

The Lord Has Risen Indeed!

Key Verse: *“Their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.”*
—**Luke 24:31**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 24:13-21, 28-35

NO EVENT IN HUMAN HISTORY, other than his death as man’s Redeemer, is as important in the outworking of the plan of salvation as Jesus’ resurrection on the third day by the mighty power of God. At the time it occurred, only a handful of Jesus’ closest followers were made aware of it, and even they did not fully understand its significance until they were enlightened fifty days later, when begotten by God of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Nevertheless, Jesus made several appearances to them after his resurrection, in order that their faith might be strengthened, as well as to instruct them to remain at Jerusalem for the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

In one of these post-resurrection appearances, two of Jesus’ disciples were walking to the village of Emmaus, a short distance from Jerusalem. He overheard them discussing the events that had taken place, and reasoning among themselves as to why their Master had been permitted to die. “And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.” (Luke 24:15) Jesus could see that they did not recognize him, so he asked them

what they were talking about, and why they were sad.—
vss. 16,17

One of them, named Cleopas, then proceeded to pour out his heart to this “stranger.” He told how Jesus of Nazareth was a mighty prophet in deed and word to all the people of the region, yet the Jewish religious rulers insisted that he be put to death. Cleopas continued, saying, “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” (vs. 21) He said there had now been reports that Jesus’ body could not be found, and even rumors that he might be alive.

Jesus, still unrecognized by the two disciples, then proceeded to speak: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (vss. 25-27) This evidently stirred the hearts of the disciples, because as they approached Emmaus, toward evening, they constrained this “stranger” to abide with them.

As the three of them sat to partake of their evening meal together, a truly amazing thing happened. The stranger “took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.” (vs. 30) Our Key Verse states that by this simple act of blessing and breaking bread, the two disciples immediately knew that this stranger was the risen Jesus himself. Having accomplished his purpose of giving them reassurance and strengthening their faith, Jesus vanished from their sight.

We can appreciate the two disciples’ reaction to what had happened, and echo their words, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (vs. 32) It was Jesus’ simple act of blessing and breaking bread which renewed their faith, and ours, in a time of great distress. ■