

Disciples Believe the Resurrection

Devotional Reading: [John 20:11–18](#)

Background Scripture: [Luke 24:13–49](#)

Luke 24:13–27, 30–31

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his

body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

Key Text

Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

—Luke 24:31

Jesus Calls Us

Unit 2: Experiencing the Resurrection

Lessons 5–8

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize the conversation that took place on the road to Emmaus.
2. Compare and contrast the disciples' experiences of Jesus when they did *not* and then *did* recognize him.
3. Write a prayer for his or her eyes to be opened to Jesus' presence during personal "road to Emmaus" times.

Lesson Outline

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- B. Lesson Context

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- A. Distressed by Death (vv. 13–14)
- B. Joined by Jesus (vv. 15–16)

II. The Travelers Lament (Luke 24:17–24)

- A. Despair (vv. 17–21)
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Unexpected Appearances

III. The Stranger Responds (Luke 24:25–27, 30–31)

- A. Corrective Teaching (vv. 25–27)
- B. Revealing Meal (vv. 30–31)

"Ordinary" Hospitality

Conclusion

- A. Personal Revolution
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

How to Say It

Cleopas	<i>Clee-uh-pass.</i>
Clopas	<i>Klo-pus.</i>
Emmaus	<i>Em-may-us.</i>
Ketuvim (<i>Hebrew</i>)	<i>Ket-you-vim.</i>
Maccabees	<i>Mack-uh-bees.</i>
Messiah	<i>Meh-sigh-uh.</i>
Nazareth	<i>Naz-uh-reth.</i>
Nevi'im (<i>Hebrew</i>)	<i>Neh-vih-im.</i>
Pentateuch	<i>Pen-ta-teuk.</i>
Pilate	<i>Pie-lut.</i>
Tanakh (<i>Hebrew</i>)	<i>Tah-nahkh.</i>
Torah (<i>Hebrew</i>)	<i>Tor-uh.</i>

Introduction

A. The Resurrection Revolution

What do you think of when you hear the term *revolution*? Perhaps you think of socio-political revolutions, like the American Revolution. But other, much less bloody revolutions have since occurred. These revolutions have provided a similar sense of cultural change and upheaval in their wake.

Beginning with the creation of the transistor in the mid-twentieth century, the Digital Revolution has changed the way people engage with the world. From the transistor came the ability for more advanced computers and, ultimately, the internet.

By the twenty-first century, millions of transistors could be placed on a single microchip. These microchips are the computing power behind modern electronic devices. Because of the Digital Revolution and the resulting ease of access to computers, everyday life has changed in one way or another. Any person who has access to the internet can experience a life previously thought unattainable. All this has resulted in humanity's transition into a new era of history: the Information Age.

The story of Scripture comes to one climax with a revolution: the resurrection of Jesus. This revolution overthrew the reign of death and brought the possibility of new life, one free from fear and despair ([Romans 5:12–21](#)). Today's Scripture reveals the surprising nature of that revolution.

B. Lesson Context

Today's Scripture follows after the women discovered the empty tomb ([Luke 24:1–8](#); see [lesson 5](#)). Two apostles wanted to see the empty tomb for themselves ([24:12](#); compare [John 20:3–10](#)).

Many first-century Jews believed in the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead. This doctrine is rooted in certain Old Testament prophetic texts (see [Daniel 12:1–3, 13](#); etc.). Jewish texts from the period between the Old and New Testaments developed this doctrine further (see the nonbiblical [2 Maccabees 7:13–14; 12:43](#); etc.). Not all Jews, however, believed in the resurrection (see [Acts 23:8](#)). Jesus' followers, though skeptical of the empty tomb, would not have entirely denied the possibility.

I. The Journey Begins

(Luke 24:13–16)

A. Distressed by Death (vv. 13–14)

13. Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

These *two* travelers were some of Jesus' followers who had heard the women's report regarding the empty tomb (see [Luke 24:9](#)). The travelers began their journey on the *same day* that the women had seen the tomb: "the first day of the week" ([24:1](#)). Scripture does not indicate the reason for their journey.

