

# CHAPTER 24

Our Lord Jesus went gloriously down to death, in spite of the malice of his enemies, who did all they could to make his death ignominious; but he rose again more gloriously, of which we have an account in this chapter; and the proofs and evidences of Christ's resurrection are more fully related by this evangelist than they were by Matthew and Mark. Here is,

**I.** Assurance given by two angels, to the woman who visited the sepulchre, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, according to his own word, to which the angels refer them (v. 1-7), and the report of this to the apostles (v. 8-11).

**II.** The visit which Peter made to the sepulchre, and his discoveries there (v. 12).

**III.** Christ's conference with the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, and his making himself known to them (v. 13-35).

**IV.** His appearing to the eleven disciples themselves, the same day at evening (v. 36-49).

**V.** The farewell he gave them, his ascension into heaven, and the joy and praise of his disciples whom he left behind (v. 50-53).

## LUKE 24:1-12

### THE RESURRECTION

The manner of the re-uniting of Christ's soul and body in his resurrection is a mystery, one of the *secret things* that *belong not to us*; but the *infallible proofs* of his resurrection, that he did indeed rise from the dead, and was thereby proved to be the Son of God, are *things revealed, which belong to us and to our children*. Some of them we have here in these verses, which relate the same story for substance that we had in Matthew and Mark.

**I.** We have here the affection and respect which the good women that had followed Christ showed to him, after he was dead and buried, v. 1. As

soon as ever they could, after the sabbath was over, they *came to the sepulchre*, to embalm his body, not to take it out of the linen in which Joseph had wrapped it, but to anoint the head and face, and perhaps the wounded hands and feet, and to scatter sweet spices upon and about the body; as it is usual with us to strew flowers about the dead bodies and graves of our friends, only to show our good-will towards the taking off the deformity of death if we could, and to make them somewhat the less loathsome to those that are about them. The zeal of these good women for Christ did continue. The spices which they had prepared the evening before the sabbath, at a great expense, they did not, upon second thoughts, when they had slept upon it, dispose of otherwise, suggesting, *To what purpose is this waste?* but they brought them to the sepulchre on the morning after the sabbath, early, very early. It is a rule of charity, *Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give,* <sup>2</sup> Corinthians 9:7. What is prepared for Christ, let it be used for him. Notice is taken of the names of these women, *Mary Magdalene*, and *Joanna*, and *Mary* the mother of James; grave matronly women, it should seem, they were. Notice is also taken of certain others with them, v. 1, and again, v. 10. These, who had not joined in preparing the spices, would yet go along with them to the sepulchre; as if the number of Christ's friends increased when he was dead, <sup>32</sup> John 12:24, 32. The daughters of Jerusalem, when they saw how inquisitive the souse was after her Beloved, were desirous to seek him with her (<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon 6:1), so were these *other women*. The zeal of some provokes others.

**II.** The surprise they were in, when they found the stone rolled away and the grave empty (v. 2, 3); they were *much perplexed* at that (v. 4) which they had much reason to rejoice in, that *the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre* (by which it appeared that he had a legal discharge, and leave to come out), and that they *found not the body of the Lord Jesus*, by which it appeared that he had made us of his discharge and was come out. Note, Good Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should comfort and encourage themselves.

**III.** The plain account which they had of Christ's resurrection from two angels, who appeared to them *in shining garments*, not only white, but bright, and casting a lustre about them. They first saw *one* angel without the sepulchre, who presently *went in*, and sat with another angel in the sepulchre, *one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of*

*Jesus had lain*; so the evangelists may be reconciled. The women, when they saw the angels, *were afraid* lest they had some ill news for them; but, instead of enquiring of them, they *bowed down their faces to the earth*, to look for their dear Master in the grave. They would rather find him in his *grave-clothes* than angels themselves in their *shining garments*. A dying Jesus has more beauty in the eyes of a believer than angels themselves. These women, like the spouse, when found by the watchman (and angels are called *watchers*), enter not into any other conversation with them than this, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* Now here,

**1.** They upbraid the women with the absurdity of the search they were making: *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* v. 5. Witness is hereby given to Christ that he is *living*, of him *it is witnessed that he liveth* (<sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 7:8), and it is the comfort of all the saints, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; for because he lives we shall live also. But a reproof is given to those that look for him *among the dead*, — that look for him among the dead heroes that the Gentiles worshipped, as if he were but like one of them, — that look for him in an image, or a crucifix, the work of men's hands, or among unwritten tradition and the inventions of men; and indeed all they that expect happiness and satisfaction in the creature, or perfection in this imperfect state, may be said to *seek the living among the dead*.


**2.** They assure them that he is risen from the dead (v. 6): *“He is not here, but is risen*, is risen by his own power; he has quitted his grave, to return no more to it.” These angels were competent witnesses, for they had been sent express from heaven with orders for his discharge. And we are sure that their record is true; they durst not tell a lie.

**3.** They refer them to his own words: *Remember what he spoke to you, when he was yet in Galilee*. If they had duly believed and observed the prediction of it, they would easily have believed the thing itself when it came to pass; and therefore, that the tidings might not be such a surprise to them and they seemed to be, the angels repeat to them what Christ had often said in their hearing, *The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men*, and though it was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet they that did it were not the less *sinful* for doing it. He told them that he *must be crucified*. Surely they could not forget that which they had with so much concern seen fulfilled; and would not this bring to their mind that which always followed, *The third day he*

*shall rise again?* Observe, These angels from heaven bring not any *new gospel*, but put them in mind, as the angels of the churches do, of the sayings of Christ, and teach them how to improve and apply them.

**IV.** Their satisfaction in this account, v. 8. The women seemed to acquiesce; they *remembered his words*, when they were thus put in mind of them, and thence concluded that if he was risen it was not more than they had reason to expect; and now they were ashamed of the preparations they had made to embalm on the third day *him* who had often said that he would on the third day rise again. Note, A seasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.

**V.** The report they brought of this to the apostles: *They returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest of Christ's disciples*, v. 9. It does not appear that they were together in a body; they were *scattered every one to his own*, perhaps scarcely two or three of them together in the same lodgings, but one went to some of them and another to others of them, so that in a little time, that morning, they all had notice of it. But we are told (v. 11) how the report was received: *Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*. They thought it was only the fancy of the women, and imputed it to the power of imagination; for they also had forgotten Christ's words, and wanted to be put in mind of them, not only what he had said to them in Galilee some time ago, but what he had said very lately, in the night wherein he was betrayed: *Again a little while, and ye shall see me. I will see you again*. One cannot but be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples, — who had themselves so often professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God and the true Messiah, had been so often told that he must die and rise again, and then enter into his glory, had seen him more than once raise the dead, — that they should be so backward to believe in his raising himself. Surely it would seem the less strange to them, when hereafter this complaint would justly be taken up *by them*, to remember that there was a time when it might justly have been taken up against them, *Who hath believed our report?*

**VI.** The enquiry which Peter made hereupon, v. 12. It was Mary Magdalene that brought the report to him, as appears,  John 20:1, 2, where this story of his running to the sepulchre is more particularly related.

1. Peter hastened to the sepulchre upon the report, perhaps ashamed of himself, to think that Mary Magdalene should have been there before him; and yet, perhaps, he had not been so ready to go thither now if the women had not told him, among other things, that *the watch was fled*. Many that are *swift-footed* enough when there is no danger are but *cow-hearted* when there is. Peter now *ran to the sepulchre*, who but the other day *ran from his Master*.

2. He looked into the sepulchre, and took notice how orderly the linen clothes in which Christ was wrapped were taken off, and folded up, and laid by themselves, but the body gone. He was very particular in making his observations, as if he would rather credit his own eyes than the testimony of the angels.

