

April 20, 2014
Community Baptist Church
Sunday Morning Service
Easter
643 South Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as you prepare to study Luke 24:13-27.

1. Why were the religious rulers unable to grasp the reality that Jesus was Messiah sent from God?
2. Why were the women so perplexed that Jesus had risen from the dead?
3. When did the disciples finally figure out God's plan for Messiah?
4. What has Christ taught you about Himself from the Scriptures?

WAS IT NOT NECESSARY?

Luke 24:13-27

Easter is obviously not about bunnies, egg hunts, chocolate candy, and new fashions made of pretty pastels. It is about death, burial, and resurrection. Easter is about the unpleasant kind of things that human nature attempts to dismiss as unnecessary. But He who died in our stead to pay for our sins explains why the unpleasant realities about Easter are necessary.

Our Rulers Delivered Him Up (v.20).

Two disciples who trudged along a lonely road, burdened with recent events, told a "stranger" who joined them that people who were supposed to be "in the know" delivered Jesus to death. They

asked the stranger if he didn't know the actions of *our chief priests and rulers (v.20a)*. Certainly, the chief priests and rulers, of all the people in Israel, would know if Jesus was the Messiah. After all, the chief priests were among the most significant religious persons in Israel. They carried out the duties passed on by the Law of the Old Testament. They oversaw the ministry in the temple and appointed the thousands of other priests who assisted with the work. In Jesus' day, this man was the ex-officio leader of the Sanhedrin.

The office of those important men was rooted in the Old Testament. In that age past, the chief priest was the one man who went into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God with the atonement for the nation's sins on the Day of Atonement each year. We cannot know for certain if the person occupying the office of chief priest in Jesus' day continued that duty, or if someone else did it. Part of the reason there is confusion on this matter is because, as the disciples referred to that leadership position, they used the plural form of the noun — chief priests. Indeed that seemed to be the case in Jesus' day.

The Law stipulated that the High Priest was supposed to serve in that office for life. We know that wasn't the case in first century Israel. Far from the standard of God's Law, the Roman political leaders appointed chief priests. If it was political, it was about money and power. What a travesty. As a result, Jerusalem always seemed to have a few ex-chief priests hanging around and applying quite a bit of influence through the advise they freely gave. Therefore, in Jesus' day, Caiaphas was the chief priest but Annas, his father-in-law, was the first of the "chief priests" to question Jesus at His "pre-trial."

Coming to the other leader the disciples mentioned, we have to admit that the word ruler is a rather vague term that could refer to rulers of any kind. In the context of the disciples' explanation, these must have been the leaders of religion such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, scribes and elders (which would have been either Pharisee or Sadducee).

The terms chief priests, scribes and elders are often found together to refer to all the religious leaders. They were responsible to make decisions in all areas of religion, the law and the Scripture. The scribes were responsible to study and teach the Scriptures (Genesis – Malachi). They made up any new law that was necessary for

“helping” the people to obey God’s law. The populace would have expected this august group of leaders to know who the Messiah was. Could it be that the disciples had it wrong all the time?

Must be that was the case because the chief priests and rulers rejected Jesus as Messiah. The disciples told the Stranger that these chief priests and rulers *delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him*” (v.20). They delivered Jesus of Nazareth up. The verb means to hand over or to commit to another. The chief priests and rulers took possession of Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane through the power of the temple guards. They questioned Jesus and abused Him for several hours. Then they took this Jesus whom they had forcefully taken into their possession and handed Him over to the political authority Pilate.

They delivered Jesus to be condemned to death. They were not interested in justice. They did not intend for Pilate’s soldiers to beat and punish Jesus and then release Him. Pilate tried that having told the mob, *I will therefore punish and release Him*” (Luke 23:16). No, that wasn’t going to fly! The religious leaders wanted nothing short of death for this Jesus. But they were not permitted by law to condemn a man to death, and that is why they handed Him over to the political authority.

Ultimately, it was just as the two disciples said: “They crucified Him.” It was a very simple statement made almost in passing. But it was a stinging accusation. To this day, Jews react to such a condemning conclusion. No Jew would have been willing to render himself ceremonially unclean for the Passover Feast by participating in a crucifixion—physically. No Jew hammered the nails or hoisted the cross or thrust the spear into Jesus’ side. But what did these very leaders and the crowd they manipulated say to Pilate? *And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”* (Matthew 27:25). The consequences of this crime have been visited on their children many times since that day. The two disciples were right . . . the chief priests and rulers crucified the man the disciples thought was Messiah.

Before we point fingers of accusation at those cold-hearted religionists, let’s stop to remember that intelligent people would still deliver up Jesus. It is still the significant people who rule over our world. They are people with money, with family connections, who

are able to manipulate their friends to become powerful. They make the rules for the masses. The graduates of the Ivy League schools rule over everyone else in America. Check out the educational background for the White House, the Congress, and the Supreme Court. Consider the philosophical leanings of all the leaders of the media and press. Our rulers are the elite class. The powerful, influential leaders tell the rest of the culture what to believe and how to think.

