

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



In-depth Analysis of Luke 24

Luke 24 is the final chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and it holds key theological themes and narratives that encapsulate the resurrection of Jesus, His appearances to His disciples, and His ascension. It also presents a foundation for Christian hope, identity, and mission. The chapter has significant doctrinal implications and contains vital teachings on the nature of Jesus' resurrection, the fulfillment of Scripture, and the Great Commission.

Let's break the chapter into its main sections for a comprehensive analysis:

1. The Resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-12)

Key Points:

- **The Empty Tomb (Luke 24:1-3):**

On the first day of the week, the women who had followed Jesus go to the tomb with spices to anoint His body. However, they find the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. This moment is the beginning of the resurrection narrative, where the physical death of Jesus is overturned. The stone's removal signifies the triumph of life over death and is a symbol of God's power.

- **The Angels' Announcement (Luke 24:4-7):**

Two men in dazzling clothes (angels) appear to the women and remind them of Jesus' prophecy that He would rise on the third day. The reference to Jesus' prior teachings about His death and resurrection highlights the consistency of God's plan and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (such as in Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53, etc.).

- **The Women's Report (Luke 24:8-10):**

The women (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others) remember Jesus' words, and they go to inform the apostles. The fact that women are the first witnesses to the resurrection is noteworthy, as it is countercultural for the time. Women were not often regarded as reliable witnesses in ancient Jewish society, which serves to

further authenticate the narrative's truth: if the resurrection were a fabricated story, it likely would not have been told this way.

- **Peter's Reaction (Luke 24:11-12):**

The apostles, especially Peter, initially reject the women's story, thinking it was an "idle tale." However, Peter runs to the tomb, finds it empty, and is left "wondering." This emphasizes the disbelief and confusion even among Jesus' closest followers. Their skepticism further supports the authenticity of the resurrection account, as early believers were not immediately convinced

2. The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

Key Points:

- **Two Disciples on the Road (Luke 24:13-16):**

Two followers of Jesus, one of whom is named Cleopas, are walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. As they discuss recent events, including Jesus' crucifixion and the empty tomb, Jesus Himself joins them, though they do not recognize Him.

- **Jesus Opens the Scriptures (Luke 24:17-27):**

Jesus asks them what they are discussing and rebukes them for being slow to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. He then explains how the Messiah had to suffer and enter into His glory, beginning with Moses and the Prophets (i.e., the Old Testament). This section is critical because it shows that Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection were not accidental but were divinely ordained and part of God's redemptive plan, rooted in Scripture.

- **The Recognition of Jesus (Luke 24:28-31):**

When they reach Emmaus, the two disciples invite Jesus to stay with them. During the meal, when He breaks the bread, their eyes are opened, and they recognize Him. This moment is significant: their inability to recognize Him earlier serves as a theological point about the nature of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances—His risen form is somehow different from His pre-resurrection self.

- **The Disciples' Return to Jerusalem (Luke 24:32-35):**

Once they recognize Jesus, He disappears, and the two disciples immediately return to Jerusalem to share the news with the eleven apostles. Their statement, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" shows that Peter, too, has encountered the risen Christ, further confirming the truth of the resurrection.

3. Jesus Appears to His Disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49)

Key Points:

- **Jesus Appears to the Disciples (Luke 24:36-43):**

While the disciples are discussing the news of the resurrection, Jesus suddenly appears among them, greeting them with "Peace to you!" They are startled and frightened, thinking they are seeing a ghost. Jesus reassures them by showing His hands and feet, demonstrating that He is not a spirit but physically risen. This event is foundational to

Christian belief, as it demonstrates the physical resurrection of Jesus—He is not just a spiritual figure but a real, tangible person who has overcome death.

- **The Fulfillment of Scripture (Luke 24:44-47):**

Jesus reminds His disciples that everything that happened—the suffering, death, and resurrection—was a fulfillment of the Scriptures (again referring to the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms). He opens their minds to understand the Scriptures and commissions them to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. This section underscores the continuity between the Old Testament and the work of Jesus, emphasizing the role of Scripture in explaining God’s redemptive plan.

- **The Promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:48-49):**

Jesus tells His disciples that they are witnesses to these things and that they will be clothed with power from on high. This refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit, which will occur in Acts 2 at Pentecost. The Spirit is to empower the disciples for the mission ahead, enabling them to carry out the Great Commission and spread the message of Jesus to the world.

4. The Ascension of Jesus (Luke 24:50-53)

Key Points:

- **The Ascension (Luke 24:50-51):**

Jesus leads the disciples out to Bethany, lifts up His hands, and blesses them. As He blesses them, He is taken up into heaven. The Ascension is a key moment in the life of Jesus, as it marks the end of His physical presence with His disciples and the beginning of His reign at the right hand of God. It also serves as a promise that He will return in the same way He left.