One possibility is that the two had come to *Jerusalem* for the observance of Passover, which had been during the previous week (see [Luke 22:1](#); [John 13:1](#)). Jews were required to travel to Jerusalem to participate in that annual event (see [Deuteronomy 16:5–6](#); compare [Luke 2:41–42](#)). Since the observance of Passover had passed (see [Matthew 26:17](#); [Luke 22:7](#)), plus the fact that the Sabbath was over (see [23:54–56](#)), the two travelers could have been returning home.

This verse is the only mention in the New Testament of *a village called Emmaus*, and its exact location is unknown. Even at the slow pace of two miles per hour, the travelers could complete the approximately *seven mile* journey to Emmaus in under a day.

14. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

At a normal walking pace of two miles per hour, the journey provided ample time for contemplation and conversation regarding what *had happened* during the previous week. The primary attention-getters had been, of course, Jesus' arrest ([Luke 22:47–54](#)), trials ([22:66–23:25](#)), crucifixion ([23:26–46](#)), and burial ([23:50–55](#)). In their perspective, the

final chapter of Jesus' life and ministry had been written. However, the women who visited Jesus' tomb had described a different reality (see [24:1–12](#)). Was there any way for the two men to make sense of *everything*?

What Do You Think?

Who is a believer with whom you can discuss how God's work changed your life?

Digging Deeper

How will you offer "heartfelt advice" ([Proverbs 27:9](#)) for the spiritual growth of that believer?

B. Joined by Jesus (vv. 15–16)

15. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;

The word translated *discussed* is used elsewhere by Luke the author to suggest strong debate (see [Luke 22:23](#); [Acts 6:9](#); [9:29](#)). The emphatic statement *Jesus himself* stresses that it was Jesus and no one else who appeared *and walked along with* the two.

16. but they were kept from recognizing him.

The fact that the two *were kept from recognizing him* could mean either that God obscured their vision in some way or that Jesus' physical appearance was somewhat changed from before his burial. Another possibility is that the two were so engaged in conversation that they failed to recognize Jesus. The two had no reason to think that this other traveler would have special insight regarding the previous week's events. Later, other followers of Jesus would also fail to recognize him in their midst (see [John 20:14–15](#); [21:4](#)).

II. The Travelers Lament

(Luke 24:17–24)

A. Despair (vv. 17–21)

17. He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast.

As the all-knowing Son of God, Jesus knew the reason for the two travelers’ discussion and resulting sadness (compare [Mark 2:8](#)). Thus Jesus’ question was intended to start a conversation, not to gain knowledge.

18. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

Luke identifies *one* of the two as *Cleopas*. It is highly unlikely that this individual was the same as “Clopas” in [John 19:25](#). Perhaps Luke identified this individual because he was still alive when Luke wrote his Gospel. If this were the case, the Gospel’s original audience could corroborate the story.

Cleopas was surprised that the other traveler was unaware of the previous week’s events. Jesus had taught openly at the Jerusalem temple ([Luke 21:37](#)). Crowds had gathered at his trial ([23:13–23](#)) and crucifixion ([23:27](#)). Therefore, Cleopas assumed that the traveler was *the only one visiting* and was clueless as to what had happened in *Jerusalem*. But Cleopas’s response could even be read as a sarcastic retort. Even a stranger coming to Jerusalem for the observance of Passover would surely have known *the things that had happened* to Jesus.

Ironically, the person who seemed to be a stranger was the only person who fully understood the week’s events. Cleopas assumed that the

stranger was unaware at best and ignorant at worst. However, it was Cleopas who was in the dark.

19a. “What things?” he asked.

Jesus did not immediately reveal his knowledge regarding the *things* that had occurred over the previous week. To start a conversation with the two travelers, Jesus asked them to recount the week’s events as they understood them.

19b. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

The designation *Jesus of Nazareth* occurs 15 times in the New Testament, functioning as an identifier of his earthly origin. Nazareth was the town where he grew up (see [Luke 2:39–40](#)). Jesus’ followers invoked this designation when they did miraculous works in the name and power of Jesus (see [Acts 3:6–8; 4:8–11](#)).

What Do You Think?

Under what circumstances should we invoke Jesus’ name today?

Digging Deeper

How do [Acts 3:6, 16; 9:27–28; 16:18; Colossians 3:17; and James 5:14](#) help frame your answer?

19c. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

As Jesus showed his might and proclaimed Scripture, people considered him to be at least *a prophet* of God (see [Matthew 21:10–11; Luke 7:16–17; 9:18–19](#)). In addition to foretelling and forthtelling, prophets like those in the Old Testament did miraculous works in the name of the Lord (example: [1 Kings 18:30–38](#)).

