



Luke 24

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Tape #8068
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Luke's gospel chapter twenty-four, the last chapter of the gospel of Luke.

The twenty-third chapter ended with the burial of Jesus. If that were the last chapter of the gospel of Luke, we might as well all go home. There is no gospel. The gospel is, the good news is that though He was crucified and buried He rose again. Therein we have the gospel. It's in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the whole gospel hinges on the fact of the resurrection. If there be no resurrection, then there is no gospel. We are still in our sins. Those who have died with a hope in Christ have perished. It's all over. We're of all to be most pitied if there is no resurrection of Jesus.

We know that when Luke wrote this, he didn't write chapter one, verse one, verse two; he didn't set out verses and chapters. He just wrote the whole thing without verses and chapters. These verses and chapters were added by men to help us to reference certain passages. Because there is a scripture that is just very meaningful to me, how do I find it? And so because we have it divided into chapters and verses, we can reference the scripture. So it's a handy way to reference.

But many times, we come to an end of the chapter and we sort of think, That's the end of the chapter. But the story goes on. If it all ended at chapter twenty-three, we'd be in a mess. But the story goes on. It is a continuous story and it's very evident by looking at the end of chapter twenty-three and we read in verse fifty-five, "And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after." That is, Joseph took the body of Jesus to bury it in the sepulchre. And so they were following Joseph who is carrying the body of Jesus. "And they beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and perfumes; and they rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:55,56).

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre (24:1),

The "they" of chapter twenty-four, first verse, is identified by the last verse of the twenty-third chapter, "they" being the women who had come from the Galilee region. Jesus traveled with a large company. We think of the twelve apostles but actually there were hundreds of disciples. And when Jesus would travel there would be a great crowd that would travel with Him. You've got to think of logistics.

When you're travelling, you've got to have food, you've got to have other things besides just walking along. They didn't have Motel Six. They didn't have buses and all, but they were walking and if you rip your robe on a bush or something, you have to have a lady around who can sew the thing up. And of course, you need ladies to prepare the food and all. And so there were many ladies that traveled with them also. And these ladies had come from Galilee, as Jesus made His way to Jerusalem. They were devout followers of Jesus.

Among them, of course, was Mary Magdalene. Mary who was from the little [I was going to say] sea coast, but it is the sea of Galilee, it's called that, but she was from one of the little cities or villages along the shores of the Galilee, Magdala. And there were many others who came and they were very interested. When Jesus was being crucified, they were standing there watching the crucifixion. They watched as Joseph took them down. They followed Joseph to the tomb where he placed Jesus and they were watching the whole event. And then they went home and they began to prepare the spices and the perfumes to take back and to put in the folds of the wrapping around the body of Jesus to pay their final respects.

But sabbath day came and so they had to wait for the sabbath. But early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women were heading back towards the sepulchre,

bringing the spices which they had prepared, and there were certain others with them. And they found that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre (24:1,2).

Mark tells us while they were on their way to the sepulchre, they were worried. They were saying, Who's going to roll away the stone? Because he tells us it was a great stone.

In Jerusalem today, you can go to a couple of these stone sepulchers. They're hewn out of the stone. There's one right near the King David Hotel. It's called the Tomb of Herod, which it is not, but it is right there just beside almost the King David Hotel. And there is this burial cave and there is this stone that they roll over the opening of the cave. The stone is rolled back but it is huge. I can understand the women saying, Who's going to roll away the stone for us?

There is another place near the garden tomb, it's called the King's Tomb. Very fancy burial area and they have there again another cave and you can go inside and you find all these little niches where they had buried people. It was more than just, it was a family kind of a mausoleum and there is a huge stone in front of it in a groove and you roll the stone back and roll it in.

But I got up on the wall and put my feet on it and tried to push it with my feet and I couldn't do it. It was really heavy and really lodged in there. So I can understand the women's saying, Who's going to roll away the stone? When they got there, to their amazement, the stone was already rolled away.

Just a little side note. It's interesting the things that we often worry about. Here the women were worried about who's going to roll away the stone. All of their worry about that was worthless because when they got there, the stone was already rolled away. And how many times we find in life we're worried about something but by the time we get there, we find the Lord has already been there before us and taken care of it. All of our worry was just wasted after, wasted time because the Lord had already taken care of it. Shows you, don't waste much time worrying. It doesn't really help the situation and many times, by the. And usually it's worried about something in the future. I can handle it right now. I'm okay right now. But I'm worried about next week. But the Lord goes before us so often and takes care of the issues before we ever get there.

