

Luke 24:1-47 • Words More Than Signs

Introduction

Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” To be sure, there are a great many lessons and applications to be drawn from Luke’s account of the resurrection and appearance of Jesus; but circle all the occurrences of “words”, “Scripture”, “Law”, etc. in this last chapter and it’s very evident that it wasn’t just the 3-1/2 years of Christ’s earthly ministry that fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. His final appearances and teachings were all instructions to be continual witnesses of the fulfillment of God’s Word in their testimony of Christ and to carry on Jesus’ practice of teaching, witnessing and admonishing others through the Word.

¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; ⁵and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, ⁷saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”

⁸And they remembered His words, ⁹and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

¹⁰Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

[Read 1-12]

Q: Who is first to quote Jesus’ words?

A: The angels quote Christ’s own words that He personally gave in advance as to these events, their meaning and what actions to take in the shadow of their fulfillment. [Note: Isn’t amazing that even angels know **both** OT and NT Scripture? See 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Peter 1:12.]

Q: What is the key reaction of the women according to v.8?

A: They remembered His words. In spite of all the signs Christ performed in their presence, despite raising at least 3 people from the dead (in particular Lazarus, after being dead himself for 3 days), there was still a lack of understanding of His words. Just as they didn’t fully understand the message behind Jesus’ many signs and miracles, they did not fully understand the message behind **THIS** sign and miracle. [See Isaiah 55:10-11]

Q: What were the women’s next actions based on? Had they seen the “Living One” yet?

A: They had not seen Him yet (confirmed again in v.24), but having their eyes opened to Christ’s words, they reported everything to the rest. Their actions were based on faith in Christ’s words.

Q: Why did the women’s report seem like nonsense to the others?

A: They did not understand Christ’s words at this point. Their eyes had yet to be opened either by the Living One’s appearance nor by remembering and understanding Christ’s words.

¹³And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

¹⁷And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?"

And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

¹⁹And He said to them, "What things?"

And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²²But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

²⁵And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

[Read 13-24]

Q: What words are the two men exchanging?

A: Christ's life and words in comparison with those of the O.T. as evidenced in v.19, "...*The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word...*"

Q: Is it significant that what they call Jesus, "...the Nazarene, who was a prophet...."?

A: It might indicate that they were convinced He was more than just a "good man" or "teacher", but not "the Son of David" or "Messiah" that would equate to being the Son of God. Their eyes weren't fully open to Him yet.

Q: What is the difference in the men's understanding of Christ's words vs. that of the women?

A: The women forgot them but at the angel's reminder – combined with the evidence of the empty tomb – remembered and trusted Christ's words to be true. The men remembered the words of the Prophet but had not yet come to a point of seeing that His words had been proven true or what they truly meant.

[Read 25-27]

Q: With Whose words did Christ use to open the men's eyes that they could understand the events of Christ's own life and words?

A: The O.T., beginning with Moses and working through all of Scripture. He didn't begin with quotes from His own recent, earthly ministry that would form the basis for the N.T.

Q: According to John 1:1, Who is the Word?

A: Jesus Christ.

Application: *Do we truly understand the relationship between the Bible and Christ Himself, that they are One and the same? Having never seen Him, much less seen Him work a sign or miracle as during His earthly ministry, do we understand that the **WHOLE** Bible is given as our witness to, of, and for Him? And, quite simply, that it's enough?*

²⁸And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹But they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them.

³⁰When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³²They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”

³³And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴saying, “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

³⁶While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.”

³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

³⁸And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

⁴¹While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³and He took it and ate it before them.

[Read 28-35]

Q: What is the significance of the breaking of the bread in the context of this event?

A: The nourishment of the Word of God. Although there may be many other applications and allusions, particularly to the Last Supper, the context of this story focuses on the effect of the Word of God as evidenced by the effect it had on their hearts.

Q: How did Christ respond to Satan in each of the three temptations in Luke 4 and Matthew 4?

A: Jesus quoted Scripture.

Q: What was Christ’s specific response to Satan’s first temptation to turn the stones into bread?

A: Matthew 4:4, “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.””

Q: What is the significance of Christ’s immediate disappearance coinciding with the breaking of the bread?

A: Once their eyes were opened to the Word there was no need for the physical presence of the Messiah. It becomes a matter of faith. The Word is enough.

[Read 36-43]

Q: Sidebar question – No matter what sign or miracle Jesus performed, what did the authorities continue to request of Jesus to prove His authority?

A: They always asked for another sign, something unequivocally proving He was the Christ. They never accepted His message or teaching concerning the Law.

Q: Aside from the obvious appearance out of nowhere and from the dead, what miraculous signs did Christ perform to prove Himself to those present?

A: None. He confirmed His existence through the physical senses: They saw Him, heard Him, spoke with Him, examined Him and observed Him eating.

⁴⁴Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

[Read 44-47]

Q: Instead of a “confirming sign” what does Christ provide?

A: He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and their fulfillment in everything they witnessed in Christ’s life and ministry.

Q: What is the significance of identifying the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms?

A: These are the three main categories into which the Jews ordered what we call the O.T. Christ is the fulfillment of **ALL** Scripture since He Himself **IS** the Word.

Overall Application

- The power of God’s Word cannot be underestimated in its effect on us personally and those to whom we preach it. The **WHOLE** Bible is our primary tool and rallying point.
- The common denominator of the angels, the women, the men on the road, and the disciples is acceptance of, and obedience to, the Word – **not** being awestruck by signs and wonders. Both Christ’s pre-resurrection and post-resurrection ministries are centered on the fulfillment of the Word.
- The foundation laid through Christ’s disciples was opening their eyes to the Word. Notice that in their ministries as documented in Acts and their own epistles that they continually use the O.T. to illuminate the nature and teachings of Christ.
- Just as we are to make the Bible the centerpiece of our discipleship of others, Christ Himself made it the centerpiece of training and discipleship for the founding members of His church.