To the two, Jesus’ power was evident through his teaching and mirac-

ulous deeds. However, even Moses was “powerful in speech and action” ([Acts 7:22](#)). Did the travelers believe that Jesus was more than a prophet and was truly the Son of God?

20. “The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

Jesus had warned his disciples about his arrest, specifically that the Jewish leadership would reject him and instigate the process leading to his death ([Luke 9:22](#); compare [19:47](#); [20:19](#)). This was fulfilled when “Pilate called together *the chief priests, the rulers and the people*” ([23:13](#)) to determine what would happen to Jesus after his arrest.

No first-century Jew anticipated that God’s Messiah would have been *sentenced to death and crucified*. The Roman Empire used crucifixion as a tool to terrorize its subjects and assert its authority. Jesus’ followers expected him to overcome the Roman Empire and free God’s people from oppression.

21a. “but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

The reason that the travelers were distraught was because they had (rightly) believed that Jesus was the anointed deliverer from God, the Messiah. Hebrew Scriptures promised that God’s anointed deliverer would be a descendant of David to redeem and rule over *Israel* (see [2 Samuel 7:10–16](#); compare [Luke 20:41–44](#)). Many Jews anticipated that this would be a political redemption, freeing the people from oppressive foreign occupation (see [Acts 1:6](#)).

By speaking of *the one who was going to redeem Israel*, the travelers likely shared this viewpoint. They had *hoped* and trusted that Jesus would free their people from foreign oppression. To see Jesus put to death in a horrifying manner brought them disappointment. For a

deeper study on the concept of redemption and expectations of the redeemer, see [Exodus 6:6](#); [2 Samuel 7:23](#); [Psalm 130:8](#); [Isaiah 43:1](#); [44:6](#); [49:7](#); [Luke 1:68](#); [2:38](#); [21:25–28](#).

What Do You Think?

How should believers respond when God’s plans turn out differently than they had expected?

Digging Deeper

How does prayer (see [Philippians 4:6–7](#)) prepare you to deal with those situations?

21b. “And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

The two may have heard of the promise that Jesus made to his disciples regarding his resurrection on *the third day* (see [Luke 9:22](#); [18:31–33](#); compare [13:32](#)). On this, the promised third day, the two left Jerusalem without having experienced the fulfillment—or so they thought.

B. Skepticism (vv. 22–24)

22–23. “In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.

The two were part of “all the others” ([Luke 24:9](#)) who had received the report from the *women* regarding the empty *tomb* (see [lesson 5](#)).

24. “Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

The women’s report had been confirmed by others. Peter had visited the empty *tomb* ([Luke 24:12](#)). John’s Gospel indicates that another disciple—John himself—joined Peter in investigating ([John 20:1–10](#)). Both

men confirmed what *the women had said*, but the men did not see their resurrected Lord. Jesus' followers had to live in faith, trusting Jesus' promises without having immediate evidence to their fulfillment (compare [20:26–29](#)).

Unexpected Appearances

I sat across from my roommate in our dorm room as we talked about a mutual friend. Mid-conversation the door opened, and that mutual friend walked into our room. We wondered how much of the conversation our friend had heard!

News of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial, along with the women's claim regarding the tomb, were all that the two men could talk about. They had questions and felt confusion regarding it all. What does our resurrected Lord think of your conversations? Do you proclaim him in a way that invites others to proclaim him also?

—L. M. W.

III. The Stranger Responds ([Luke 24:25–27, 30–31](#))

A. Corrective Teaching ([vv. 25–27](#))

25. He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”

By calling the two travelers *foolish*, Jesus followed in the tradition of Hebrew wisdom literature that called out the folly of fools ([Proverbs 13:16](#); etc.). Paul used the same underlying Greek word when he rebuked people who were being led astray by false teaching (see [Galatians 3:1, 3](#)).

The rebuke came because the two were *slow to believe* and accept the teachings regarding the promised Messiah. Jesus previously had brought together his Twelve Apostles and proclaimed that “everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled” (Luke 18:31). He followed with a prediction of his arrest, death, and resurrection (18:32–33).

