

The Lord Appears

Luke 24:36-53

SS Lesson for 04/07/2013

Devotional Scripture: 1 Cor 15:1-8

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Jesus had to be resurrected so that our faith could be validated (1 Cor 15:12-14)

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As a disciple of Jesus, our responsibility is to daily strive to follow His example (Matt 10:38)

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Jesus controls indwelling of Holy Spirit not man

Jesus was the one who could ask God to send His Spirit (John 14:16)

Holy Spirit only speaks at Jesus' prompting (John 16:13)

Jesus gives His Spirit for the common good of all Christians, not any one person (1 Cor 12:7-8)

Jesus gives as He determines (1 Cor 12:11)

Holy Spirit is the source of power

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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS BY BOB DEFFINBAUGH

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches about how **Jesus, our Lord Appeared** to many as proof of Him being our LIVING Savior. The **study's aim** is to demonstrate how Jesus showed Himself to His disciples to prove that what the prophets had said about Him was true. The **study's application** is to affirm that we can always trust what God says to us because He keeps His promises.

Key Verse: Luke 24:44

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Jesus fulfilled all of God's promises, and in the lives of believers He is always faithful to do what He promised to do. However, we sometimes make claims on His promises that we do not have a right to make. Three questions help us understand the issues involved in claiming God's promises. (1) Is it a promise for me? (2) Are there any conditional parts to the promise? (3) Do I understand there may be a difference between God's timing and my own? Consider the first qualifying question: Is it a promise for me? According to Romans 15:4, all Scripture is written for believers. We receive instruction and information from every passage. However, there are promises in the Word of God that were not written directly to us. First Samuel 11:9 reads, "Tomorrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." A believer who is having a difficult time in his life might claim such a verse as a definite promise of God for himself. However, the promise was made at a specific time for a particular reason. Not every promise of God in the Bible can be applied directly to our lives. This promise does teach us principles about God, but it is illegitimate for someone today to claim such a promise as applying specifically to himself as an individual. The second qualifying question forces us to determine whether conditions are given along with the promise. When Jesus promised that God would give believers whatever they asked for, He attached a condition: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). The promise is for believers, so we have a right to claim it; but its fulfillment comes after we meet the conditions Jesus gave. People should never consider God unfaithful in keeping His promises when the real unfaithfulness is their own. The final question believers must ask when considering God's promises concerns the issue of time. Am I expecting God to fulfill His promise on my timetable, or His? The Prophet Habakkuk had to learn that distinction. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3). Humans are constrained by time; God is not. That is why the Apostle Peter wrote that a thousand years is as a day and a day is as a thousand years in God's sight (2 Peter 3:8). God has an unchangeable plan, and He works out "all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). He needs no one's advice. Each event in His plan will happen at His appointed time. We must not conclude that God is unfaithful simply because He does not fulfill His promise at the time we would prefer. His timing is always perfect. The old saying is true: You cannot break God's promises by leaning on them. He will always fulfill His promises. It is essential, however, that we have a biblical understanding of our part in claiming them.

Commentary from Barnes Notes

[*These are the words*] Or this is the "fulfillment" of what I before told you respecting my death. See Luke 18:33; Mark 10:33.

[*While I was yet with you*] Before my death. While I was with you as a teacher and guide.

[*In the law of Moses*] The five books of Moses-Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Among the Jews this was the first division of the Old Testament, and was called the "Law."

[*The prophets*] This was the second and largest part of the Hebrew Scriptures. It comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, which were called the "former prophets;" and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve smaller books from Daniel, to Malachi, which were called the "latter prophets."

[*The psalms*] The word here used probably means what were comprehended under the name of "Hagiographa," or holy writings. This consisted of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. This division of the Old Testament was in use long before the time of Christ, and was what he referred to here; and he meant to say that in "each of" these divisions of the Old Testament there were prophecies respecting himself. The "particular" subject before them was his "resurrection from the dead." A most striking prediction of this is contained in Ps 16:9-11. Compare it with Acts 2:24-32; 13:35-37.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the major outlines came from reviewing the Scriptural Text.