So they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus (24:3).

They found that it was empty. The tomb was empty. Though the wrappings that were around His body were lying there, yet the Lord was not there.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, these two men said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee (24:4-6),

Don't you remember what He told you there in Galilee? Go back to the ninth chapter and in verse twenty-two, when Jesus was with them in Galilee, Jesus was saying to them, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day" (Luke 9:22). He told them that. And so the angel is saying, Don't you remember what He told you when you were in the Galilee? That He would be raised the third day? He isn't here. Why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here. He's risen. Don't you remember what He told you while you were there in the Galilee.

To put the order of events, Mary Magdalene was coming with these ladies to the sepulcher. As they came to the sepulcher, when they saw the stone rolled away Mary immediately assumed that someone had maybe taken the body of Jesus. So she left the other ladies to run and tell Peter and John that the stone was rolled away from the door of the sepulcher. These other ladies, we read here, went into the sepulcher. Mary had split to tell Peter and John what had happened. While the other ladies were still there, the two angels appeared to them and told them that Jesus was risen just like He said He would. So they went off to tell the disciples that they saw the angels.

In the meantime, Peter and John came running back to the sepulcher and they found just like Mary Magdalene had told them that the clothes of Jesus were lying there but the body of Jesus wasn't there. Peter wondered what in the world is going on but John caught the picture and he realized, He's risen.

As Peter and John left, Mary who couldn't keep up with them, arrived at the sepulcher, coming back to it, doing detective work. She's going to discover where the body of Jesus has been taken so that she can give it proper attention in burial. As she looks into the tomb, she sees an angel who asked her, Why are you weeping? And she said, Because they have taken away my Lord. I don't know where He is. And turning

away, she saw Jesus standing there but she didn't recognize that it was Jesus. She thought that maybe He was a gardener.

And He asked her, Woman, why are you crying? And she said, Because they've taken away my Lord but if you will tell me where you have taken Him, I will carry Him away. Jesus said unto her, Mary. And she realized who it was and she came over and grabbed hold of Him, began to hug Him like a person that was drowning. I'll never let you away from me again. And He said, Mary, don't cling to Me. But you go and tell My disciples that I have risen indeed. So Mary went to tell His disciples that she had seen the risen Lord.

In the meantime, as these other ladies were going back Jesus also appeared to them. And they came and held Him by the feet. And then later on, in that morning. Then before they got back with the fact that we had seen Christ; all they had was a message, We saw the angels, these two disciples took off for Emmaus. That we'll be getting to in a little bit. Getting ahead of my story here.

But then Jesus appeared to Peter and we'll catch that but we don't know anything about the appearance to Peter. But it's recorded by Paul in Corinthians chapter fifteen and also recorded here in Luke. So that gives you a little bit of the order of the events.

So the angel said, Don't you remember what He told you when you were in the Galilee?

He told you that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And then they remembered his words (24:7,8),

Yes, He did say that! I remember that.

And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest (24:9).

The rest of the disciples. Just the eleven apostles, the rest of the disciples. Of course, Judas is no longer there so you got eleven now.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles (24:10).

Mary had told Peter and John earlier and they ran to check it out. But these are the women.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not (24:11).

They didn't trust the word of these women. It seemed like just hysteria or they just didn't believe. They were so destroyed by the crucifixion of Jesus. It had so shocked them, it had brought them such great disappointment, I think that they were afraid to believe. It's like a person who has been extremely hurt in a love relationship and is afraid to ever love again. Their hopes had been so high for the kingdom, a better world that was promised by the Lord that when Jesus was crucified and their hopes were so dashed, they were afraid to even hope again. And thus, the story of the women they just didn't believe it.

Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes, they were lying there by themselves, and he departed, wondering (24:12)

He was questioning, wondered what's going on.

what has come to pass (24:12).

John saw it, he believed. He's risen. Peter is still questioning.

And, behold, two of them [that is, of the disciples] went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs (24:13).

A furlong is about 582 feet or a little more than a tenth of a mile. Sixty furlongs then would be just a little over six miles. And so they were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It would be like us deciding to walk to Orange. Take you a little while to get there. And they were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Or to Disneyland from here, about six miles.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened (24:14).

They were just discussing the crucifixion. They were discussing how horribly disappointed they were. How that their hopes for the kingdom had been so shattered.

And it came to pass, that, while they were talking with each other and trying to figure these things out, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them (24:15).