True to form established in every age, the significant people want to rule their own lives. The elite and powerful reveal their penchant to manipulate the lives of others because they are quite sure they are in charge of their own lives. And so, even the religious leaders of the culture tell us what to believe, how to act, and what philosophies to embrace. They are as wrong as the leaders who crucified Jesus, and they would do it all over again. This conclusion is obvious because they refuse to let Messiah be their King. They reign as kings and will have no part of the historical Jesus messing up their lives. And we, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, say, “Our rulers and leaders have no time for the One we think is Messiah.”

Some of Our Women Found the Tomb Empty (vv.22-23).

The disciples mentioned some women had committed to follow Messiah. They told the Stranger, *Moreover, some women of our company amazed us* (v.22a). They sacrificed much to help the “ministry.” It was a small band of women who helped Jesus and the disciples who, for the most part, we do not know. It is true that the Scripture names some of them in various places. But for the most part, we know only a little about this band of precious helpers. It appears that some helped while they stayed home, while others might have traveled with Jesus and the disciples. They were women like Mary who anointed Jesus’ feet and dried them with her hair. They were like Martha who worried herself sick trying to be a good hostess. They were part of the “company.”

These women were confused by the recent turn of events. *They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive* (vv.22b-23). On one hand, they

hoped He was the one who would redeem Israel (v.21). But then they watched as Jesus was punished, mocked, scourged, crucified, and laid in a tomb. So much for the idea that He was the Redeemer of Israel.

Things went from bad to unexplainable for those women. That very morning some of the women who were committed to Jesus as Messiah discovered that His body was not in the tomb. Even more remarkable was that angels appeared to them announcing that Jesus had risen from the dead. So why was there not great rejoicing? Where was the party? This was too much to believe. A risen Messiah? None of this made sense. In the first place, Messiah should not have died. He should have gathered His army together to free Israel from Rome. He should have ousted Herod and sat on his throne at the palace. The events of the past few days were so mind-boggling that the women could not possibly connect the dots. What was going on here?

Committed people, though committed to something religious, still don't grasp the real purpose of Messiah. They do not understand the need for a Savior from sin. Millions of people understand that there is a Creator God to whom they will give an answer. No one needs to convince them that they are guilty of sin—their consciences do that quite well. They wonder how they are supposed to loose themselves from the consequences of that sin. Being deficient in their understanding of the need of the Savior, these people commit to religion. They hear what sounds like a good explanation for getting free from consequences. They learn they need to do good works.

So, the poor ignorant folks set about to establish their own means to gain salvation. Since God is good, they reason that it only makes sense to do good in order to please Him. More exactly, they conclude that since God is love, it only makes sense that if they too are loving, God will smile on them in the end. So they either commit to a list of what constitutes good works or works of love or they make their own lists. They are devout and serious about doing the kind of things they imagined Jesus would do if He were here.

If that is God's plan for individuals to remove the stain of sin, why did Jesus die and rise from the dead? That is a good question. If He was such a fine example of love and good works, He must have died simply as a martyr. Martyrdom for a good cause is always admirable. Two disciples on the road to Emmaus were really

confused and kind of wondered why this Stranger who walked with them didn't know what was going on.

Some of the Disciples Found the Tomb Empty (v.24).

The two fellows in the story, along with the other disciples, observed many reasons to believe Jesus. They saw the miracles He did and heard the teaching He taught. For three years, Jesus had revealed God and His will to these disciples. No doubt all of the disciples were impressed from the beginning of their meeting with Jesus that they had found the Messiah. We know that was the case for a fellow named Andrew who quickly told Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). Likewise, Philip found Nathanael and said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets wrote" (John 1:45). This was the greatest find in life!

The lessons Jesus taught were not typical but seemed to be from heaven. Over and over Jesus impressed the disciples with His power. He made lame men walk, blind men to see, the deaf to hear, and released the woman with hemorrhages from her sickness. He healed lepers and cast out demons. He controlled the wind and the sea and fed multiplied thousands from small baskets of fish and bread. More than that, the disciples saw Jesus raise the dead son of the widow from Nain to life (Luke 7:15). They saw Him raise the daughter of Jairus from death to life (Luke 8:55). They saw Him resurrect from the tomb His friend Lazarus who had been dead for four days (John 11:44).

For about a year, the disciples had heard Jesus tell them repeatedly that He was going to die and rise again. Jesus began to tell the disciples this news in the context of Peter's great confession that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 16:16). *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised (Matthew 16:21).* A few days later Jesus said the same thing. *As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed (Matthew 17:22-23).* Several times Jesus said this. The words

distressed the disciples, but they never seemed to grasp what the Master was teaching them.