3. He went away, as he thought, not much the wiser, *wondering in himself at that which was come to pass*. Had he remembered the words of Christ, even this was enough to satisfy him that he was risen from the dead; but, having forgotten them, he is only amazed with the thing, and knows not what to make of it. There is many a thing puzzling and perplexing to us which would be both plain and profitable if we did but rightly understand the words of Christ, and had them ready to us.

## LUKE 24:13-35

### THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS

This appearance of Christ to the *two disciples* going to Emmaus was mentioned, and but just mentioned, before (<sup>4162</sup>Mark 16:12); here it is largely related. It happened the same day that Christ rose, the first day of the new world that rose with him. One of these two disciples was *Cleopas* or *Alpheus*, said by the ancients to be the brother of Joseph, Christ's supposed father; who the other was is not certain. Some think it was Peter; it should seem indeed that Christ did appear particularly to Peter that day, which the eleven spoke of among themselves (v. 34), and Paul mentions, (<sup>4885</sup>1 Corinthians 15:5). But it could not be Peter that was one of the *two*, for he was one of the *eleven* to whom the *two* returned; and, besides, we know Peter so well as to think that if he had been one of the two he would have been the *chief speaker*, and not Cleopas. It was one of those that were

associated with the eleven, mentioned v. 9. Now in this passage of story we may observe,

**I.** The *walk* and *talk* of these two disciples: *They went to a village called Emmaus*, which is reckoned to be about two hours' walk from Jerusalem; it is here said to be about sixty furlongs, seven measured miles, v. 13. Whether they went thither upon business, or to see some friend, does not appear. I suspect that they were going homewards to Galilee, with an intention not to enquire more after this Jesus; that they were meditating a retreat, and stole away from their company without asking leave or taking leave; for the accounts brought them that morning of their Master's resurrection seemed to them *as idle tales*; and, if so, no wonder that they began to think of making the best of their way home. But as they travelled they *talked together of all those things which had happened*, v. 14. They had not courage to *confer* of these things, and *consult* what was to be done in the present juncture at Jerusalem, for fear of the Jews; but, when they were got out of the hearing of the Jews, they could talk it over with more freedom. They *talked over these things*, reasoning with themselves concerning the probabilities of Christ's resurrection; for, according as these appeared, they would either go forward or return back to Jerusalem. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ, when they are together, to talk of his death and resurrection; thus they may improve one another's knowledge, refresh one another's memory, and stir up one another's devout affections.

**II.** The good company they met with upon the road, when Jesus himself came, and joined himself to them (v. 15): *They communed together, and reasoned*, and perhaps were warm at the argument, one hoping that their Master was risen, and would set up his kingdom, the other despairing. *Jesus himself drew near*, as a stranger who, seeing them travel the same way that he *went*, told them that he should be *glad of their company*. We may observe it, for our encouragement to keep up Christian conference and edifying discourse among us, that where but two together are well employed in work of that kind Christ will come to them, and make a third. When they that fear the Lord *speak one to another* the Lord *hearkens and hears*, and is with them of a truth; so that two thus twisted in faith and love become a *threefold cord, not easily broken*, <sup>QHD</sup>Ecclesiastes 4:12. They in their communings and reasonings together were searching for Christ, comparing notes concerning him, that they might come to more

knowledge of him; and now Christ comes to them. Note, They who seek Christ shall find him: he will manifest himself to those that enquire after him, and give knowledge to those who use the helps for knowledge which they have. When the spouse enquired of the watchman concerning her beloved, *it was but a little that she passed from them, but she found him.* <sup>2004</sup>Song of Solomon 3:4. But, though they had Christ with them, they were not at first aware of it (v. 16): *Their eyes were held, that they should not know him.* It should seem, there were both an alteration of the *object* (for it is said in Mark that now *he appeared in another form*) and a restraint upon the organ (for here it is said that *their eyes were held* by a divine power); or, as some think, there was a confusion in the *medium*; the air was so disposed that they could not discern who it was. No matter *how* it was, but *so* it was they did not *know him*, Christ so ordering it that they might the more freely discourse with him and he with them, and that it might appear that his word, and the influence of it, did not depend upon his bodily presence, which the disciples had too much doted upon, and must be weaned from; but he could teach them, and warm their hearts, by others, who should have his spiritual presence with them, and should have his grace going along with them unseen.

**III.** The conference that was between Christ and them, when he knew them, and they knew not him. Now Christ and his disciples, as is usual when friends meet incognito, or in a disguise, are here crossing questions.

**1.** Christ's first question to them is concerning *their present sadness*, which plainly appeared in their countenances: *What manner of communications are those that you have one with another as you walk, and are sad?* v. 17. It is a very kind and friendly enquiry. Observe,

**(1.)** They were *sad*; it appeared to a stranger that they were so.

**[1.]** They had lost their dear Master, and were, in their own apprehensions, quite disappointed in their expectations from him. They had given up the cause, and knew not what course to take to retrieve it. Note, Christ's disciples have reason to be sad when he withdraws from them, to *fast* when the *Bridegroom* is taken from them.

**[2.]** Though he was risen from the dead, yet either they did not know it or did not believe it, and so they were still in sorrow. Note, Christ's disciples are often sad and sorrowful even when they have reason to rejoice, but

through the weakness of their faith they cannot take the comfort that is offered to them.

[3.] Being sad, they had *communications one with another* concerning Christ. Note, *First*, It becomes Christians to talk of Christ. Were our hearts as full of him, and of what he has done and suffered for us, as they should be, *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak*, not only of God and his providence, but of Christ and his grace and love. *Secondly*, Good company and good converse are an excellent antidote against prevailing melancholy. When Christ's disciples were sad they did not each one get by himself, but continued as he sent them out, two and two, for two are better than one, especially in times of sorrow. Giving *vent* to the grief may perhaps give *ease* to the grieved; and by talking it over we may talk ourselves or our friends may talk us into a better frame. Joint mourners should be mutual comforters; comforts sometimes come best from such.

(2.) Christ came up to them, and enquired into the matter of their talk, and the cause of their grief: *What manner of communications are these?* Though Christ had now entered into his state of exaltation, yet he continued tender of his disciples, and concerned for their comfort. He speaks as one troubled to see their melancholy: *Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?* <sup>(1407)</sup>Genesis 40:7. Note, Our Lord Jesus takes notice of the sorrow and sadness of his disciples, and is afflicted in their afflictions. Christ has hereby taught us,

[1.] To be *conversable*. Christ here fell into discourse with two grave serious persons, though he was a stranger to them and they knew him not, and they readily embraced him. It does not become Christians to be morose and shy, but to take pleasure in good society.

[2.] We are hereby taught to be *compassionate*. When we see our friends in sorrow and sadness, we should, like Christ here, take cognizance of their grief, and give them the best counsel and comfort we can: *Weep with them that weep*.

2. In answer to this, they put a question to him concerning *his strangeness*. *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days?* Observe,



**(1.)** Cleopas gave him a civil answer. He does not rudely ask him. “As for what we are talking of, what is that to you?” and bid him go about his business. Note, We ought to be civil to those who are civil to us, and to conduct ourselves obligingly to all, both in word and deed. It was a dangerous time now with Christ's disciples; yet he was not jealous of this stranger, that he had any design upon them, to inform against them, or bring them into trouble. Charity is not forward to *think evil*, no, not of strangers.

**(2.)** He is full of Christ himself and of his death and sufferings, and wonders that every body else is not so too: “What! art thou such a stranger in Jerusalem as not to know what has been done to our Master there?” Note, Those are strangers indeed in Jerusalem that know not of the death and sufferings of Christ. What! are they *daughters of Jerusalem*, and yet so little acquainted with Christ as to ask, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?*

**(3.)** He is very willing to inform this stranger concerning Christ, and to draw on further discourse with him upon this subject. He would not have any one that had the face of a man to be ignorant of Christ. Note, Those who have themselves the knowledge of Christ crucified should do what they can to spread that knowledge, and lead others into an acquaintance with him. And it is observable that these disciples, who were so forward to instruct the stranger, were instructed by him; for to him that has, and uses what he has, shall be given.

