

## Luke's Gospel ch. 24 vv. 1-12 Jesus' Resurrection

*[Please note: sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.  
King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

### Introduction

If you are a regular listener you will know that we have been steadily going through Luke's Gospel, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. Not all at once, of course, but over the past few years in groups of 4 or 6 talks. You can find all of these talks, which make excellent study guides, on our website, [www.truthfortoday.org.uk](http://www.truthfortoday.org.uk). The subject of the last talk was Christ's death and burial. Our subject today is His resurrection, and the Scripture is Luke ch. 24 vv. 1-12. What a wonderful subject to be occupied with for this short time, today, that of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As usual, in my talks, I will be reading and quoting from the Authorised Version of the Bible, sometimes called the King James Version, and these references will all be listed in the transcript which can be found on our website. Again our website is, [www.truthfortoday.org.uk](http://www.truthfortoday.org.uk) and please feel free to download any of our talks to listen to, or print them off to read. If you have been blessed by our ministry then please tell your Christian friends about us.

I'm sure you will know that the divisions of chapters and verses are not in the original text, but they were added many centuries later. Although they are a great help, sometimes the divisions seem to be in the wrong place, but as we start our study of chapter 24 today there is no doubt that this really is a new chapter! The old chapter ended with the death and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ, and these faithful women observing the Sabbath day "according to the commandment" (see ch. 23 v. 56). Our chapter begins, "Now upon the first day of the week..."

I love the way that Dr. Luke seems to be in a hurry to tell his readers about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This phrase, "Now upon", is uniquely used here in Luke's Gospel. (I know these words are used together in the story of Samuel and Saul, but not in the same way as we have them here). The events recorded in chapter 24 obviously follow on from the last chapter, but to me, the phrase Luke uses, "Now upon the first day of the week..." seems to be deliberate to herald that this really is a new chapter in the story of Jesus Christ.

There is no greater story than that of the resurrection of Jesus from amongst the dead. It is this most vital truth that gives us the faith to believe that our sins have been forgiven and we have an eternal hope. The vital nature of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the subject of the apostles' teaching. The early apostles preached this message, and Paul concludes, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (see 1 Corinthians ch. 15 v. 17).

### The first day of the week.

Each of the Gospel writers use this expression, but only in relation to the resurrection day! I guess that the first day of the week (or Sunday as we call it) was the day which followed the weekly Sabbath (or Saturday), but we don't read this term anywhere else in the 4 Gospels. The first day of

the week, is uniquely connected to the Lord's resurrection, and many of us will much prefer to say, 'the Lord's Day' rather than Sunday. I know we need to be careful not to get hung up on language, and it really depends upon whom we are speaking with, but it sometimes slightly grates on me when I refer to Saturday and Sunday as the 'weekend.' "Have a great weekend" we say, as we leave the workplace on a Friday afternoon, but really the Sunday, or the Lord's Day, is the beginning of a new week. I tend to say, "the Lord's Day", when speaking to fellow believers and say, "Sunday", when speaking to non-Christians.

The only other references in the Bible to "the first day of the week" are in connection to the gathering together of the early disciples. In Acts ch. 20 we read that the disciples came together to break bread and to listen to Paul's preaching. And in 1 Corinthians ch. 16, the apostle Paul encourages the believers to set aside money (an offering or a collection as we would say), as they came together on 'the first day of the week.' I trust that this is our regular habit to do these important things; to gather with the Lord's people on the first day of the week, to break bread, to hear the Word of God, and to give back to the Lord of what He has entrusted to us. If not, may we be challenged to do so.

Just before we move on, it is interesting to note the very careful use of the terms, "the Lord's Day" and "the Lord's Supper" in Scripture. I have neither the time nor the ability to develop this subject here today, but those who know Greek will tell us that the word, "Lord", in these two expressions is used in a particular way, linking them together.

### **What had they come to do?**

We read,

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them" (v. 1).

These devout women and followers of Jesus, set out "very early in the morning" to anoint the body of Jesus with the spices and ointments which they had prepared. We learn who they were in verse 10, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them. Their motivation was love and devotion to their Lord and Master and their loving desire to do this final act on the Lord's body stands in stark contrast to the way the Roman soldiers had mistreated Him. Although, as we will read later, they did not get to do what they had planned to do, I'm sure the risen Lord saw into their hearts and appreciated their love for Him. It has often been pointed out that Mary of Bethany was not amongst this company of women who came to the tomb. She had already anointed the Lord's head and feet, with precious ointment, in view of His burial. Perhaps she was more spiritually intelligent than these women we are reading of, and knew what was about to happen to her Lord. It often strikes me that she kept this precious ointment for Him, when she could have used it on her brother Lazarus when he died. That being so, let us not take anything away from the desire that these women had for the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be an encouragement for each of us that the Lord knows our hearts, and even if we misjudge the situation, or get things slightly wrong, it is the motive of our heart which counts.