Verse	Phrase	Major Outline
36	Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."	Jesus' Appearance Brings Peace
40	When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.	Jesus' Appearance Assures Resurrection
43	And He took it and ate in their presence	Jesus' Appearance Brings Fellowship
44	All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me	Jesus' Appearance Relates to Scripture
49	Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you	Jesus' Appearance Provided The Promise of The Holy Spirit Power

Lesson Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The ancients believed in an "up-down" universe. "Below" was the underworld that housed the dead; "above" was Heaven, the realm of celestial beings. When Jesus returned to the Father, he ascended—that is, he went up into the sky. Everyone who witnessed this would have understood that to be the proper way to reach Heaven (compare 2 Corinthians 12:2). Even so, we know that there is no physical "place" in the sky (or anywhere else) where God lives because we understand the abode of God in a spiritual, non-spatial way, as Paul did (see Acts 17:24). Thus when reading of Jesus' ascension, we should not be sidetracked by trying to account for all of the physical characteristics of his departure. What is important is to grasp the significance of Jesus' ascension and to remember his final words just before that event. In so doing, we share the faith of those who heard those words as confirmation that Jesus had been dead, had come back to life, and then underwent an amazing transition. In last week's lesson, we saw Jesus joining in mysterious fashion two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:15). He later disappeared from their sight after they recognized him (24:31). These disciples returned to report their encounter to the larger group in Jerusalem (24:33). In today's lesson, Jesus appears to the disciples in a startling way.

From Bob Deffinbaugh - From the Series: Luke: The Gospel of the Gentiles

First, the time which is spanned in these verses is 40 days. We know this from Luke's words in Acts chapter 1, where he wrote, To these [apostles] He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). We might gain the impression that these three paragraphs describe incidents all occurring on the same day, if it were not for these words in Acts 1, along with the parallel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and John. Luke's purpose is not to tell us all that happened in those 40 days, nor even to indicate a change in location, as much as to sum up the way in which Jesus convinced His disciples that He was raised from the dead, according to the Scriptures. We may, therefore, suspect that a change in time and place might be found, for example, in verses 44 and 50. We do know at least that the ascension of our Lord took place 40 days after His resurrection, and thus more than a month after His first appearance to the disciples, as described in verses 36-43. Second, Luke's account of the last days of our Lord on the earth may be more thorough than the account given by Matthew, but his account in the first chapter of Acts is even more detailed. Luke's purpose, like that of the other gospel writers, was not to tell us everything, but to tell us a few important things, and thus they are selective in what they choose to relate. They have much more to tell us than what they have written (cf. John 20:30-31). Third, Luke's emphasis in his account of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ is on what took place in Jerusalem, not so much on what happened in Galilee (as, for example, Matthew recorded (28:16-17). There are many appearances, some of which are described in one or more gospel, and others of which may be described by another. There were probably a number of appearances which were not even mentioned. We should not expect to be able to neatly harmonize all of the accounts, for there is simply too much that is not said. If all the facts were known, the details would perfectly harmonize. Fourth, while Jesus referred to the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures, Luke did not include any references for us in his account. Furthermore, Jesus' teaching is not really recorded, but only the most general thrust of it. We will discover some of the central passages when we come to our study in the book of Acts, but the passages are not listed here. I think that the Spirit of God is challenging us to read and study the Old Testament and to find them for ourselves. We should look for prophecies pertaining to Christ in the Old Testament, indeed, in every part of it. Luke's report of Jesus' words tells us what to look for, and where, but the searching is still our task.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Jesus' Appearance Brings Peace (Luke 24:36-38)

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."
37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.
38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

Relieves Fear

Trust in Jesus' power to overcome any issues gives us peace (Ps 4:8)

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Jesus' presence provides hope and peace through justification (Rom 5:1-5)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Jesus provided us a spirit of peace not fear (Rom 8:15)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Jesus destroyed the fear of death (Heb 2:14-15)

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

The question is who can harm us if Jesus is with us (1 Pet 3:12-14)

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."

Jesus' love drives out fear (1 John 4:18-19)

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us.