The reason the disciples could not make sense of Jesus' distressing teaching was because they had an errant understanding of Messiah's purpose. They even confessed to the Stranger, "*But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened*" (v.21). The disciples view of Messiah did not fit with the suffering Servant-of-God picture that Isaiah had declared (Isaiah 53). The idea of the Lamb of God, the words John the Baptist used to introduce Jesus to the disciples, never registered. They were Jews who sacrificed lambs at least every Passover. They were Jews well versed in the requirements of the law, requirements for lambs to be slain to picture the final sacrifice of the Lamb of God for sins. So why were they unable to connect the Lamb idea with sacrifice (i.e. execution)?

The disciples were looking for a Messiah who would restore the kingdom to Israel and sit on the throne of David as King. That is why Peter rebuked Jesus when He first began to teach about His death, burial, and resurrection. *And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."* But he turned and said to Peter, "*Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man*" (Matthew 16:22-23). Peter's mind, as that of all the disciples, was not set on the things of God. So set in this error were the disciples that even after they met with and talked with the risen Savior for 40 days, they asked, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). They believed in Messiah, they loved Messiah, they just didn't have God's view of Messiah. Now Jesus their Messiah had been dead (and as far as they knew, gone) for three days.

The two disciples were not odd at all compared to our modern peers. Religious people still experience many reasons to hope in Jesus. They see the evidence, but it doesn't change their hearts. They see many expressions of Christ's work. Through their "church experience" they see souls saved, lives changed, praise, worship, prayer, and hear the Bible read and preached. But in spite of all this exposure to Christ, their hearts are not changed. *For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened,*

who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt (Hebrews 6:4-6). How can people be so familiar with the things of Christ and yet not be born again?

Like the disciples, many people today do not understand the need for the Christ in their lives. We all tend to want life to operate according to our desires—just like those disciples of old did. In that vein of thinking, we decide how things should work out, what kind of religious experience is comfortable or exciting, and, in short, what the will of God is. We conclude things like, "He is going to restore the kingdom to Israel in our lifetime." But until we are convinced of the reality of our sin, the gravity of our sin, and the consequences of our sin, we will never understand the need for the Perfect Jesus, the Murdered Jesus, the Dead Jesus, and the Resurrected Jesus. So how will we be convinced?

What Does Your Bible Say? (vv.25-27).

The Stranger was the resurrected Jesus Himself. He listened to the disciples whining about the events of the day and then, *He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself* (vv.25-27).

Jesus pointed out that Moses and the Prophets describe the work of Messiah. Those men should have known that. Of all people, they should have recognized that Moses and the Law pointed to the work and ministry of Christ. All of those required sacrifices pictured the need for blood to be shed for the forgiveness of sins. Obvious was the fact that the blood of all those lambs, goats, and oxen did not pay the price for sin because the people kept repeating the picture. The writer to the Hebrew Christians pointed out: *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly*

things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Hebrews 9:22-24). It all pointed to Christ the Messiah.

Not only Moses and the Law, but the Prophets declared the work of the Savior. Surely Jesus unpacked some of Isaiah's words. Like, *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1).* Or, *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth (Isaiah 53:3-7).*

Did Jesus explain how Jeremiah promised the new covenant that would be made available only through Christ's sacrifice? *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:33-34)*

It is hard to understand what the disciples concluded when they had studied Daniel's very specific promise about Christ's execution. *But after the sixty-two sets of seven time periods, the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing (Daniel 9:26a GWV).* If the disciples really believed that Jesus was the Christ, why didn't they make the

connection? Once Jesus opened the Scripture to them, they did. Suddenly all the dots began to connect for the disciples.

So, too, your Bible explains why Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Resurrection was necessary because of death. Jesus Christ died in order to pay the penalty for our sins. He was the only human to ever live perfectly under the Law of God. Therefore, only His sacrifice of His blood would suffice to pay the penalty for all the sin of humanity. To reject the redemption price He paid is to conclude that Christ's death was unnecessary. It leaves Christ, God the Son, being nothing but a martyr who died for his cause. Or it makes the death of Christ a huge mistake. And that requires no resurrection.

Resurrection was necessary to give life. That is why John introduced Jesus this way: *In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:4-5).* He who lives eternally gives the gift of eternal life. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).* He offers life that never ends to those who trust Him, who have implicit faith in His finished work. He offers life that is of the same quality as His own life to those who trust Him.

On the first Easter Sunday, there were some people who were perplexed, confused, and discouraged because they didn't understand what their Bible said about Jesus. Jesus helped them understand and their hearts were warmed within them. On this Easter Sunday, people will be perplexed, confused, and discouraged if they do not embrace what the Bible says about Jesus. If such people would just confess their sin against their Creator, acknowledge that they are powerless to cause reconciliation, and by faith embrace the sacrifice of Christ as the means of reconciliation, their doubt will flee and they will know peace with God.