Although these two were not among Jesus’ Twelve Apostles, they had received the teaching of *the prophets* regarding the Messiah. Such teachings likely included Isaiah’s proclamation regarding the suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; etc.). Further, Jesus also might have referred to the prophet Daniel regarding the promised reign of “one like a son of man, ... the Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:13–14).

The two were slow to believe, but they were not incapable or ill-prepared. The prophets’ teachings, the women’s testimony, and even the words of Jesus himself provided ample evidence of God’s work.

26. “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

This simple question expressed a central part of God’s eternal plan. Jesus had previously attested to the ways that the Son of Man would suffer (Luke 9:22, 44; 17:22–25; 18:31–34). He then related that to the suffering experienced by *the Messiah*. The title “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of Messiah (see John 1:41), both titles meaning “the anointed one.” God’s plan of salvation required that Christ suffer before being glorified. As a result, salvation is available (see Acts 5:30–31; Hebrews 2:10).

27. And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Jesus referred to Hebrew Scripture, what Christians call the Old Tes-

tament, to prove his point. Its contents in Jesus' day are traditionally seen in three categories. First are the writings of *Moses*, the first five books of the Old Testament. These five are often referred to as the five books of law, the Pentateuch, or Torah. Two passages Jesus may have discussed from this section include [Genesis 3:15](#) and [Deuteronomy 18:15](#).

The second section is called *Nevi'im*, which is the Hebrew word for *Prophets*. Some passages Jesus may have cited from this section include [Isaiah 7:14](#); [9:6](#); [Ezekiel 34:23](#); and [Malachi 3:1](#). The third section, not mentioned in the verse before us, is called *Ketuvim*, which refers to all the other books of the Old Testament that are not in the writings of Moses or the prophets. The author Luke does not refer to this third category, but he does do so in [Luke 24:44](#) by using the phrase "the Psalms" loosely as a catchall category.

Taking the first letter of each word *Torah*, *Nevi'im*, and *Ketuvim* and adding vowels yields the word *Tanakh*, used to describe the entirety of the Old Testament. This three-fold division is rather different from the division most often used today: 5 books of law, 12 of history, 5 of wisdom and poetry, 5 of major prophets, and 12 of minor prophets.

What Do You Think?

How would you respond to someone who says that the Old Testament is not valuable for Christian faith and life?

Digging Deeper

What Old Testament Scriptures would be a particularly good starting point for making a gospel presentation?

B. Revealing Meal (vv. 30–31)

30. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

As the travelers neared their destination, they invited Jesus to stay with them for the night (Luke 24:28–29, not in today’s printed text). Their invitation did not imply that they were aware of his identity. They were just extending hospitality to the unknown traveler. Traveling at night was dangerous, so demonstrations of hospitality were common (examples: Genesis 19:2; Judges 19:20).

The act of sharing a meal was an obvious way for the travelers to show hospitality. One of the two travelers would presumably serve as the meal’s host. However, Jesus himself took the role of host when *he took bread, gave thanks, and broke it*. This act paralleled aspects of his final meal with his disciples (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19).

What Do You Think?

How can table fellowship be an opportunity for you to introduce the gospel to unbelievers?

Digging Deeper

Who among your unbelieving neighbors will you invite to your table?

31. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

This meal not only met the travelers’ physical needs, but it was also the moment in which Christ’s presence was revealed (compare Luke 24:36–43; John 21:9–14; see also Hosea 6:1–3). The passive voice of the phrase *their eyes were opened* serves as the counterpart to the passive voice of “they were kept from recognizing him” in Luke 24:16, above. The result in both cases is to stress what happened, not what or who

caused it to happen.

Jesus did not linger with the two. The fact that Jesus could be seen and recognized and yet vanish *from their sight* indicates both a continuity and a discontinuity with his physical body after the resurrection (see also [Luke 24:36–43](#); [John 20:19–29](#)).

The interaction left the two realizing that *they recognized* and knew the resurrected Christ. Their previously saddened hearts had burned within them ([Luke 24:32](#)). Only after they knew Jesus could they explain the sensation in their hearts. The two returned to Jerusalem and told the other disciples of their experience with the resurrected Christ ([24:33–35](#)). Despite the presence of unbelief, the revolution of the resurrected Christ was underway.

“Ordinary” Hospitality

When our children were young, our family prioritized eating dinner together. This meant juggling dinnertime between work, school, and extracurricular activities. As our children grew older, eating dinner together each night became more difficult. But we remained committed to the tradition.