**(4.)** It appears, by what Cleopas says, that the death of Christ made a great noise in Jerusalem, so that it could not be imagined that any man should be such a stranger in the city as not to know of it; it was all the talk of the town, and discoursed of in all companies. Thus the matter of fact came to be universally *known*, which, after the pouring out of the Spirit, was to be *explained*.

**3.** Christ, by way of reply, asked concerning *their knowledge* (v. 19): *He said unto them, What things?* thus making himself yet more a stranger. Observe,

**(1.)** Jesus Christ made light of his own sufferings, in comparison with the joy set before him, which was the recompence of it. Now that he was entering upon his glory, see with what unconcernedness he looks back upon his sufferings: *What things?* He had reason to know what things; for

to him they were bitter things, and heavy things, and yet he asks, *What things?* The sorrow was forgotten, for joy that the man-child of our salvation was born. He took pleasure in infirmities for our sakes, to teach us to do so for his sake.

(2.) Those whom Christ will teach he will first examine how far they have learned; they must tell him *what things* they know, and then he will tell them what was the meaning of these things. and lead them into the mystery of them.

4. They, hereupon, gave him a particular account concerning Christ, and the present posture of his affairs. Observe the story they tell, v. 19, etc.

(1.) Here is a summary of Christ's *life* and *character*. The *things* they are full of are concerning *Jesus of Nazareth* (so he was commonly called), who *was a prophet*, a teacher come from God. He preached a true and excellent doctrine, which had manifestly its rise from heaven, and its tendency towards heaven. He confirmed it by many glorious miracles, miracles of mercy, so that he was *mighty in deed and word before God and all the people*; that is, he was both a great favourite of heaven and a great blessing to this earth. He was, and appeared to be, greatly beloved of God, and much the darling of his people. He had great acceptance with God, and a great reputation in the country. Many are *great before all the people*, and are caressed by them, who are not so *before God*, as the scribes and Pharisees; but Christ was mighty both in his *doctrine* and in his *doings, before God and all the people*. Those were strangers in Jerusalem that did not know this.

(2.) Here is a modest narrative of his sufferings and death, v. 20. "Though he was so dear both to God and man, yet the *chief priests and our rulers*, in contempt of both, *delivered him to the Roman power, to be condemned to death, and they have crucified him.*" It is strange that they did not aggravate the matter more, and lay a greater load upon those that had been guilty of crucifying Christ; but perhaps because they spoke to one that was a stranger they thought it prudent to avoid all reflections upon the chief priests and their rulers, how just soever.

(3.) Here is an intimation of their disappointment in him, as the reason of their sadness: "*We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel*, v. 21. We are of those who not only looked upon him to be a prophet, like Moses, but, like him, a redeemer too." He was depended

upon, and great things expected from him, by them that *looked for redemption*, and in it for the consolation of Israel. Now, if *hope deferred makes the heart sick*, hope disappointed, especially such a hope, kills the heart. But see how they made that the ground of their despair which if they had understood it aright was the surest ground of their hope, and that was the dying of the Lord Jesus: *We trusted (say they) that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel*. And is it not he that doth redeem Israel? Nay, is he not by his death paying the price of their redemption? Was it not necessary, in order to his saving Israel from their sins, that he should suffer? So that now, since that most difficult part of his undertaking was got over, they had more reason than ever to *trust that this was he that should deliver Israel*; yet now they are ready to give up the cause.

**(4.)** Here is an account of their present amazement with reference to his resurrection.


**[1.]** “*This is the third day* since he was crucified and died, and that was the day when it was expected, if ever, that he should rise again, and rise in glory and outward pomp, and show himself as publicly in honour as he had been shown three days before in disgrace; but we see no sign of it; nothing appears, as we expected, to the conviction and confusion of his prosecutors, and the consolation of his disciples, but all is silent.”

**[2.]** They own that there was a report among them that he was risen, but they seem to speak of it very slightly, and as what they gave no credit at all to (v. 22, 23): “*Certain women also of our company made us astonished* (and that was all), who were *early at the sepulchre*, and found the body gone, and they said that they had *seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive*; but we are ready to think it was only their fancy, and no real thing, for angels would have been sent to the apostles, not to the women, and women are easily imposed upon.”

**[3.]** They acknowledge that some of the apostles had visited the sepulchre, and found it empty, v. 24. “*But him they saw not*, and therefore we have reason to fear that he *is not risen*, for, if he be, surely he would have *shown himself* to them; so that, upon the whole matter, we have no great reason to think that he is risen, and therefore have no expectations from him now; our hopes were all nailed to his cross, and buried in his grave.”

**(5.)** Our Lord Jesus, though not known by face to them, makes himself known to them by his word.

[1.] He reproveth them for their incogitancy, and the weakness of their faith in the scriptures of the Old Testament: *O fools, and slow of heart to believe*, v. 25. When Christ forbade us to say to our brother, *Thou fool*, it was intended to restrain us from giving unreasonable reproaches, not from giving just reproofs. Christ called them *fools*, not as it signifies *wicked men*, in which sense he forbade it to us, but as it signifies *weak men*. He might call them *fools*, for he *knows our foolishness*, the foolishness that is bound in our hearts. Those are fools that act against their own interest; so they did who would not admit the evidence given them that their Master was risen, but put away the comfort of it. That which is condemned in them as their *foolishness* is, *First*, Their *slowness to believe*. Believers are branded as fools by atheists, and infidels, and free-thinkers, and their most holy faith is censured as a fond credulity; but Christ tells us that those are *fools* who are *slow of heart to believe*, and are kept from it by prejudices never impartially examined. *Secondly*, Their *slowness to believe the writings of the prophets*. He does not so much blame them for their slowness to believe the testimony of the women and of the angels, but for that which was the cause thereof, their *slowness to believe the prophets*; for, if they had given the prophets of the Old Testament their due weight and consideration, they would have been as sure of Christ's *rising from the dead* that morning (being the third day after his death) as they were of the *rising of the sun*; for the *series and succession* of events as settled by *prophecy* are no less certain and inviolable than as settled by *providence*. Were we but more *conversant* with the scripture, and the divine counsels as far as they are made known in the scripture, we should not be subject to such perplexities as we often *entangle* ourselves in.

[2.] He shows them that the sufferings of Christ, which were such a stumbling-block to them, and made them unapt to believe his glory, were really the appointed way to his glory, and he could not go to it any other way (v. 26): “*Ought not the Christ* (the Messiah) *to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* Was it not decreed, and was not that decree *declared*, that the promised Messiah must first suffer and then reign, that he must go by his cross to his crown?” Had they never read the fifty-third of Isaiah and the ninth of Daniel, where the prophets speak so very plainly of the *sufferings of Christ* and the *glory that should follow*?  1 Peter 1:11. The cross of Christ was that to which they could not reconcile themselves; now here he shows them two things which take off the offence of the cross: — *First*, That the Messiah *ought to suffer* these


things; and therefore his sufferings were not only no objection against his being the Messiah, but really a proof of it, as the afflictions of the saints are an evidence of their sonship; and they were so far from ruining their expectations that really they were the foundation of their hopes. He could not have been a *Saviour*, if he had not been a *sufferer*. Christ's undertaking our salvation was voluntary; but, having undertaken it, it was necessary that he should suffer and die. *Secondly*, That, when he had suffered these things, he should *enter into his glory*, which he did at his resurrection; that was his first step upward. Observe, It is called *his* glory, because he was *duly entitled* to it, and it was the glory he had before the world was; he *ought* to enter into it, for in that, as well as in his sufferings, the scripture must be fulfilled. He *ought* to suffer first, and then to enter into his glory; and thus the *reproach* of the cross is for ever *rolled away*, and we are directed to expect the crown of *thorns* and then that of *glory*.