He came out and began to walk along with them.

But their eyes were holden that they should not know him (24:16).

They just didn't realize who it was.

The eyes of unbelief. Blind. Tragic, too. Unbelief has such a blinding effect upon people. Whereas faith opens up your eyes. We see so many people who are bound in unbelief. And we see how blind they are to the spiritual realities that exist around us. They don't see them. They don't see the hand of God in nature. Or in the circumstances or the events of their life. They seem to be totally blind to these things. "Their eyes were holden they should not know Him."

And he said unto them, What are you fellows talking about as you are walking along? You seem to be so sad. What's your problem, fellows? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, [and the other we don't know his name] answering said unto him, Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, that doesn't know the things which have come to pass there in these last few days (24:17,18)?

Everybody knows what happened. You remember later on, when Paul made his defense before King Agrippa in Caesarea, as Paul was talking to Agrippa about the crucifixion of Jesus, he said, You know these things, Agrippa. It wasn't done in a corner. It was something that everybody knew about. And so when Jesus asked, How come you guys are so sad? What's your problem? They said, Are you the only stranger around here that doesn't know what's happened lately in Jerusalem?

And Jesus [I think with sort of a bit of humor] said, What things (24:19)?

What are you talking about? As though He didn't know. But giving them the opportunity to express their feelings over the things that has happened. Drawing them out.

And they answered Him and said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people (24:19):

Jesus a mighty prophet in the deeds. And surely when you read of the life of Jesus, the miracles that He performed, the opening of the blind eyes, making the lame to walk, cleansing the leper, raising the dead, no man in the history of the world has done these kind of deeds that Jesus did, healing all manner of sicknesses that were among the people.

Not only though mighty in deed but mighty in word and today we still marvel at the teachings of Jesus. We marvel at the sermon on the mount. And His words have influenced more people towards a good life than any other person in history. His words have had more influence in our western civilization than any other man. His words have had more influence on world history than any other man. No man even comes close to Jesus as far as impact upon the world and the history of the world. Surely mighty in word and in deed. You can't deny that.

Even as you look at the world today. Here we are tonight, influenced by the word of Jesus. Here we are tonight, with a hope of eternal life because of the words of Jesus. Here we are transformed from a life of darkness, a life that's governed by sin to a life of righteousness, seeking after the Lord and the things of the Lord. Living a life of honesty, purity, righteousness, knowing that that's what our Lord desires. And so their witness of Him, a prophet might in deed. But then, they said,

The chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and they have crucified him (24:20).

A good man and yet they condemned Him and crucified Him. One thing that the Bible makes certain that you all know is that Jesus did not die for sin that He committed. Pilate said, I've examined Him, I find no fault in Him. He died not for His sin but He died for your sins. The Bible said, "All of us like sheep have gone astray; we turned every one of us to our own ways, and God laid on Him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). All of the sins I have ever committed were laid on Jesus Christ. He died for me.

But because He died for my sin, I don't have to die for my sin. He took my sin, died in my place, thus I don't have to die for my sin and those who believe in Jesus don't have to die for their sins but can have eternal life by their believing in Him. That's the gospel. That's God's good news. That though you have sinned and though you are guilty, your guilt can be forgiven. More than that, God just counts you as though you were never guilty. He justifies you because of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

"The chief priests and the rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and they crucified Him."

But we trusted [it's past tense here, we trusted or we had trusted] that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel (24:21):

We thought that He was the Messiah, the Redeemer. We thought He was the One that was going to

establish the kingdom of God, to usher in an age of righteousness, the golden age. Age of God's reign and God's rule over the earth. We thought He was the One. We thought this is it. We had trusted. But here and now, shows the reason for their sadness, for their despair because they crucified Him,

and this is now the third day (24:21).

Our hope is gone. It's over. He's dead. We had trusted that He would have been the One to redeem Israel. But this is the third day since He was crucified, since these things were done.

Yea, and certain women also of our company astonished us, who had gone early to the tomb this morning; When they didn't find the body, they came back, and they said, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and they found it even so as the women had said [that is, the stone was rolled back]: but they didn't see him (24:22-24).

Though they had the witness of the women, that the tomb was empty, they had the witness of Peter and John who had gone to the tomb, yet they still didn't believe.

