

Resurrection of Our Lord

ALIVE IN THE PROMISE

Luke 24:13-49

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Analysis by Bruce T. Martin

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 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 took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his

glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that

the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

DIAGNOSIS: Unable to Believe

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – Perplexed

The followers of Jesus, both women and men (v. 22; see 23:49), were perplexed about what had happened over the last few days (v. 14). Their hoped-for messiah (v. 21) had been handed over to the authorities and crucified, and yet he did not save himself. He was laid in a tomb, and yet his body was now missing. There was a rumor of his resurrection (v. 23), and yet no one had seen him alive (v. 24). Crucifixion and rumors of angels (v. 23) does not a messiah make.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – Blinded

The followers of Jesus, knowing first hand all that had happened, were disappointed that Jesus, “a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (v. 19), had been killed. Even with the risen Jesus present among them, they did not recognize him. Indeed, they “were kept from recognizing him” (v. 16). Filled with “doubts” (v. 38), their hearts could not see beyond their eyes. Reports about Jesus being alive again (vv. 18-19), no matter how accurate, do not believers make.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – Dead-ended

The Problem, capital P, signified here by Luke’s use of the divine passives in verse 16, is that God himself, through the law, had blinded the followers of Jesus. They (and we) were kept from seeing beyond their disappointment, beyond what we think,

hope and dream our messiah ought to be. Though there were hints of the truth already in scripture, and finally in the crucifixion itself, they were not able to fathom how deep, deceptive and destructive their sin really was. They (and we) were dead-ended by God, in order that sin itself might one day be dead-ended—in Christ.

PROGNOSIS: Believing the Promise

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *The Word of Promise*

The Promise, capital P (also for Prognosis), had literally appeared in their midst, they saw him with their eyes, and yet they did not recognize him as God's messiah. Until, that is, the living voice of Christ—the voice of the new creation—"opened their eyes/hearts/minds and they recognized him" (vv. 31, 32, 45) as the One who really saves. The new creation happened to them in "the breaking of the bread" (v. 35, summarizing v. 30) and in "interpreting/opening to them the things about himself in all the scriptures" (vv. 27, 32, 44-47). Jesus' interpretive/saving words to them, that He was "to suffer and to rise from the dead" in fulfillment of the scriptures, brought them "peace" with God and "forgiveness of sins" (vv. 26, 36, 46-49). Only thus could they "see" Him as the Christ, and for Him to "enter into his glory" (v. 26).

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – *The Eyes of Promise*

Jesus' resurrected "glory" yokes him to his followers as Savior is yoked to the saved. The "redeemer of Israel" (v. 21) cannot be the Redeemer without the redeemed, nor can the promise be fulfilled without the children of promise. In Christ, in whom the old creation ends and the new creation begins, the law in its entirety is entirely "fulfilled" (v. 44). Those with eyes of promise, who see and interpret and understand scripture

according to God's saving purpose, no longer avert their eyes from Jesus the crucified messiah. With eyes of promise empowered by promise (v. 49), that is, with eyes of faith, we see and understand all that is necessary for us to see and to understand. More than that, more than the "glory" of our faith in Christ, we cannot see. Not yet!

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *The Face of Promise*

The resurrection of Jesus is the final recognition that the same who was crucified is the Christ of God, the Promise fulfilled. With eyes of promise no longer shying away from a suffering and dying Christ, the face of promise, we become "eye-witnesses" to God's saving purpose (v. 48), "proclaiming, in Jesus' name, repentance and forgiveness of sins to all people" (v. 47). The eyes of promise both recognize and bear the face of promise. Eye-witnesses are thus face-witnesses as well, bearing in their own bodies the cruciform face of Christ, which is His glory. In a world of sin, that's what the promise continues to look like. "See!" (v. 49), those who are witnesses to the promise, being alive in the promise, cannot help but bear the face of promise.