[3.] He expounded to them the scriptures of the Old Testament, which spoke of the Messiah, and showed them how they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and now can tell them more concerning him than they could before tell him (v. 27): *Beginning at Moses*, the first inspired writer of the Old Testament, he went in order through *all the prophets*, and *expounded to them the things concerning himself*, showing that the sufferings he had now gone through were so far from defeating the prophecies of the scripture concerning him that they were the accomplishment of them. He began at Moses, who recorded the first promise, in which it was plainly foretold that the Messiah should have his *heel bruised*, but that by it the serpent's head should be incurably broken. Note, *First*, There are things dispersed throughout *all the scriptures* concerning Christ, which it is of great advantage to have *collected and put together*. You cannot go far in any part of scripture but you meet with something that has reference to Christ, some prophecy, some promise, some prayer, some type or other; for he is the true *treasure hid in the field* of the Old Testament. A golden thread of gospel grace runs through the whole web of the Old Testament. There is an *eye* of that *white* to be discerned in every place. *Secondly*, The things concerning Christ need to be *expounded*. The eunuch, though a scholar, would not pretend to understand them, *except some man should guide him* (~~488~~ Acts 8:31); for they were delivered darkly, according to that dispensation: but now that the veil is taken away the New Testament expounds the Old. *Thirdly*, Jesus Christ is himself the best expositor of scripture, particularly the scriptures concerning himself; and even after his

resurrection it was in this way that he led people into the knowledge of the mystery concerning himself; not by advancing new notions independent upon the scripture, but by showing how the scripture was fulfilled, and turning them over to the study of it. Even the Apocalypse itself is but a second part of the Old-Testament prophecies, and has continually an eye to them. *If men believe not Moses and the prophets, they are incurable.* *Fourthly*, In *studying* the scriptures, it is good to be *methodical*, and to take them in order; for the Old-Testament light shone *gradually* to the *perfect day*, and it is good to observe how *at sundry times*, and in *divers manners* (subsequent predictions improving and giving light to the preceding ones), God spoke to the fathers *concerning* his Son, by whom he has now *spoken* to us. Some begin their bible at the wrong end, who study the Revelation first; but Christ has here taught us to *begin at Moses*. Thus far the conference between them.

**IV.** Here is the discovery which Christ at length made of himself to them. One would have given a great deal for a copy of the sermon Christ preached to them by the way, of that exposition of the bible which he gave them; but it is not thought fit that we should have it, we have the substance of it in other scriptures. The disciples are so charmed with it, that they think they are come too soon to their journey's end; but so it is: *They drew nigh to the village whither they went* (v. 28), where, it should seem, they determined to *take up* for that night. And now,

**1.** They courted his stay with them: *He made as though he would have gone further*; he did not *say* that he would, but he seemed to them to be going further, and did not readily turn into their friend's house, which it would not be decent for a stranger to do unless he were invited. He would have gone further if they had not courted his stay; so that here was nothing like dissimulation in the case. If a stranger be *shy*, every one knows the meaning of it; he will not thrust himself *rudely* upon your house or company; but, if you make it appear that you are freely desirous of him for your guest or companion, he knows not but he may accept your invitation, and this was all that Christ did when he *made as though he would have gone further*. Note, Those that would have Christ dwell with them must invite him, and be importunate with him; though he is often *found of those that seek him not*, yet those only that *seek* can be sure to *find*; and, if he seem to *draw off* from us, it is but to draw out our importunity; as here, *they constrained him*; both of them laid hold on him, with a kind and friendly violence, saying, *Abide with us*. Note, Those that have

experienced the pleasure and profit of communion with Christ cannot but covet more of his company, and beg of him, not only to *walk with them* all day, but to *abide with them* at night. When *the day is far spent*, and it is *towards evening*, we begin to think of retiring for our repose, and then it is proper to have our eye to Christ, and to beg of him to *abide with us*, to manifest himself to us and to fill our minds with good thoughts of him and good affections to him. Christ yielded to their importunity: He *went in, to tarry with them*. Thus ready is Christ to give further instructions and comforts to those who improve what they have received. He has promised that *if any man open the door*, to bid him welcome, he will *come in to him*,  Revelation 3:20.

**2.** He manifested himself to them, v. 30, 31. We may suppose that he continued his discourse with them, which he began upon the road; for thou must talk of the things of God *when thou sittest in the house as well as when thou walkest by the way*. While supper was getting ready (which perhaps was soon done, the provision was so small and mean), it is probable that he entertained them with such communications as were *good and to the use of edifying*; and so likewise as they *sat at meat* his *lips fed* them. But still they little thought that it was Jesus himself that was all this while talking with them, till at length he was pleased to throw off his disguise, and then to withdraw.

**(1.)** They began to suspect it was he, when, as they *sat down to meat*, he undertook the office of the Master of the feast, which he performed so like himself, and like what he used to do among his disciples, that by it they discerned him: *He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them*. This he did with his usual air both of authority and affection, with the same gestures and mien, with the same expressions perhaps in craving a blessing and in giving the bread to them. This was not a *miraculous* meal like that of the five loaves, nor a *sacramental* meal like that of the eucharist, but a *common* meal; yet Christ here did the same as he did in those, to teach us to keep up our communion with God through Christ in common providences as well as in special ordinances, and to crave a blessing and give thanks at every meal, and to see our daily bread provided for us and broken to us by the hand of Jesus Christ, the Master, not only of the great family, but of all our families. Wherever we *sit down to eat*, let us set Christ at the upper end of the table, take our meat as *blessed to us* by him, and *eat and drink* to his glory, and receive contentedly and thankfully what he is pleased to *carve* out to us, be the fare ever so coarse and mean.



We may well receive it cheerfully, if we can by faith see it coming to us *from Christ's hand*, and with his blessing.

**(2.)** Presently *their eyes were opened*, and then they saw who it was, and *knew him* well enough. Whatever it was which had hitherto concealed him from them, it was now taken out of the way; the mists were scattered, the veil was taken off, and then they made no question but it was their Master. He might, for wise and holy ends, put on the shape of another, but no other could put on his; and therefore it must be he. See how Christ by his Spirit and grace makes himself known to the souls of his people.

**[1.]** He opens the scriptures to them, for they are they which testify of him to those who *search them*, and search for him in them.

**[2.]** He meets them at his table, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and commonly there makes further discoveries of himself to them, is *known to them in the breaking of bread*. But,

**[3.]** The work is completed by the opening of the eyes of their mind, and causing the scales to fall off from them, as from Paul's in his conversion. If he that gives the revelation do not give the understanding, we are in the dark still.

**3.** He immediately disappeared: *He vanished out of their sight*. *Aphantos egeneto* — He *withdrew himself* from them, slipped away of a sudden, and went *out of sight*. Or, he *became not visible by them*, was made inconspicuous by them. It should seem that though Christ's body, after his resurrection, was the very *same body* in which he suffered and died, as appeared by the marks in it, yet it was so far changed as to become either *visible* or *not visible* as he thought fit to make it, which was a step towards its being made a *glorious body*. As soon as he had given his disciples one glimpse of him he was gone presently. Such short and transient views have we of Christ in this world; we see him, but in a little while lose the sight of him again. When we come to heaven the vision of him will have no interruptions.

**V.** Here is the reflection which these disciples made upon this conference, and the report which they made of it to their brethren at Jerusalem.