- **The Disciples’ Reaction (Luke 24:52-53):**

After witnessing the ascension, the disciples return to Jerusalem with great joy and spend their time in the temple, praising and blessing God. The Ascension affirms the disciples’ faith and reinforces the mission to which they are called.

Theological Themes in Luke 24:

1. **Resurrection as a Fulfillment of Scripture:** Jesus’ resurrection is presented as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and Jesus’ own predictions. This theme ties together the promises of God and the hope of Israel with the new reality inaugurated in Christ.
2. **The Role of Witnesses:** The resurrection story emphasizes the role of witnesses, particularly the women and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The idea that the first witnesses were often those least expected in the culture of the time emphasizes the authenticity and inclusivity of the message of the Gospel.
3. **Jesus as the Fulfillment of God’s Redemptive Plan:** Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection are not seen as isolated events but as part of God’s larger redemptive plan that is consistent with the Scriptures. The disciples are called to proclaim this message to the world.

4. **The Promise of the Holy Spirit:** Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, which will empower the disciples to carry out the mission of spreading the Gospel. This promise is fulfilled in the book of Acts, marking the beginning of the Church's mission.
 5. **Ascension and Continuation of Jesus' Work:** The Ascension does not mark the end of Jesus' work but the beginning of the disciples' mission empowered by the Holy Spirit. It signals that Jesus continues His work from the Father's right hand, with the promise of His return.
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Conclusion:

Luke 24 offers a profound and detailed account of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, framing these events as the fulfillment of God's promises and the beginning of the disciples' mission to the world. It emphasizes the importance of Scripture in understanding Jesus' mission, the **necessity of the Holy Spirit**, and the essential role of witnesses in spreading the message of the Gospel. This chapter serves as a foundational text for Christian theology, providing assurance of Jesus' triumph over death, the authenticity of His resurrection, and the empowerment of His followers for the task ahead.



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The Resurrection of Jesus.

1
But at daybreak on the first day of the week they took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

2
They found the stone rolled away from the tomb;

3
but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4
While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them.

5
They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead?”

6
He is not here, but he has been raised.

[24:1–53] The resurrection narrative in Luke consists of five sections:

(1) the women at the empty tomb (Lk 23:56b–24:12);

(2) the appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13–35);

(3) the appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem (Lk 24:36–43);

(4) Jesus’ final instructions (Lk 24:44–49); (5) the ascension (Lk 24:50–53). In Luke, all the resurrection appearances take place in and around Jerusalem; moreover, they are all recounted as having taken place on Easter Sunday. A consistent theme throughout the narrative is that the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus were accomplished in fulfillment of Old Testament promises and of Jewish hopes (Lk 24:19a, 21, 26–27, 44, 46). In his second volume, Acts, Luke will argue that Christianity is the fulfillment of the hopes of Pharisaic Judaism and its logical development (see Acts 24:10–21).

[24:6] **He is not here, but he has been raised:** this part of the verse is

Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee,

7

that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.”

8

And they remembered his words.

9

Then they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others.

10

The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; the **others** who accompanied them also told this to the apostles,

11

but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them.

12

But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, bent down, and saw the burial cloths alone; then he went home amazed at what had happened.

The Appearance on the Road to Emmaus.

13

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,

14

and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.

omitted in important representatives of the Western text tradition, but its presence in other text types and the slight difference in wording from Mt 28:6 and Mk 16:6 argue for its retention.

[24:9] The women in this gospel do not flee from the tomb and tell no one, as in Mk 16:8 but return and tell the disciples about their experience. The initial reaction to the testimony of the women is disbelief (Lk 24:11).

[24:12] This verse is missing from the Western textual tradition but is found in the best and oldest manuscripts of other text types.

[24:13–35] This episode focuses on the interpretation of scripture by the risen Jesus and the recognition of him in the breaking of the bread. The references to the quotations of scripture and explanation of it (Lk 24:25–27), the kerygmatic proclamation (Lk 24:34), and the liturgical gesture (Lk 24:30) suggest that the episode is primarily catechetical and liturgical rather than apologetic.

[24:13] Seven miles: literally, “sixty stades.” A Stade was 607 feet. Some manuscripts read “160 stades” or more than eighteen miles. The exact location of Emmaus is disputed.

15

And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,

16

but their **eyes were prevented** from recognizing him.

17

He asked them, “**What are you discussing as you walk along?**” They stopped, looking downcast.

18

One of them, named **Cleopas**, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?”

19

And he replied to them, “**What sort of things?**” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20

how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him.

21

But we **were hoping** that **he would be the one to redeem** Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place.

22

Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning

[24:16] A consistent feature of the resurrection stories is that the risen **Jesus was different and initially unrecognizable** (Lk 24:37; Mk 16:12; Jn 20:14; 21:4).

23

and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive.

24

Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.”