So Jesus said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken (24:25):

Their problem was that they believed only part of what the prophets had spoken. Didn't the prophets say that He was going to set up a new world in which there would be peace? Men would beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, they would study war no more. Every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree, eating and not being afraid. Didn't they speak of a glorious day when men would not taking advantage of other men? When everyone would live together in a community of love and sharing. When there would be no greed. When there would be no sickness. Sort of a perfect world. All of us enjoying its glory and beauty without striving. Yes, the prophets did say that. That's a part of the story of the Messiah.

But the prophets also said, He would be "despised and rejected by men; He would be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He would be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and with His stripes we would be healed. And God would lay upon Him the iniquities of us all. And that He would die and be numbered with the transgressors in His death" (Isaiah 53:3,5,6,12). But God cried out, For the transgressions of my people was He smitten.

The prophets spoke of His being crucified. The prophets spoke of His being cut off without receiving the kingdom. And many other such like prophecies of the suffering of the Messiah, giving His back to the smiters, having His beard plucked out (Isaiah 50:6). Things of this nature. But they didn't believe those prophecies concerning the Messiah because they couldn't balance them. They couldn't figure out how He could reign King of Kings and Lord of Lords and still be put to death and be abused and be rejected.

So they only believed part of the prophecies concerning the Messiah. And Jesus tried to share with them the prophecies concerning His crucifixion and concerning His death but every time He did, they'd turn it off. Peter even rebuked Him once for even talking about that. He said, Shame on You, Lord, You shouldn't talk like that. Because they had a mindset tunnel vision and they could only see a part of the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

So Jesus accuses them of being slow of heart in believing all that the prophets had said. And so He said unto them,

Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things (24:26),

Talking about His crucifixion. He said, They've crucified Him. Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things?

and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses [that is, the first five books, the Torah] and through all of the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (24:26,27).

Took them through a survey of the Old Testament. And as He surveyed the Old Testament, He pointed out all of these prophecies about Himself. The sacrifices as He was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. And through the Old Testament He showed them these things. Oh, how I wish Cleopas would have written them down. Would have written a gospel of Cleopas. I would give anything for a gospel of Cleopas. If he had only shared with us the things that Jesus taught them as He expounded in the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

And as they drew near to the village [that is, Emmaus], where they were going: Jesus made like He was going to continue down the road (24:28).

Maybe over to Gibeon, just beyond Emmaus.

But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, the day is far spent. So he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and He broke it, and gave it to them (24:29,30).

Perhaps as He took the bread and blessed it, as He gave that blessing of the bread, maybe they were reminded of there at the sea of Galilee when He took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the five thousand. And just in His blessing, maybe there was a similarity that suddenly they realized, Wait a minute. Maybe it was that they saw the nailprints in His hands as He broke the bread and they saw there in the hands the nailprints. Whatever it was, suddenly,

Their eyes were opened, and they recognized this is Jesus; no sooner did they recognize that fact than Jesus disappeared (24:31).

They were so excited. Though it was late towards the evening, they jogged all the way back to Jerusalem. This news is too good to wait until tomorrow. We've got to get back and tell them that Jesus is indeed alive. We've seen Him!

O glorious news. This is the Gospel. And when you've got the Gospel, you just got to share it. Hard to keep it back. You just want to tell people the truth that Jesus is alive. He's risen from the dead.

Before they made their journey, turning to each other,

They said, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us along the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures (24:32)?

Did you feel that in your heart as He was talking? Just that burning. You see, the problem with them is that the fire had gone out. While Jesus was with them teaching them, there was a fire burning in their soul. Hope. The kingdom of God will be established soon. All of this bitterness in man. All of these strivings, these wars, all of the robbery and thievery and all, it's going to be over. We can live together in love and in peace. Soon going to be a glorious place to live because He is going to set up the kingdom and He is going to establish a righteous rule over the earth. And there was a flame in their hearts in the hope of the establishing of God's kingdom. But that flame went out when He died on the cross.

Now as He gives them all of the scriptures, as He opens up their understanding, expounds to them the scriptures, the flame begins to burn again. It's rekindled. They just start getting, Yes. True. And the flame started to burn again and thus, when He disappeared, they realized, Oh it's the Lord and He disappears. They said, Wow, didn't our hearts burn within us when He talked to us along the way? And as He opened up the scriptures to us?

So they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them (24:33),

Obviously, when they got there, the eleven were there and they shared what had happened. But when they met the eleven, the eleven told them, they said, The Lord is risen indeed. They knew that these guys went away doubting and despondent. Probably said, We're going home, that's the end of it, fellows. Had a good future but we don't know what we're going to do. It was probably a parting of, goodbye kind of a thing. Find your way and we'll try and find ours. But when they got back, the eleven said,

The Lord is risen indeed, He has appeared to Simon (24:34).