**1.** The reflection they each of them made upon the influence which Christ's discourse had upon them (v. 32): *They said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us?* "I am sure mine did," saith one; "And so



did mine,” saith the other, “I never was so affected with any discourse in all my life.” Thus do they not so much compare *notes* as compare *hearts*, in the review of the sermon Christ had preached to them. They found the preaching powerful, even when they knew not the preacher. It made things very plain and clear to them; and, which was more, brought a *divine heat* with a *divine light* into their souls, such as put their hearts into a glow, and kindled a holy fire of pious and devout affections in them. Now this they take notice of, for the confirming of their belief, that it was indeed, as at last they saw, *Jesus himself* that had been talking with them all along. “What fools were we, that we were not sooner aware who it was! For none but he, no word but his, could *make our hearts burn within us* as they did; it must be he that has the key of the heart; it could be no other.” See here,

**(1.)** What *preaching* is likely to *do good* — such as Christ's was, *plain preaching*, and that which is familiar and level to our capacity — *he talked with us by the way*; and *scriptural preaching* — *he opened to us the scriptures*, the scriptures relating to himself. Ministers should show people their religion in their bibles, and that they preach no other doctrine to them than what is there; they must show that they make that the fountain of their knowledge and the foundation of their faith. Note, The expounding of those scriptures which speak of Christ has a direct tendency to warm the hearts of his disciples, both to quicken and to comfort them.

**(2.)** What *hearing* is likely to *do good* — that which makes the *heart burn*; when we are much affected with the things of God, especially with the love of Christ in dying for us, and have our hearts thereby drawn out in love to him, and drawn up in holy desires and devotions, then our hearts *burn within us*; when our hearts are raised and elevated, and are as the sparks which *fly upwards* towards God, and when they are kindled and carried out with a holy zeal and indignation against sin, both in others and in ourselves, and we are in some measure refined and purified from it by the *spirit of judgment* and the *spirit of burning*, then we may say, “Through grace our hearts are thus inflamed.”

**2.** The report they brought of this to their brethren at Jerusalem (v. 33): *They rose up the same hour*, so transported with joy at the discovery Christ had made of himself to them that they could not stay to make an end of their supper, but returned with all speed to Jerusalem, though it was towards evening. If they had had any thoughts of quitting their relation to Christ, this soon banished all such thoughts out of their mind, and there

needed no more to send them back to his flock. It should seem that they intended at least to take up their quarters to-night at Emmaus; but now that they had seen Christ they could not rest till they had brought the good news to the disciples, both for the confirmation of their trembling faith and for the comfort of their sorrowful spirits, with the *same comforts wherewith they were comforted of God*. Note, It is the duty of those to whom Christ has manifested himself to let others know what he has done for their souls. When thou art converted, instructed, comforted, strengthen thy brethren. These disciples were *full* of this matter themselves, and must go to their brethren, to give vent to their joys, as well as to give them satisfaction that their Master was risen. Observe,

**(1.)** How they found them, just when they came in among them, discoursing on the same subject, and relating another proof of the resurrection of Christ. They found the eleven, and those that were their usual companions, *gathered together* late in the night, to pray together, it may be, and to consider what was to be done in this juncture; and they found them *saying* among themselves (*legontas* it is the saying of the *eleven*, not of the *two*, as is plain by the original), and when these two came in, they repeated to them with joy and triumph, *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, v. 34. That Peter had a sight of him before the rest of the disciples had appears ~~465~~ 1 Corinthians 15:5, where it is said, *He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve*. The angel having ordered the women to tell Peter of it particularly (~~414~~ Mark 16:7), for his comfort, it is highly probable that our Lord Jesus did himself presently the same day appear to Peter, though we have no particular narrative of it, to *confirm the word of his messengers*. This he had related to his brethren; but, observe, Peter does not here proclaim it, and boast of it, himself (he thought this did not become a penitent), but the other disciples speak of it with exultation, *The Lord is risen indeed, ontos* — *really*; it is now past dispute, no room is left to doubt it, for he has appeared not only to the women, but to Simon.

**(2.)** How they seconded their evidence with an account of what they had seen (v. 35): *They told what things were done in the way*. The words that were spoken by Christ to them in the way, having a wonderful effect and influence upon them, are here called the *things* that were *done in the way*; for the words that Christ speaks are not an empty sound, but *they are spirit and they are life*, and wondrous things are *done* by them, *done by the way*, by the by as it were, where it is not expected. They told also how he was at

length *known to them in the breaking of bread*; then, when he was carving out blessings to them, God opened their eyes to discern who it was. Note, It would be of great use for the discovery and confirmation of truth if the disciples of Christ would compare their observations and experiences, and communicate to each other what they know and have felt in themselves.

## ◀246▶ LUKE 24:36-49

### CHRIST'S INTERVIEW WITH THE APOSTLES

Five times Christ was seen the same day that he rose: by Mary Magdalene alone in the garden (◀414▶ John 20:14), by the women as they were going to tell the disciples (◀419▶ Matthew 28:9), by Peter alone, by the two disciples going to Emmaus, and now at night by the eleven, of which we have an account in these verses, as also ◀419▶ John 20:19. Observe,

**I.** The great *surprise* which his appearing gave them. He came in among them very *seasonably*, as they were comparing notes concerning the proofs of his resurrection: *As they thus spoke*, and were ready perhaps to *put it to the question* whether the proofs produced amounted to evidence sufficient of their Master's resurrection or no, and how they should proceed, *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them*, and *put it out of question*. Note, Those who make the best use they can of their evidences for their comfort may expect further assurances, and that the *Spirit of Christ* will *witness with their spirits* (as Christ here witnessed with the disciples, and confirmed their testimony) that they are the *children of God*, and risen with Christ. Observe,

**1.** The *comfort* Christ spoke to them: *Peace be unto you*. This intimates in general that it was a kind visit which Christ now paid them, a visit of love and friendship. Though they had very unkindly deserted him in his sufferings, yet he takes the first opportunity of seeing them together; for he deals not with us as we deserve. They did not *credit* those who had seen him; therefore he *comes himself*, that they might not continue in their disconsolate incredulity. He had promised that after his resurrection he *would see them in Galilee*; but so desirous was he to see them, and satisfy them, that he anticipated the appointment and *sees them at Jerusalem*. Note, Christ is often *better* than his word, but never *worse*. Now his first word to them was, *Peace be to you*; not in a way of compliment, but of

consolation. This was a common form of salutation among the Jews, and Christ would thus express his usual familiarity with them, though he had now entered into his state of exaltation. Many, when they are advanced, forget their old friends and take state upon them; but we see Christ as free with them as ever. Thus Christ would at the first word intimate to them that he did not come to quarrel with Peter for *denying* him and the rest for *running away* from him; no, he *came peaceably*, to signify to them that he had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them.

**2.** The *fright* which they put themselves into upon it (v. 37): They were *terrified*, supposing that *they had seen a spirit*, because he came in among them without any noise, and was in the midst of them ere they were aware. The word used (<sup>4145</sup>Matthew 14:26), when they said *It is a spirit*, is *phantasma*, it is a *spectre*, an *apparition*; but the word here used is *pneuma*, the word that properly signifies *a spirit*; they supposed it to be a spirit not clothed with a real body. Though we have an alliance and correspondence with the world of spirits, and are hastening to it, yet while we are here in this world of sense and matter it is a terror to us to have a spirit so far change its own nature as to become visible to us, and conversable with us, for it is something, and bodes something, very extraordinary.