Certainly it would have been easier for our family to eat separately. We recognized, however, that mealtime was the best time to intentionally reconnect with each other. The ordinary acts of serving food and sharing meals deepened our family’s relationships.

The two travelers thought they had lost relationship with Jesus. At some point during the meal, however, they realized with whom they were eating. They had unknowingly shown hospitality to the risen Lord! Make time to share a meal with your friends and neighbors. You might

be surprised about what comes from those ordinary measures of hospitality (see [Hebrews 13:2](#)).

Visual for [Lesson 6](#). Pose this question for whole-class discussion before you review the Conclusion as a class.

—L. M. W.

Conclusion

A. Personal Revolution

The Digital Revolution has provided great advances for humanity (examples: improved productivity, rapid communication). Only time

will tell if these benefits will be outweighed by the costs of this revolution (example: issues related to online privacy and personal addictions).

The travelers in today's Scripture experienced a Resurrection Revolution that brought a personal revolution. Their saddened outlook was transformed when they shared a meal with the resurrected Lord.

This revolution brought the two travelers joy, enthusiasm, and peace. It also meant reordered priorities; they received a correction and were reminded of how Scripture pointed to Christ's resurrection and the resulting revolution. Are you attentive to the ways the resurrection can change your expectations—and your life?

B. Prayer

Heavenly Father, Jesus' resurrection has changed the world. Show us how we might better teach your Word for other people to believe in you. In the name of the resurrected Jesus. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

Jesus' resurrection brings a revolution. Are you living in it?

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Ask for three volunteers to come to the front of the class. Each volunteer will give one true and two untrue statements about themselves. (The statements should be unusual and difficult to immediately verify.) The class will ask five questions of the first volunteer, trying to determine the true fact. Then the class will vote by a show of hands, and the volunteer will reveal the true fact. Repeat with the other volunteers. Lead a discussion about how people ask questions and seek evidence when hearing of something unusual.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Did It Happen?” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work in pairs to complete as indicated.

After completing either activity, lead into Bible study by saying, “Last week’s lesson was the first of two parts. This week we’ll continue the story and consider how some of Jesus’ followers were provided with an unexpected corrective.”

Into the Word

Announce a Bible-marking activity. Provide copies of [Luke 24:13–27, 30–31](#) for those who do not wish to write in their own Bibles. Provide handouts (you create) with these instructions:

- Draw a circle around words or phrases that describe the concepts of vision or recognition.
- Draw a rectangle around words or phrases that describe the concept of disappointment.
- Underline the words or phrases from Jesus that address the travelers’ disappointment.
- Write an exclamation point next to any verse that references another Scripture.

- Draw a question mark around any word or phrase that you find difficult to understand.

Read the Scripture aloud (or ask a volunteer to do so) slowly two to four times. As the Scripture is read, learners are to mark their copies in the ways noted.

Divide the class into three groups and distribute handouts (you create) of the following questions for in-group discussion.

Vision Group. 1—What is the significance of vision and recognition in today’s Scripture? 2—What impediments prevent people from having spiritual “eyes” to see God’s work? 3—How should believers respond once their “eyes” are opened to God’s work?

Disappointment Group. 1—What is the significance of the travelers’ disappointment, and how did Jesus address their disappointment? 2—What causes believers to experience spiritual disappointment? 3—What is the appropriate response to hearing another believer’s spiritual disappointment?

Scripture Group. 1—How were other Scriptures used by the people in today’s text? 2—How does their usage of Scripture inform our own usage? 3—What steps can believers take to better grasp the whole narrative of Scripture?

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Extra! Extra!” exercise from the active page, which you can download. Have learners work in pairs to complete as indicated. After 10 minutes, have pairs present their articles to the whole class.

Into Life

Divide the class into pairs and have each pair discuss the following

questions that you will write on the board: 1—Describe a time when you had a moment of spiritual insight regarding the presence of Jesus. 2—How did God use that insight to deepen your faith? 3—What situations or experiences — like the travelers’ experience on the road to Emmaus—can prevent a believer from noticing Jesus’ presence?

Have each learner write a prayer for his or her eyes to be opened to Jesus’ presence during a “road to Emmaus” time. Encourage learners to put this prayer in a location where they will see it often.