He also appeared to Mary and the women but they didn't count that. But now that Peter has the testimony, the Lord appeared to him, they're excited.

And they told what things were done (24:35)

These guys then shared, Oh man, we were in the path, and they told how Jesus came and opened up the scriptures to them. So it was just a real exciting meeting.

Now, Thomas evidently left. And after Thomas was gone, Jesus Himself showed up.

And as they were speaking, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and He said, Shalom [typical greeting] (24:36).

But they were terrified and frightened, they thought that they were seeing a ghost. And he said unto

them, Why are you so troubled? and why are your thoughts arising in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, like you see me have (24:37-39).

I'm not a ghost. I'm Jesus. Touch Me. Look, here my hands. Look at the marks in my feet. It's Me. The revelation of Jesus. Jesus will reveal Himself even today to those whose hearts are open and hungry to know Him.

You can know the experience of a heart that just burns with real passion and love for Jesus. As you begin to experience His love in your life, forgiveness of your sins, and that new life in Christ.

And so, Jesus showed to them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Do you have any meat here? So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and ate it before them. And he said, Now this is what I was telling you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (24:40-44).

I was telling you that I would be despised and rejected. I was telling you I was going to be crucified. All of these things that were written had to be fulfilled.

Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures (24:45),

How important this is. That He opens our understanding to understand the scriptures. The Bible says "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit: neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned. But he which is spiritual understands all things" (1 Corinthians 2:14,15).

So to just try to come in an intellectual approach doesn't make it. You have to pray that God will open your eyes to see, to give you understanding. And it's wonderful when the Spirit of God begins to move on a person's heart. Drawing them to Jesus Christ. How the understanding begins to open up and begins to make sense. Things that seem like a puzzle, seem confusing, all of a sudden begin to make sense. You say, Wow, I see it, yes.

He died for me. He rose again. And I can have eternal life by believing in Him. And it begins to make sense and then it begins to be exciting. Then it begins to be a thrill and a joy and the old flame begins to blaze inside. The hope that we have in and through Jesus Christ of an eternal glory with Him. He opened their understanding.

And He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day (24:46):

That was written and it was necessary that I do it.

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things (24:47,48).

It was necessary that I die and rise on the third day and that you go out now and preach to people, first of all, repentance. Repentance is more than just being sorry for the past. The things that you did in rebellion against the word of God. It is changing. Like the little child said in defining repentance, it said it is being so sorry you don't do it again. There's a change and repentance always speaks of a change. A changed attitude towards my past life and sin. A changed attitude towards Jesus Christ. That's repentance.

I'm sorry that I offended the Lord by allowing hatred or greed or these other things to master over my life. To allow the desire for pleasures or the lust of my flesh to rule me. I see where it hasn't benefited or helped me. Repentance but then the remission of sins.

If you repent, God is gracious and loving and forgiving. And because Jesus died for your sins, you can be forgiven by God and your sins can be washed away. The remission of sins. And so our Gospel begins with the call to repentance but declaring that your sins can be forgiven. Remitted by God.

As God said, "Come, let us reason together. Though your sins were as scarlet, you can be as white as snow; though they were red as crimson, yet you can be as white as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). For "if we confess our sins, He is faithful, He is just, He will forgive us our sins and He'll cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The remission of sins, what a glorious message we have to tell the people who have been burdened down by their past; who maybe are suffering because of their past. Suffering pangs of conscience or even maybe suffering physically from things that they have done in the past in a life of sin.

But we can declare unto them that if you will just turn to Jesus Christ, turn away from that past, He will forgive. Your sins will be remitted, blotted out. Never to be brought up against you again. You can be today a brand new person in Jesus. “Old things passed away, everything becoming new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

And so Jesus said, You’re to start here in Jerusalem and this is the message you’re to take to the world. Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, but He rose the third day according to the scriptures. And through Him the preaching of the remission of sins. And then He said,

Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high (24:49).

