knowledge that we have. We *never* should rest or become comfortable with *whatever* level of understanding we have about the Truth of Scripture. *Partial* Truth or Truth that is mixed with human ingenuity or human reasoning can be as bad and as "off base" as not knowing anything. We must continue to read and study and ask questions and ponder and continually *refine* what we believe and why we believe it until it is razor sharp and wholly biblical.

The saints of the Old Testament had Divine Truth. God had chosen to reveal Himself to them. And that means that every single word in the Old Testament is true and reliable and trustworthy. Every word in the 39 Books of the Old Testament is inspired and inerrant and infallible.

But, in addition to the Old Testament being true, it is also *incomplete*. It is *not* the full Revelation of God. It is *not* the final statement by God about *anything*. The 39 Books of the Old Testament are a *partial*, and therefore, *inferior* Revelation of God and His Ways that God *finalized* through the 27 Books of the New.

Now as the Canon of Scripture was being received by the Church and compiled, there were a number of people who wanted to throw the Old Testament away. And their reasoning was that since the 27 Books of the New Testament contains the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man, we really don't need the 39 Books of the Old Testament anymore. Thank God their efforts weren't successful.

Because, we *need* the Old Testament. The fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy that we find in the New through Jesus Christ would not make any sense unless we had the Prophecies themselves in the Old. The infinitely superior New Covenant would not make much sense without understanding the inferior Old or the First Covenant. The Salvation of Jesus in the New would not make much sense if we

didn't understand the Divine Condemnation of the Old. And the glorious "Good News" of Forgiveness of Sins and a new heart through the Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we find in the New Testament would merely be interesting if we didn't understand the infinitely "Bad News" of God's Wrath against sinners that we find in the Old Testament. So, without the New Testament, the Old leaves us hopeless, and without the Old Testament, the New leaves us bewildered.

But what Jesus is telling these two men here in **Luke 24**, and us, is that if you read and understand the Old Testament *correctly*, you will come to Jesus Christ, because, ultimately, *everything* in the Old Testament is about Jesus. And that means that if the net effect of you reading and studying and believing the 39 Books of the Old Testament is that you do *not* see Jesus, if all your effort to learn Hebrew and to comprehend the Law of God is that you do *not* come to Jesus, if all you get by knowing all the details of the Levitical Priesthood and the worship of God under the First Covenant is that you do *not* see Salvation as being in Jesus alone, then you are deceived about what you are reading and studying. Because a *correct* reading of the Old Testament Books will *always*, and *in all cases*, lead you to Jesus.

The old priest, Zacharias, was gifted to know that his son, John the Baptist, was going to usher in the infinitely superior New Covenant by paving the way for the Messiah because in **Luke 1:76-79**- he said:

76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on *BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS*;

77 To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins,

78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,

79 *TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH*, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

.. and the "Salvation by the forgiveness of sins" in verse 77, the "tender mercy of our God with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us" in verse 78, that will *SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH*, and that will "guide our feet into the way of peace" in verse 79 have absolutely *nothing* to do with the Covenant that God

made to Noah or to Abraham or to Moses. This is a description of the New Covenant. So, six months before Jesus was even born, Zacharias *knew* that He would be the fulfillment of **Isaiah 9**. So, Zacharias could see Jesus in the Old Testament.

In **Luke 2** an old man, named Simeon, whom Luke said was:

Luke 2:25b

... righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

... came into the Temple in Jerusalem as Joseph and Mary were circumcising the eight-day old Jesus. And Luke tells us:

Luke 2:26-32

26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Here, in verse 30, Simeon calls the eight-day old Jesus:

Your [God's] salvation

... and in verse 32, he calls this Baby"

A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.

... which means that Simon was sovereignly given the ability to know that this little baby Boy was the fulfillment of five separate Old

Testament Passages. So, Simeon was sovereignly given the ability to see Jesus in the Old Testament.

Neither Simeon or Anna or Zacharias heard a single Sermon by Jesus. They never witnessed Him perform a single miracle. They didn't see the Crucifixion and had very little understanding about the Resurrection. And yet, they believed that Jesus was the Messiah and they knew that Old Testament Passages were fulfilled in Him

And that means that the Jews and Muslims, and others of our day, who read and study the Old Testament rigidly, and yet never see Jesus and they never come to Jesus for Salvation are deceived about what they are reading. Their understanding about what the Old Testament says is wrong. How do I know that? Because, they cannot see Jesus in the Old Testament. And whatever else you might see, if you don't see Jesus, it is all a waste of time. And all those wayward cults that supposedly start out as Christian and yet get all tangled up in Old Testament Truth to the point where they abandon three primary issues:

- ✓ The full inspiration of the 27 Books of the New Testament
- ✓ The Deity of Jesus Christ
- ✓ Justification by faith alone, apart from "keeping the law of God"

... are all deceived. They are *not* reading the Old Testament correctly or they would see Jesus. All that many of these people get when they read and study the Old Testament is that they need to resurrect the dietary and ceremonial laws that God gave to Israel, they need to keep the Jewish Sabbath, and they need to be obedient to the Law of God in order to earn enough Righteousness to enter into Heaven. And that means that all their studying of the precious Old Testament Books has done is to draw them *away* from the Truth and into heresy.

Now that doesn't mean that there is *anything* wrong with the Old Testament, there isn't. What is wrong is what these people *think* they know about what the Old Testament says. Jesus says here in **Luke 24** that *everything* in the Old Testament is about Him. Now look at what happened next:

Luke 24:28-31

28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.