### **What did they find?**

In verses 2 and 3 we read,

"And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus."

These godly women found the opposite of what they were looking for. They came expecting to find the stone sealing the tomb, and I expect that they intended trying to remove it, so that they could

anoint the body of Jesus. But what they found was an open tomb, for the stone had been rolled away, and they “found not the body of the Lord Jesus [Christ]!”

We read in Matthew’s Gospel that the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate saying,

“Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead...”.

And so a large stone was put against the opening of the tomb, and it was sealed, and a guard of soldiers kept watch (see Matthew ch. 27 vv. 62-66).

But all this was in vain, as we can triumphantly sing;

Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes;  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives for ever with His saints to reign!  
He arose! He arose!  
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

(R Lowry, 1826-99).

### **So what had happened?**

We need to read all the accounts of the Gospel writers to get the full story of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke doesn’t tell us about the earthquake and the angel of the Lord rolling the stone away, only that the tomb was open, and the body of Jesus had gone!

Chapter 24 begins with an ‘opened’ tomb and ends with an ‘opened’ heaven. Read the full chapter carefully and see just how many ‘openings’ there are in this wonderful chapter. It is a study in itself.

These women were perplexed. I’m sure we can understand that. They had come to the sepulchre with a clear picture of what they were going to be faced with, but all this had changed! This word “perplexed” is used so infrequently in the Bible that my Bible dictionary does not even list it. But it carries the thought of being at a complete loss to know what to do. What they were experiencing was totally beyond what they had expected, and it was about to get even better!

We read,

“And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (vv. 4-7).

In the margin of my Bible the alternative translation is given for the question posed by the angel, “Why seek ye him that liveth among the dead?” It would seem that there was no pause for an answer to be given, or perhaps the question was rhetorical and did not require an answer as the angels knew very well why these women were at the tomb. I suggest in asking this question, they were setting the scene for the wonderful announcement which followed, as they exclaimed, “He is not here, but is risen!”

These words were echoed by the risen Lord to the apostle John when He said,

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen” (see Revelation ch. 1 v. 18).

### **What impact did this announcement have on these godly women?**

We go on reading in the chapter,

“And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles” (vv. 8-10).

You see, although we do not often hear of these women during the Lord’s life, it is evident that they were His disciples, and followed Him ‘in the way’, and ‘ministered to Him.’ Again this should be an encouragement to all of us who seek to follow and serve the Master. Perhaps like these women, our service may go largely unnoticed by others, but it will not go unnoticed by Him. This was a lesson which Martha had to learn, the lesson that the Master sees and evaluates rightly our service for Him. Whilst Martha was “careful and troubled” about her service, her sister, Mary, had chosen the “good part”, which was sitting and hearing His word (see Luke ch. 10 vv. 41-42).

These women obviously followed close enough to the Lord Jesus to hear His words, as we read,

“And they remembered his words.”

This is so important for us if we want to be His disciples, His followers, that we hear His words. By divine inspiration, and by divine preservation, we have the complete Word of God, the Bible in our hands today. Given so long ago, to “holy men of God [who] spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (see 2 Peter ch. 1 v. 21), and for which many godly men (and women) have contested for throughout history. We should never undervalue our Bibles. We should be familiar with the words which Jesus spoke, which He said were the words of His Father. We should also know the words or “doctrine” of the apostles, who were the human instruments God used to bring His truth to His people of this generation, the Church. It is only as we “remember his words” that we can truly be His disciples.

I have said this many times before, but I think it is increasingly important. We live in a society where everyone has a voice and is encouraged to use it. Your opinions and my opinions are weighed against the opinions of others, and endless discussions follow. Often it is the loudest voices which are the ones which are heeded. Even amongst the people of God, sometimes it is the loudest voices which prevail, when in reality the question should be, “What does the Bible say?” Good if we, as the people of God, are willing to remember His word, and are willing for His word to govern our thoughts, and then act in accordance with it. In our society, where many have no idea of what God says in His word, we should be living out the Scriptures of truth.

We see that the words spoken by the angels, caused the women to remember the words of the Master, which in turn caused them to return from the sepulchre to find the Lord’s eleven disciples and the rest of Christ’s followers. There were at least five women who experienced the early morning events of that resurrection day: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women. They would have told of what they had just witnessed: the stone rolled away, the missing body, the angels, and the angelic message. I’m sure their testimony must have been powerful; they would truly be the messengers in the message’ (cp. Haggai ch. 1 v. 13). But what was the response? How was this tremendous news received?