**II.** The great *satisfaction* which his discourse gave them, wherein we have,

**1.** The reproof he gave them for their causeless fears: *Why are you troubled, and why do frightful thoughts arise in your hearts?* v. 38. Observe here,

**(1.)** That when at any time we are *troubled*, *thoughts* are apt to *rise in our hearts* that do us hurt. Sometimes the *trouble* is the effect of the *thoughts* that *arise in our hearts*; our griefs and fears take rise from those things that are the creatures of our own fancy. Sometimes the thoughts arising in the heart are the effect of the trouble, without are fightings and then within are fears. Those that are melancholy and troubled in mind have *thoughts arising in their hearts* which reflect dishonour upon God, and create disquiet to themselves. *I am cut off from thy sight. The Lord has forsaken and forgotten me.*

**(2.)** That many of the troublesome thoughts with which our minds are disquieted arise from our mistakes concerning Christ. They here thought

that they had *seen a spirit*, when they saw Christ, and that put them into this fright. We forget that Christ is our *elder brother*, and look upon him to be at as great a distance from us as the world of spirits is from this world, and therewith terrify ourselves. When Christ is by his Spirit convincing and humbling us, when he is by his providence trying and converting us, we *mistake him*, as if he designed our hurt, and this troubles us.

**(3.)** That all the troublesome thoughts which rise in our hearts at any time are known to the Lord Jesus, even at the first rise of them, and they are displeasing to him. He chid his disciples for such *thoughts*, to teach us to chide ourselves for them. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou troubled? Why do thoughts arise* that are neither *true* nor *good*, that have neither *foundation* nor *fruit*, but hinder our joy in God, unfit us for our duty, give advantage to Satan, and deprive us of the comforts laid up for us?

**2.** The proof he gave them of his resurrection, both for the *silencing* of their *fears* by convincing them that he was *not a spirit*, and for the *strengthening* of their *faith* in that doctrine which they were to preach to the world by giving them full satisfaction concerning his resurrection. Two proofs he gives them: —

**(1.)** He shows them his body, particularly *his hands and his feet*. They saw that he had the shape, and features, and exact resemblance, of their Master; but is it not his ghost? “No,” saith Christ, “*behold my hands and my feet*; you see I have *hands and feet*, and therefore have a *true* body; you see I can *move* these hands and feet, and therefore have a *living* body; and you see the marks of the nails in my hands and feet, and therefore it is *my own* body, the *same* that you saw crucified, and not a *borrowed* one.” He lays down this principle — that a *spirit has not flesh and bones*; it is not compounded of gross matter, shaped into various members, and consisting of divers heterogeneous parts, as our bodies are. He does not tell us what a *spirit* is (it is time enough to know that when we go to the world of spirits), but what it is not: *It has not flesh and bones*. Now hence he infers, “*It is I myself*, whom you have been so intimately acquainted with, and have had such familiar conversation with; it is *I myself*, whom you have reason to rejoice in, and not to be afraid of.” Those who *know Christ* aright, and know him as *theirs*, will have no reason to be terrified at his appearances, at his approaches.

[1.] He appeals to their *sight*, shows them *his hands* and *his feet*, which were pierced with the nails. Christ retained the marks of them in his glorified body, that they might be proofs that it was he himself; and he was willing that they should be *seen*. He afterwards showed them to Thomas, for he is not ashamed of his sufferings for us; little reason then have we to be ashamed of them, or of ours for him. As he showed his wounds here to his disciples, for the enforcing of his instructions to them, so he showed them to his Father, for the enforcing of his intercessions with him. He appears in heaven *as a Lamb that had been slain* (<sup>4816</sup>Revelation 5:6); his *blood speaks*, <sup>4824</sup>Hebrews 12:24. He makes intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction; he says to the Father, as here to the disciples, *Behold my hands and my feet*, <sup>4816</sup>Zechariah 13:6, 7.

[2.] He appeals to their *touch*: *Handle me, and see*. He would not let Mary Magdalene touch him at that time, <sup>4817</sup>John 20:17. But the disciples here are entrusted to do it, that they who were to preach his resurrection, and to suffer for doing so, might be themselves abundantly satisfied concerning it. He bade them *handle him*, that they might be convinced that he was not a *spirit*. If there were really no spirits, or apparitions of spirits (as by this and other instances it is plain that the disciples did believe there were), this had been a proper time for Christ to have undeceived them, by telling them there were no such things; but he seems to take it for granted that there have been and may be apparitions of spirits, else what need was there of so much pains to prove that he was not one? There were many heretics in the primitive times, atheists I rather think they were, who said that Christ had never any substantial body, but that it was a mere phantasm, which was neither really born nor truly suffered. Such wild notions as these, we are told, the Valentinians and Manichees had, and the followers of Simon Magus; they were called *Doketai* and *Phantysistai*. Blessed be God, these heresies have long since been *buried*; and we know and are sure that Jesus Christ was no *spirit* or *apparition*, but had a true and real body, even after his resurrection.

(2.) He *eats* with them, to show that he had a real and true body, and that he was willing to converse freely and familiarly with his disciples, as one friend with another. Peter lays a great stress upon this (<sup>4818</sup>Acts 10:41): *We did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead*.

[1.] When they *saw his hands and his feet*, yet they knew not what to say, *They believed not for joy, and wondered*, v. 41. It was their infirmity that

they *believed not*, that yet they believed not, *eti apistounton auton* — *they as yet being unbelievers*. This very much corroborates the truth of Christ's resurrection that the disciples were so slow to believe it. Instead of stealing away his body, and saying, *He is risen*, when he is not, as the chief priests suggested they would do, they are ready to say again and again, *He is not risen*, when he is. Their being incredulous of it at first, and insisting upon the utmost proofs of it, show that when afterwards they did believe it, and venture their all upon it, it was not but upon the fullest demonstration of the thing that could be. But, though it was their infirmity, yet it was an excusable one; for it was not from any contempt of the evidence offered them that they believed not: but, *First*, They *believed not for joy*, as Jacob, when he was told that Joseph was alive; they thought it too good news to be true. When the faith and hope are therefore *weak* because the love and desires are *strong*, that weak faith shall be helped, and not rejected. *Secondly*, They *wondered*; they thought it not only *too good*, but *too great*, to be true, forgetting both the scriptures and the power of God.

[2.] For their further conviction and encouragement, he *called for some meat*. He sat down to meat with the two disciples at Emmaus, but it is not said that he did eat with *them*; now, lest that should be made an objection, he here did actually *eat* with *them* and *the rest*, to show that his body was really and truly *returned to life*, though he did not eat and drink, and converse constantly, with them, as he had done (and as Lazarus did after *his* resurrection, who not only returned to life, but to his former state of life, and to die again), because it was not agreeable to the economy of the state he was risen to. They gave him a *piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb*, v. 42. The honey-comb, perhaps, was used as sauce to the broiled fish, for Canaan was a land *flowing with honey*. This was mean fare; yet, if it be the fare of the disciples, their Master will fare as they do, because in the kingdom of our Father they shall fare as he does, shall eat and drink with him in his kingdom.

3. The *insight* he gave them into the word of God, which they had *heard* and read, by which faith in the resurrection of Christ is wrought in them, and all the difficulties are cleared.

(1.) He refers them to the *word* which they had *heard* from him when he was with them, and puts them in mind of that as the angel had done (v. 44): *These are the words which I said unto you* in private, many a time,



while I was yet with you. We should better *understand* what Christ *does*, if we did but better *remember* what he hath *said*, and had but the art of comparing them together.

(2.) He refers them to the *word* they had read in the Old Testament, to which the word they had heard from him directed them: *All things must be fulfilled which were written*. Christ had given them this general hint for the regulating of their expectations — that whatever they found written concerning the Messiah, in the Old Testament, must be fulfilled in him, what was written concerning his sufferings as well as what was written concerning his kingdom; these God had *joined together* in the prediction, and it could not be thought that they should be *put asunder* in the event. *All things* must be fulfilled, even the *hardest*, even the *heaviest*, even the *vinegar*; he could not die till he had that, because he could not till then say, *It is finished*. The several parts of the Old Testament are here mentioned, as containing each of them things concerning Christ: *The law of Moses*, that is, the Pentateuch, or the *five* books written by Moses, — the *prophets*, containing not only the books that are purely prophetical, but those historical books that were written by prophetical men, — the *Psalms*, containing the other writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. See in what various ways of writing God did of old reveal his will; but all proceeded from one and the self-same Spirit, who by them gave notice of the coming and kingdom of the Messiah; for *to him bore all the prophets witness*.