29 But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them.

30 When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Now what we can get out of this is that evidently them reclining at the table with Jesus was the catalyst that God used to open their eyes. But, regardless of what the catalyst may have been in this case, the main thrust of this Passage is that unless and until God sovereignly opens human eyes, we *cannot* and we *will not* see Jesus. So, seeing Jesus in His Glory is the Work of God the Holy Spirit, and it is mandatory if we are going to be the people of God. So, *part* of our ongoing prayer life should be that God would be merciful to open our eyes so we may see Jesus. Now look at the result of this "seeing" of Jesus:

Luke 24:32-34

32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them,

34 saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."

Now the transition between verse 33 and 34 is a bit complicated in the original Greek. Verse 34 *appears* to say that the two men, who were granted with the ability to see Jesus on the road to Emmaus, are doing the speaking and relating to the eleven how the Lord had appeared to Simon Peter. But, in reality, that is not the case. Based on the tense of the verbs here, it is actually the eleven who are telling the two men, as they entered the room all excited about their visitation

with the Lord, that Simon Peter has already had a similar experience himself.

So, here is how this scene would have come down. These two men, Cleopas and the other guy, went straight to Jerusalem to find the remaining Apostles so they could tell them how they had seen Jesus. But as they came into the room where the eleven were, it was the eleven who interrupted the two men's excitement by *confirming* what they saw by telling them that Simon Peter had seen the Lord as well.

Now what is fascinating about this is that Simon Peter's visitation with Jesus is not recorded for us. None of the Gospel writers were moved along by God the Holy Spirit to tell us anything about it. The only reason we know that Jesus met personally with Peter is because Dr. Luke tells us right here.

And so, it was after the eleven confirmed to the two men that not only did they believe them, but that Peter had already had a similar experience, that the two men did what Luke tells us in verse 35:

They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

So, the experience that these two men had on the road to Emmaus was in *addition* to the experience that Peter had all by himself. And evidently, Peter had related his experience to the others before these two men got there. So, what should we make of all this?

What set these men's hearts ablaze, in the language of Augustine, what "captivated their affections", was an interpretation of Scripture that put Jesus and His finished Work front and center. So, in our day, if we are to hope that our own hearts will burn within us, our hearts and minds are going to have to put Jesus front and center, through the Scriptures.

And this understanding of "Christ-centeredness" is not new. The Protestant Reformer, Thomas Cranmer, unveiled the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, which was a collection of the first worship services that the English-speaking world had ever heard, he wrote a short manifesto on worship in its preface. And there, Cranmer claimed that the purpose of worship centered on Christ and filled with the Scriptures was to cause worshipers to:

“be the more inflamed with the love of [God’s] true religion.”

Cranmer believed that worship’s goal was to set hearts on fire. And so, Cranmer designed worship services that made much of Jesus. But how did he do that in his day and how can we do it in ours? Some people have argued that “Christ-centered worship” simply means singing songs, and praying prayers, and preaching sermons that make much of Jesus and His finished Work. Reformers, like Cranmer, and theologians, like Paul, would tell us, though, that this approach is far too simplistic.

They would be more inclined to describe “Christ-centered worship” as an ongoing *cyclical* process of two actions that we could call “*displacement*” and “*replacement*”.

Every last one of us, Christian and non-Christian alike, comes into worship having spent several days consistently placing *ourselves* at the center of our lives. And it is this “self-centeredness” that is the normal and natural disposition of what Paul called the “old self”, or the “sinful nature”, or sometimes just “the flesh”.

So, if we are to see Jesus, and if our hearts are going to burn within us, if worship is going to truly be “Christ-centered”, it must *first* do the work of displacing *me*. It must tell me that *I* do not belong in the center. It must call me out for what I am, a fraud, an imposter, and a sinner. And this means that worship’s first word to me must be a *discomforting, insulting, displacing* word that leaves no blurred lines between Who God is (perfect and holy) and who I am (rebellious and sinful).

And this is why Cranmer and the other Reformers were dead set on providing *repeated* moments in worship that highlight God’s Glory through lofty words of praise. It also is why they *insisted* that we must have moments to confess our sinfulness. These kinds of words and habits displace “me.” They remove me from “center-stage”.

And then, and really only then, can the Words of the Gospel rush in to offer the remedy of “*replacement*”, putting *Christ* at the center. The point that Paul and the Reformers were attempting to make is that for Christ-centered worship to have its proper heart-inflaming effects, the Gospel needs to be set against the backdrop of my own horrific sin and my own serious need.

Now, if that is true, then singing and praying and preaching about how awesome Jesus is, and how amazing His Grace is, and how marvelous His Cross is, is simply not enough.

And that isn't because Jesus is not just that awesome. And it's not because His Grace is not just that amazing. And it's not because the Cross is not just that marvelous. It is because we are just that carnal and just that determined to remain fixed at the center. We will never have eyes to see Jesus in His magnificent Glory until we've been thoroughly displaced, until we've been knocked off the throne of our self-made throne in our imaginary kingdom.

Now words of displacement can come in many forms: songs that highlight the glorious incommunicable Attributes of God, prayers that offer words of confession, Psalms of lamentation read together or responsively. But such words are needed in order for the replacement to happen so that our eyes will be open and we can see Jesus, so our hearts will burn within us.

And I'm not saying this is easy and I'm not saying we will always be successful. But I *am* saying that if we don't at least understand this dynamic and pray and strive and beg God for it to happen, we will keep on *not* seeing Jesus, and we will keep on with cold, dry hearts and we will become nice, religious people.

May God help us to see the risen Christ in His Glory so that our hearts may burn within us.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.