## Seeing is believing.

Sadly, it is often the case that we lack faith to believe what is out with our personal experience. Although these five or more devoted, godly women had witnessed to what they had seen and heard, and told how those things resonated with what the Lord had said whilst He was with them, we read,

“And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not”  
(v. 11).

I wonder why, unlike the women, the apostles did not seem to remember the words Jesus had spoken concerning His death and resurrection? Well, as we will hear in the next talk in the series (which is the last bar one), there was a great deal of despondency amongst the disciples. They could not come to terms with the death of the One whom they believed to be the Messiah.

I think they would certainly have heard the words Jesus spoke, as did the women, evidently, but there was a lack of faith in them to believe what was spoken. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews (who I believe was Paul), warns the early Christians not to forget the consequences of the lack of faith displayed in God’s earthly people, Israel, when he wrote,

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”  
(see Hebrews ch. 4 v. 2).

The world says, ‘seeing is believing’ but for the Christian, ‘believing is seeing.’ The writer of the Hebrews also wrote,

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”, and again, “But without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (see ch. 11 vv. 1 & 6).

Later on John wrote (in chapter 20 of his Gospel) of the events which took place in the evening of the resurrection day, the first day of the week, when the Lord appeared to His disciples and showed them His hands and His side. We read,

“Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord” (v. 20).

But Thomas, one of the twelve, for whatever reason, was not gathered with the other disciples, and would not believe their testimony of the risen Christ saying,

“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe” (v. 25).

I find this quite astonishing really. Thomas knew these ten men who had accompanied Jesus in His ministry. He was “one of the twelve”, the other being Judas Iscariot who, through remorse had taken his own life at this point in time. Thomas must have, I would have thought, seen the transformation on their faces. They had gathered together in fear of the Jews, but then the risen Lord had appeared in the midst of their gathering. Surely Thomas would have been able to detect the change in attitude amongst the disciples. But it appeared that he did not. His belief would only be brought about by him seeing and handling the risen Lord.

Graciously, the Lord appeared the second time to His disciples, and Thomas was there that time. The One who hears all things, said to Thomas,

“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

Thomas had now seen with his eyes but we do not read of him handling the Lord as he said he needed to do to believe. Jesus said to him,

“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (see John ch. 20 vv. 19-29).

Dear Christian friend, we are part of that vast company of believers in Jesus, who “have not seen, and yet have believed.” Faith is the gift of God, and it is by faith that we can believe (or trust in) the risen, glorified, Lord Jesus Christ. It is through faith that we can learn to have confidence in His word, the Scriptures, and believe what they say in relation to things past, present, and future.

### **Then Peter arose...**

Verse 12 is the last which we will consider today. We read,

“Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.”

Poor Peter! We often think of his impetuous nature and him being the first to speak or act amiss. But this is not always the case. I like the fact that Peter was prepared to speak out, or do something even if it was slightly rash. I think when we read his epistles, which he wrote as an older man, that we can see that he had learned from his experiences. Good if the things which characterise us in our youth are tempered by grace as we get older. I’m sure as with natural things, in spiritual things there is much which can only be learned through experience.

Although Luke tells us that Peter arose and ran to the sepulchre, we know, from his Gospel, that John did too. We recognise John’s description of himself as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ and understand that he, the younger man, outran Peter and came first to the tomb. Whereas John looked in and believed, Peter went in and wondered. He saw the stone had been rolled away, and he saw the grave clothes which had been folded. It must have really impressed John that “the napkin, that was about his head, [was] not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself” (see John ch. 20 v. 7). This to me speaks of the power of God in resurrection and of the perfection of the sinless Son of God, over Whom death had no claim. The stone was not rolled away to let the Lord Jesus out, but to let the disciples see into the empty tomb. You will remember that earlier, Lazarus had been raised from the dead, but he came forth bound with grave clothes. In contrast, our blessed Lord and Saviour left the grave clothes (folded) in the tomb!

Peter, who only days before had denied his Lord, was left wondering, but not for long (see Luke ch. 24 v. 34 & John ch. 21). The Lord Jesus graciously met him by the shores of Lake Galilee and as the Great Shepherd, restored him to the joy of salvation. As we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, and follow his story we see Peter boldly preach that Jesus is the Christ. Peter wondered no more and writing in second epistle says,

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made know unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (see 2 Peter ch. 1 v. 16).

May God bless you all. Thank you for listening to this Truth for Today talk on Luke’s Gospel ch. 24 vv. 1-12, and the glorious subject of His resurrection, Talk No. T1223.

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