25

And he said to them, **“Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!**

26

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

27

Then beginning with **Moses and all the prophets**, he interpreted to them **what referred to him in all the scriptures.**

28

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

29

But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So, he went in to stay with them.

30

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he **took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.**

[24:26] That the Messiah should suffer...: Luke is the only New Testament writer to speak explicitly of a suffering Messiah (Lk 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23). The idea of a suffering Messiah is not found in the Old Testament or in other Jewish literature prior to the New Testament period, although the idea is hinted at in Mk 8:31–33. See notes on Mt 26:63 and 26:67–68. [24:36–43, 44–49] The Gospel of Luke, like each of the other gospels (Mt 28:16–20; Mk 16:14–15; Jn 20:19–23), focuses on an important appearance of Jesus to the Twelve in which they are commissioned for their future ministry. As in Lk 24:6, 12, so in Lk

31

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

32

Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?”

33

So, they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them

34

who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to **Simon!**”

35

Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the **breaking of the bread.**

The Appearance to the Disciples in Jerusalem.

36

While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them,

“Peace be with you.”

37

But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost.

38

Then he said to them,

“Why are you troubled? And why do

24:36, 40 there are omissions in the Western text.

questions arise in your hearts?

39

Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see, I have.”

40

And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41

While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them,

“Have you anything here to eat?”

42

They gave him a piece of baked fish;

43

he took it and ate it in front of them.

44

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 and in the prophets and 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 would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day

[24:39–42] The apologetic purpose of this story is evident in the concern with the **physical details** and the report that **Jesus ate food**.

47
and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

48
You are witnesses of these things.

49
And [behold] I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

The Ascension.

50
 Then he led them [out] as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them.

51
 As he blessed them, he parted from them and **was taken up to heaven.**

52
 They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

53
and they were continually in the temple praising God.

[24:49] The promise of my Father: i.e., the gift of the holy Spirit.

[24:50–53] Luke brings his story about the time of Jesus to a close with the report of the ascension. He will also begin the story of the time of the church with a recounting of the ascension. In the gospel, Luke recounts the ascension of Jesus on Easter Sunday night, thereby closely associating it with the resurrection. In Acts 1:3, 9–11; 13:31 **he historicizes the ascension by speaking of a forty-day period between the resurrection and the ascension.** The Western text omits some phrases in Lk 24:51, 52 perhaps to avoid any chronological conflict with Acts 1 about the time of the ascension.





QUESTIONS - LUKE 24

Luke 24 is a powerful chapter in the New Testament, containing the account of Jesus' resurrection, His appearance to the disciples, and HIS final instructions. Here are some thoughtful and insightful questions based on the key events of Luke 24:

1. The Resurrection (Luke 24:1-12)

1. Why did the women bring spices to the tomb if they had witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and burial (Luke 23:55-56)?
2. What was the significance of the angel's message to the women at the tomb (Luke 24:5-7)?
3. How did the disciples initially react to the women's report of the resurrection (Luke 24:11)?
4. What does the reaction of the disciples to the resurrection reveal about their understanding of Jesus' teachings before His death?
- 5.

2. The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal Himself to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in such a gradual manner (Luke 24:16)?
2. What is the significance of Jesus explaining the Scriptures to the two disciples, starting from Moses and all the prophets (Luke 24:27)?
3. How did the disciples recognize Jesus? What does this moment reveal about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body (Luke 24:30-31)?
4. Why do you think their hearts burned within them as Jesus spoke to them (Luke 24:32)?
5. How does the story of the road to Emmaus challenge your understanding of recognizing God's presence in everyday life?

3. Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Luke 24:36-49)

1. What is the significance of Jesus showing His hands and feet to His disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24:39)?
2. How does Jesus' question, "Why are you troubled?" (Luke 24:38), reveal His compassion and desire to help His disciples understand His resurrection?
3. Why does Jesus specifically eat a piece of broiled fish in front of them (Luke 24:42-43)?
4. How does Jesus' opening of the Scriptures (Luke 24:45) relate to the authority of Scripture in the life of a believer today?

5. What does the promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) mean for the disciples and for believers today?

4. The Ascension (Luke 24:50-53)

1. What is the significance of Jesus' ascension in the context of His mission and the disciples' understanding (Luke 24:51)?
2. How does the disciples' response to the ascension—praising and continually blessing God in the temple (Luke 24:52-53)—reflect the change in their faith and understanding?
3. How does the ascension point to the continuing work of Jesus as Lord and Savior even though He is no longer physically present?

4. Overall Themes

1. How does the resurrection of Jesus in Luke 24 confirm His identity as the Messiah?
2. What is the role of Scripture in understanding the events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in Luke 24?
3. What does Luke 24 teach about the transformation that occurs when someone encounters the risen Christ?
4. In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus offer hope for believers today?

These questions can serve as a means of deeper reflection and discussion, helping one to engage with the text more meaningfully and understand its significance both in its historical context and in its relevance to contemporary faith.