The book of Acts is a continuation of the gospel of Luke. And the gospel of Luke ends with Jesus telling His disciples, Now you tarry in Jerusalem for this promise of the Father. And I’ll send the promise of My Father upon you. But you just wait there in Jerusalem until you receive this power from God. You’re to go out to the world and tell the world the good news. But don’t go yet. You wait in Jerusalem. There’s going to be an important experience as “I’m going to pray the Father. He’s going to send you the Holy Spirit, another comforter, even the Spirit of truth that will abide with you forever” (John 14:16). And “you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you: to be My witnesses both here in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

So the last few verses of the gospel of Luke are sort of repeated in the first few verses of the Acts of the apostles. As the tie of the two books comes. So as he writes his second letter to Theophilus, the first one is called the gospel of Luke, the second is called the Acts of the Apostles. Written by Luke to this man, Theophilus. And so as he starts his letter to Theophilus he said, “The former things have I written unto you, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach, Until His ascension into heaven” (Acts 1:1,2).

He’s referring to the gospel of Luke, the ministry of Jesus while He was here on the earth with His disciples. Now Acts is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus. Only now in the book of Acts, Jesus is continuing to minister but now through His disciples who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. So until His ascension in heaven, after that He through the apostles has continued now, only through the apostles He has continued His ministry.

And so to the present day, the Lord continues to work through His devoted followers. He continues to minister to people His love, His comfort, His strength. So a definite tie between the end of Luke and the first of Acts. Because in the first chapter of Acts, the first few verses, He said, “But wait in Jerusalem,” and he talked about that “the promise of the Father, which, He said, you have heard of Me. For John indeed did baptize you with water to repentance; you’re going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit in a few days” (Acts 1:4,5). So wait in Jerusalem for this experience. Don’t go out yet.

And so it’s tied together right here with Luke where He says, Tarry in Jerusalem. He said, Wait in Jerusalem. He’s talking about the promise of the Father. In Acts, He’s talking about the promise of the Father which, of course, was in Joel, “In the last days, I’ll pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters will prophesy” (Joel 2:28). The promise of the Holy Spirit to be poured out. And so, you wait in Jerusalem for this to happen.

When we get to the book of Acts, we’ll actually get a continuation of the gospel according to Luke. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you,” here He talks about the promise of the Father upon you, the power of the Holy Spirit upon you, “and you’ll be endued with power from on high.” Jesus said in Acts, “And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you’ll be witnesses both in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth.”

So He led them out as far as Bethany (24:50),

The other gospels tell us the Mount of Olives. Bethany is on the Mount of Olives but it’s over the top of the hill and of course, that’s where Mary and Martha lived. That’s where Lazarus was raised from the dead. So He went as far as Bethany.

On the top of the Mount of Olives, I think there are three different churches that say this is the site of the ascension. One even shows you the footprints He left in the rock when He ascended. Took a lot of force to blast off and so He left the footprints in the rocks. Too bad they didn’t read the gospel of Luke and they would have put the church a little further down the hill in Bethany because He led them as far as Bethany,

Luke tells us that.

and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them (24:50).

The final act of Jesus, lifting up His hands, blessing His disciples.

And it came to pass, that while he was blessing them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy (24:51,52):

Flaming hearts. Fires burning once again.

And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen (24:53).

As we get into the book of Acts, he tells us that Jesus was standing there and He ascended into heaven. A cloud received Him out of their sight and while they were there looking steadfastly at the heavens where He had gone into the cloud, there were two angels that stood by them, white apparels, saying, "You men of Galilee, why are you staring up into the heavens? this same Jesus is going to come again in like manner as you've seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). So the promise of the return of Jesus Christ. And of course, then the fulfillment of the promise, the Holy Spirit coming upon them and then their witnessing in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth.

We read in the book of Acts that they were all gathered together in one accord, in one place and suddenly, there was this sound from heaven like a mighty rushing wind. Notice that they were continually in the temple, that upper room where they were waiting for the promise of the Father was probably one of the rooms in the temple and that's why so many people were able to gather when the Holy Spirit descended upon the church. They were over three thousand people who were converted that day. So there was a huge crowd that came to see what was going on and if it had been in a neighborhood, you couldn't get that many people around.

The fact that they were continuing daily in the temple, this room was probably one of the large rooms there in the temple itself where the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. More about that when we get to Acts.

Father, we thank You for the promise of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of that promise. We thank you, Lord, for the glorious Gospel that we have to share with people. That even though Jesus was crucified, He rose again the third day and He lives today. And those who will turn from their sin and turn to Him will be forgiven, washed and cleansed, made new persons completely; will know the joy of living in fellowship with You. Lord, thank You for the way Your word just stirs our hearts, causing them to burn, Lord, as You open to our hearts an understanding of Your scriptures. Give us further understanding, Lord, as we seek after You. In Jesus' name, Amen.