Victory over Troubles

Jesus provides overflowing comfort (2 Cor 1:3-5)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

We should be able to endure minor troubles on earth because of future glory (1 Cor 4:17)

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

As a servant of God we must expect some problems (2 Cor 6:4)

Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;

Jesus' Appearance Assures Resurrection (Luke 24:39-40)

39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

Through Word

Through the preaching of the Word (1 Cor 15:12)

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Through the teaching of the Word (Heb 6:1-2)

1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Through our own study of God's Word (2 Tim 2:15)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Through Experiences

By sharing in suffering (Phil 3:10-11)

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Through the experience of baptism (Rom 6:4-7)

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Interesting view on "Resurrected Body" of saints (From NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Some have wondered about the resurrection body that is promised to Christians. Will our resurrection bodies still show scars and physical handicaps? It is important to distinguish between Jesus' experience and ours. Regarding the resurrection, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:44, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Yet Jesus' resurrection body, as he took care to demonstrate, was not "spiritual." Jesus' resurrection was followed by numerous "flesh and blood" appearances meant to convince his disciples that he was alive. Such is not the case with our resurrection; for when Jesus comes, those believers who have died will be raised from the dead and will "meet the Lord in the air" (1Thessalonians 4:17). We will then receive the kind of "spiritual body" that Jesus received following his ascension, in order to dwell with his Father where "flesh and blood" cannot be present (1Corinthians 15:50).

From Sadness to Joy (From NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

In December a few years ago, Frank and Bet Forest were getting ready for their daughter Page to come home from college. Page was a freshman and their only child. It seemed as though the college she attended in Oklahoma was a million miles from their California home. The thought of her being home for Christmas filled every moment with anticipation. Frank and Bet headed for the airport and couldn't help but laugh at themselves when they realized they were a full hour early. About thirty minutes before Page's flight was due to arrive a voice announced, "Will persons waiting for flight number..." The rest of the announcement was a blur. Frank and Bet were escorted to another room where a representative of the airlines explained that there had been an accident. Page's flight had crashed on takeoff from Denver. All the passengers were believed to have been killed. Frank and Bet made their way back home. Standing in their living room they hugged and cried, unsure what to do. A few minutes later the phone rang. The voice at the other end said, "This is Mrs. Hastings with the airline. Your daughter missed the plane. She's all right." If you can imagine how those parents felt upon hearing such news, then you know something of how the disciples must have felt when Jesus came and stood among them and they realized, "He is alive!"

Jesus' Appearance Brings Fellowship (Luke 24:41-43)

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"
42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.
43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

Unifies faith

Because of the faithfulness of Jesus (1 Cor 1:9)

God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

By being like-minded with Christ (Phil 2:1-2)

1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Sharing experiences

By our daily walking in righteousness (1 John 1:7)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

By sharing biblical knowledge with others (Acts 8:26-31)

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road-- the desert road-- that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Meeting needs

Jesus sets the example of being compassionate for the needs of others (Matt 15:32)

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

Jesus' presence gives me the desire to aid others (Matt 25:34-40)

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Jesus' Appearance Relates to Scripture (Luke 14:44-48)

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.

Scriptural fulfillment

Even as a child Jesus knew He was fulfilling scriptures (Luke 4:18-21)

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matt 5:17)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Jesus brings the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gal 3:14-16)

14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. 15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.

Scriptural interpretation and understanding

We must make time to be alone with Jesus so He can explain things to us (Mark 4:33-34)

33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Jesus is the master teacher (John 13:12-13)

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

The day is here when Jesus speaks plainly to us (John 16:25-31)

25 "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." 29 Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 Now we can see that you know all things and that you

do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." 31
"You believe at last!" Jesus answered.

Scriptural reference to the necessity of Savior

Jesus had to become flesh so that He could be the Christ (Acts 17:2-3)

2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Jesus had to be resurrected so that our faith could be validated (1 Cor 15:12-14)

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

Jesus had to become the mediator of the new covenant (Heb 8:6-7)

6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. 7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

Scriptural example and witness

We should always follow Jesus' example (1 Pet 2:21)

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Jesus is the only one that provides eternal life (John 6:66-69)

66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. 67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

As a disciple of Jesus, our responsibility is to daily strive to follow His example (Matt 10:38)

and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Jesus' Appearance Provided The Promise of The Holy Spirit Power (Luke 24:49-53)

49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Jesus controls indwelling of Holy Spirit not man

Jesus was the one who could ask God to send His Spirit (John 14:16)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--

Holy Spirit only speaks at Jesus' prompting (John 16:13)

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Jesus gives His Spirit for the common good of all Christians, not any one person (1 Cor 12:7-8)

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

Jesus gives as He determines (1 Cor 12:11)

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Holy Spirit is the source of power

Spiritual power only comes from God through Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

God's Spirit is a spirit of power (2 Tim 1:7)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a blessing of Jesus

The blessings was first announced to Abraham (Gal 3:14)

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

These blessings come from the heavenly realms (Eph 1:3)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Our response should be a sincere and faithful worship of God

Worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)

23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

The only true act of worship involves complete giving of myself (Rom 12:1)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

Worship should be full of thanksgiving (Heb 12:28)

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

Because of Jesus' faithfulness, we must be faithful (1 Cor 4:2)

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts by Bob Deffinbaugh

(From the Series: Luke: The Gospel of the Gentiles)

The last chapter of Luke serves as a kind of conclusion, as we would expect. But in reality it is hardly a conclusion. There is but one verse, the very last verse, which gives us any sense of conclusion, and that is incredibly brief. The reason should be obvious. The Gospel of Luke cannot provide us with an ending. It is a gospel, and as such, it can tell us of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, but it cannot tell us the whole story. This is precisely why Luke found it necessary to write another volume, a sequel to the gospel. In this book, Luke will continue the story of the work of Christ in the world through His church, empowered by His Spirit. As I read the Gospel of Luke and then the Book of Acts, I can rather easily understand why the disciples felt and acted as they did in the Gospel of Luke. I can even somewhat grasp how their feelings and actions changed in the Book of Acts. But what troubles me is that the church today seems to act more like the disciples in Luke than they do the apostles in Acts. Is it possible that we need to undergo the same change of heart, mind, and action that the disciples did? Are we so much like they were then? I think so. How, then, must we change, to be more like the apostles in Acts than to continue to be like the disciples in Luke? What must change? First of all, I think that we believe, far more than the disciples did, that Jesus had to be rejected, put to death, and rise again. I don't think our problem is understanding what the Old Testament taught about Jesus. To take this a step further, I don't think that we have a great problem understanding what the gospels teach, concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I think our problem is that in spite of all that we know about Jesus, we don't really believe it. Our "profession" (our creed—what we say we believe) may be post-Pentecost, but our practice, our conduct is pre-Pentecost. We live more like the disciples lived in Luke than like they lived in Acts. The facts we know, but do we really believe them. The power we profess, but do we really practice it? In short, I see the problem exposed here in Luke, but the solution is yet to be worked out. It is solved in Acts. While a belief in the resurrection of Christ is vital, there is yet more that is needed. What is it? Let us press on to Acts to see what it is. On to volume 2! Not quite so fast. Before we press on, let me give you a hint. The disciples had come to believe that Jesus had not only died, but had risen again. The nature of the resurrection, as the disciples grasped it, was inadequate—they thought of it only as a "spiritual" resurrection. They did not really believe Jesus was present with them. That was the truth that was so hard to grasp. Jesus was not only alive. Jesus was with them, in their very midst. He would be even more present with them, and in them, through His Spirit, but this was the promise of what was still to come. The resurrection of Christ is so much sweeter when we come to realize that Him whom God raised from the dead is not only alive, but present, by means of His Spirit. May we come to grasp His presence in us, individually and corporately. Herein in joy and power. As Paul will later put it, But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you (Romans 8:11). The greatest reality of the resurrection that can be seen today is the reality that a body which is incapable of living in a way that pleases God and fulfills His commandments, which is subject to the power of sin, can be given life by the same Spirit that raised the dead body of our Lord to life. The Spirit who raised Christ from the dead can give life to our dead bodies. Here is a reality of the resurrection which the disciples were soon to experience. May we experience it as well.

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Where did Jesus go? He did not "go" anywhere in the sense of "not being here," for he is not far from us (see Acts 17:27; Hebrews 13:5). He did indeed go to the right hand of God, where he serves as our advocate and priest in Heaven (Hebrews 4:14-5:10; 8:1), but Jesus is also with us because this is what he promised (Matthew 28:20). N. T. Wright has said, "Ascension doesn't mean absence... it means sovereignty." We serve a risen Lord, and we serve him with joyous anticipation of his return. We serve our Savior by heeding his words and taking the message of forgiveness and grace to all the world. We serve the King of kings, the one who has an impact on our lives today, some 2,000 years after the Bethany event.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. If we think all our doubts would be resolved if we could just see Jesus, look at the Eleven (Luke 24:36-38)
2. Jesus shows incomparable patience in overcoming our doubts (vs. 39-43)
3. When we get rattled by the seemingly unexpected, Jesus carefully reminds us of the mission (vs. 44-48)
4. The promise of the Father comes to those who obediently wait for it in faith (vs. 49)
5. Although Jesus is not physically with us now, we are continually surrounded by His presence and joy (vs. 50-53)