(3.) By an immediate present work upon their minds, of which they themselves could not but be sensible, he gave them to apprehend the true intent and meaning of the Old-Testament prophecies of Christ, and to see them all fulfilled in him: *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures*, v. 45. In his discourse with the two disciples he took the veil from off the text, by *opening* the scriptures; here he took the veil from off the heart, by *opening the mind*. Observe here,

[1.] That Jesus Christ by his Spirit operates on the minds of men, on the minds of all that are his. He has access to our spirits, and can immediately influence them. It is observable how he did now after his resurrection give a *specimen* of those two great operations of *his Spirit* upon the *spirits of men*, his enlightening the intellectual faculties with a divine light, when he opened the understandings of his disciples, and his invigorating the active powers with a divine heat, when he made their hearts burn within them.



[2.] Even good men need to have their *understandings opened*; for though they are not *darkness*, as they were by nature, yet in many things they are *in the dark*. David prays, *Open mine eyes. Give me understanding*. And Paul, who knows so much of Christ, sees his need to learn more.

[3.] Christ's way of working faith in the soul, and gaining the throne there, is by *opening the understanding* to discern the evidence of those things that are to be believed. Thus he comes into the soul by *the door*, while Satan, as a thief and a robber, climbs up some other way.

[4.] The design of opening the understanding is *that we may understand the scriptures*; not that we may be *wise above what is written*, but that we may be *wiser in what is written*, and may be made *wise to salvation* by it. The Spirit in the word and the Spirit in the heart say the same thing. Christ's scholars never learn *above their bibles* in this world; but they need to be learning still more and more *out of their bibles*, and to grow more *ready* and *mighty* in the scriptures. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, and have our mistakes concerning him rectified, there needs no more than to be made to understand the scriptures.

4. The instructions he gave them as *apostles*, who were to be employed in setting up his kingdom in the world. They expected, while their Master was with them, that they should be preferred to posts of honour, of which they thought themselves quite disappointed when he was dead. "No," saith, he, "you are now to enter upon them; *you are to be witnesses of these things* (v. 48), to carry the notice of them to all the world; not only to *report* them as matter of news, but to *assert* them as evidence given upon the trial of the great cause that has been so long depending between God and Satan, the issue of which must be the casting down and casting out of the *prince of this world*. You are fully assured of these things yourselves, you are eye and ear-witnesses of them; go, and assure the world of them; and the same Spirit that has enlightened you shall go along with you for the enlightening of others." Now here they are told,

(1.) *What they must preach*. They must preach the gospel, must preach the *New Testament* as the full accomplishment of the *Old*, as the continuation and conclusion of divine revelation. They must take their bibles along with them (especially when they preached to the Jews; nay, and Peter, in his first sermon to the Gentiles, directed them to consult the prophets, Acts 10:43), and must show people how it was written of old concerning the Messiah, and the glories and graces of his kingdom, and then must tell

them how, upon their certain knowledge, all this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

[1.] The great *gospel truth* concerning the *death* and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ must be *published* to the children of men (v. 46): *Thus it was written* in the sealed book of the divine counsels from eternity, the volume of that book of the covenant of redemption; and thus it was written in the open book of the Old Testament, among the things revealed; and therefore *thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, for the divine counsels must be performed, and care taken that no word of God fall to the ground. “Go, and tell the world,” *First*, “That Christ *suffered*, as it was written of him. Go, preach *Christ crucified*; be not ashamed of his cross, not ashamed of a suffering Jesus. Tell them what he suffered, and why he suffered, and how all the scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in his sufferings. Tell them that it *behoved him to suffer*, that it was necessary to the taking away of the sin of the world, and the deliverance of mankind from death and ruin: nay, it *became him* to be perfected *through sufferings*,” <sup><300></sup>Hebrews 2:10. *Secondly*, “That he rose from the dead on *the third day*, by which not only all the offence of the cross was rolled away, but he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and in this also the *scriptures* were *fulfilled* (see <sup><430></sup>1 Corinthians 15:3, 4); go, tell the world how often you saw him after he rose from the dead, and how intimately you conversed with him. *Your eyes see*” (as Joseph said to his brethren, when his discovering himself to them was as life from the dead) “*that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you*,” <sup><450></sup>Genesis 45:12. Go, and tell them, then, that he that *was dead is alive*, and *lives for evermore*, and *has the keys of death and the grave*,”

[2.] The great *gospel duty* of *repentance* must be *pressed* upon the children of men. *Repentance for sin* must be preached in *Christ's name*, and by his authority, v. 47. *All men every where* must be called and *commanded to repent*, <sup><440></sup>Acts 17:30. “Go, and tell all people that the God that made them, and the Lord that bought them, expects and requires that, immediately upon this notice given, they turn from the worship of the gods that they have made to the worship of the God that made them; and not only so, but from serving the interests of the world and the flesh; they must turn to the service of God in Christ, must mortify all sinful habits, and forsake all sinful practices. Their hearts and lives must be changed, and they must be universally renewed and reformed.”

[3.] The great *gospel privilege* of the *remission of sins* must be *proposed* to all, and assured to all that *repent*, and *believe the gospel*. “Go, tell a guilty world, that stands convicted and condemned at God's bar, that an act of indemnity has passed the royal assent, which all that repent and believe shall have the benefit of, and not only be *pardoned*, but *preferred* by. Tell them that *there is hope* concerning them.”

(2.) *To whom they must preach*. Whither must they carry these proposals, and how far does their commission extend? They are here told,

[1.] That they must preach this *among all nations*. They must disperse themselves, like the sons of Noah after the flood, some one way and some another, and carry this light along with them wherever they go. The prophets had preached *repentance* and *remission* to the *Jews*, but the apostles must preach them to *all the world*. None are *exempted* from the obligations the gospel lays upon men to *repent*, nor are any *excluded* from those inestimable benefits which are included in the remission of sins, but those that by their unbelief and impenitency put a bar in their own door.

[2.] That they must *begin at Jerusalem* There they must preach their first *gospel sermon*; there the *gospel church* must be first formed; there the gospel day must dawn, and thence that light shall go forth which must take hold on the ends of the earth. And why must they begin there? *First*, Because *thus it was written*, and therefore it *behoved them* to take this method. *The word of the Lord must go forth from Jerusalem*, <sup><313></sup>Isaiah 2:3. And see <sup><312></sup>Joel 2:32; 3:16; Obad. 21; <sup><314></sup>Zechariah 14:8. *Secondly*, Because there the matters of fact on which the gospel was founded were transacted; and therefore there they were first attested, where, if there had been any just cause for it, they might be best contested and disproved. So strong, so bright, is the first shining forth of the glory of the risen Redeemer that it dares face those daring enemies of his that had put him to an ignominious death, and sets them at defiance. “*Begin at Jerusalem*, that the chief priests may try their strength to crush the gospel, and may rage to see themselves disappointed.” *Thirdly*, Because he would give us a further example of forgiving enemies. Jerusalem had put the greatest affronts imaginable upon him (both the rulers and the multitude), for which that city might justly have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity; but no, so far from that, the first offer of gospel grace is made to Jerusalem, and thousands there are in a little time brought to partake of that grace.

(3.) What *assistance they should have in preaching*. It is a vast undertaking that they are here called to, a very large and difficult province, especially considering the opposition this service would meet with, and the sufferings it would be attended with. If therefore they ask, *Who is sufficient for these things?* here is an answer ready: *Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, and you shall be endued with power from on high*, v. 49. He here assures them that in a little time the Spirit should be poured out upon them in greater measures than ever, and they should thereby be furnished with all those gifts and graces which were necessary to their discharge of this great trust; and therefore they must *tarry at Jerusalem*, and not enter upon it till this be done. Note,

[1.] Those who *receive the Holy Ghost* are thereby *endued with a power from on high*, a supernatural power, a power above any of their own; it is *from on high*, and therefore draws the soul upward, and makes it to *aim high*.

[2.] Christ's apostles could never have planted his gospel, and set up his kingdom in the world, as they did, if they had not been endued with such a power; and their admirable achievements prove that there was an excellency of power going along with them.

[3.] *This power from on high* was the *promise of the Father*, the great promise of the New Testament, as the promise of the coming of Christ was of the Old Testament. And, if it be the *promise of the Father*, we may be sure that the promise is *inviolable* and the thing promised *invaluable*.

[4.] Christ would not leave his disciples till the time was just at hand for the performing of this promise. It was but ten days after the *ascension of Christ* that there came the *descent* of the Spirit.

[5.] Christ's ambassadors must stay till they have their powers, and not venture upon their embassy till they have received full instructions and credentials. Though, one would think, never was such haste as now for the preaching of the gospel, yet the preachers must tarry till they be endued with power from on high, and *tarry at Jerusalem*, though a place of danger, because there this promise of the Father was to find them, ~~3028~~ Joel 2:28.

## CHRIST'S ASCENSION

This evangelist omits the solemn meeting between Christ and his disciples *in Galilee*; but what he said to them there, and at other interviews, he subjoins to what he said to them at the first visit he made them on the evening of the day he rose; and has now nothing more to account for but his ascension into heaven, of which we have a very brief narrative in these verses, in which we are told,

**I.** How solemnly Christ took leave of his disciples. Christ's design being to reconcile heaven and earth, and to continue a days-man between them, it was necessary that he should lay his hands on them both, and, in order thereunto, that he should *pass* and *repass*. He had business to do in both worlds, and accordingly came from heaven to earth in his incarnation, to despatch his business here, and, having finished this, he returned to heaven, to reside there, and negotiate our affairs with the Father. Observe,

**1.** Whence he ascended: from *Bethany*, near Jerusalem, adjoining to the *mount of Olives*. There he had done eminent services for his Father's glory, and there he entered upon his glory. There was the *garden* in which his sufferings began, there he was in his agony; and Bethany signifies *the house of sorrow*. Those that would go to heaven must ascend thither from the house of sufferings and sorrow, must go by agonies to their joys. The mount of Olives was pitched upon long since to be the place of Christ's ascension: *His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives*, ◀34▶ Zechariah 14:4. And here it was that awhile ago he began his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, ◀49▶ Luke 19:29.

**2.** Who were the witnesses of his ascension: *He led out his disciples* to see him. Probably, it was very early in the morning that he ascended, before people were stirring; for he never showed himself openly to all the people after his resurrection, but only to *chosen witnesses*. The disciples did not see him rise out of the grave, because his resurrection was capable of being proved by their seeing him alive afterwards; but they saw him *ascend* into heaven, because they could not otherwise have an *ocular* demonstration of his ascension. They were *led out* on purpose to see him

ascend, had their eye upon him when he ascended, and were not looking another way.

**3.** What was the farewell he gave them: *He lifted up his hands, and blessed them.* He did not go away in displeasure, but in love; he left a blessing behind him; *he lifted up his hands*, as the high priest did when he blessed the people; see <sup>(102)</sup>Leviticus 9:22. He blessed as one having authority, commanded the blessing which he had purchased; he *blessed them* as Jacob blessed his sons. The apostles were now as the representatives of the twelve tribes, so that in blessing them he blessed all his spiritual Israel, and put his Father's name upon them. He blessed them as Jacob blessed his sons, and Moses the tribes, at parting, to show that, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

**4.** How he left them: *While he was blessing them, he was parted from them;* not as if he were taken away before he had said all he had to say, but to intimate that his being parted from them did not put an end to his blessing them, for the intercession which he went to heaven to make for all his is a continuation of the blessing. He *began* to bless them on earth, but he went to heaven to *go on* with it. Christ was now sending his apostles to preach his gospel to the world, and he gives them his blessing, not for *themselves* only, but to be conferred in his name upon *all* that should believe on him through their word; for in him *all the families of the earth were to be blessed.*

**5.** How his ascension is described.

**(1.)** He was *parted from them*, was taken from their head, as Elijah from Elisha's. Note, The dearest friends must part. Those that love us, and pray for us, and instruct us, must be *parted from us*. The bodily presence of Christ himself was not to be expected always in this world; those that knew him after the flesh must now henceforth know him so no more.

**(2.)** He was *carried up into heaven;* not by force, but by his own act and deed. As he arose, so he ascended, by his own power, yet attended by angels. There needed no chariot of fire, nor horses of fire; he knew the way, and, being the *Lord from heaven*, could go back himself. He ascended in a cloud, as the angel in the smoke of Manoah's sacrifice, <sup>(123)</sup>Judges 13:20.

**II.** How cheerfully his disciples continued their attendance on him, and on God through him, even now that he was parted from them.

**1.** They paid their homage to him at his going away, to signify that though he was going into a far country, yet they would continue his loyal subjects, that they were willing to have him reign over them: *They worshipped him.* v. 52. Note, Christ expects *adoration* from those that receive blessings from him. He *blessed them*, in token of gratitude for which they *worshipped him*. This fresh display of Christ's glory drew from them fresh acknowledgments and adorations of it. They knew that though he was *parted from them*, yet he could, and did, take notice of their adorations of him; the cloud that received him out of their sight did not put them or their services out of his sight.

**2.** They *returned to Jerusalem with great joy*. There they were ordered to continue till the Spirit should be poured out upon them, and thither they went accordingly, though it was into the mouth of danger. Thither they went, and there they staid *with great joy*. This was a wonderful change, and an effect of the opening of their understandings. When Christ told them that he must leave them sorrow filled their hearts; yet now that they see him go they are *filled with joy*, being convinced at length that it was expedient for them and for the church that he should go away, to send the Comforter. Note, The glory of Christ is the joy, the exceeding joy, of all true believers, even while they are here in this world; much more will it be so when they go to the new Jerusalem, and find him there in his glory.

**3.** They abounded in acts of devotion while they were in expectation of the promise of the Father, v. 53.

**(1.)** They attended the temple-service at the hours of prayer. God had not as yet quite forsaken it, and therefore they did not. *They were continually in the temple*, as their Master was when he was at Jerusalem. *The Lord loves the gates of Zion*, and so should we. Some think that they had their place of meeting, as disciples, in some of the chambers of the temple which belonged to some Levite that was *well affected* to them; but others think it is not likely that this either could be *concealed from*, or would be *connived at* by, the chief priests and *rulers of the temple*.

**(2.)** Temple-sacrifices, they knew, were superseded by Christ's sacrifice, but the temple-songs they joined in. Note, While we are waiting for God's promises we must go forth to meet them with our praises. Praising and

blessing God is work that is never out of season: and nothing better prepares the mind for the receiving of the Holy Ghost than holy joy and praise. Fears are silenced, sorrows sweetened and allayed, and hopes kept up.

The *amen* that concludes seems to be added by the church and every believer to the reading of the gospel, signifying an assent to the truths of the gospel, and a hearty concurrence with all the disciples of Christ in praising and blessing God. *Amen*. Let him be continually praised and blessed.