

Jesus In Disguise

Luke 24:13-35

Introduction

In 1966 TIME Magazine published its first all print cover. In a black field in bold red letters were the words; **Is God Dead?** A few years later the same magazine ran another cover with the words; **Is God Back?** Once again TIME magazine has introduced another all print cover. In a black field and in bold red letters this months magazine reads; **Is Truth Dead?**

Each year the skeptic, the critic, the doubter are invited to deny the Bible and dismiss the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ for any number of reasons.

The resurrection is the heart of Christianity and the keystone in the arch of truth. **The death of Jesus speaks of the love of God. The resurrection of Jesus speaks of the power of God.**

Long ago the United States Congress issued a special edition of Thomas Jefferson's Bible. It was simply a copy of our Bible with all references to the supernatural eliminated. Jefferson—in making his selections from the Bible confined himself solely to the moral teachings of Jesus. The closing words of the gospel narratives read; "There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the mouth of the sepulcher and departed." If our Bible ended like that, it would mean no resurrection for Jesus and no resurrection for you or me.

About 1930 the Bolshevik, Bukarin, journeyed from Moscow to Kiev. His mission—to address a huge assembly, his subject atheism. For a solid hour he hammered the crowd and aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity, Christ and the resurrection hurling ridicule, insult and mocking. At last he was finished and viewed what he believed to be the smoldering ashes of mens faith. "Are there any questions?" Bukarin demanded? A solitary man arose and asked permission to speak. He mounted the platform and moved close to the Communist. The audience was breathlessly silent as the man surveyed the crowd looking first to the right and then to the left. At last he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting; "CHRIST IS RISIN!" The vast assembly arose as if one man and the response came crashing like the sound of an avalanche. "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

All these questions have the same answer: "What gives a widow courage as she stands before a fresh grave?" "What is the ultimate hope for the cripple, the amputee, the burn victim?" How can the parents of a brain damaged or handicapped child keep from living their lives in total despair? Why would anyone who is blind or paralyzed be encouraged to think about life beyond the grave? What provides hope for parents and loved ones who watch their loved ones lowered into the grave or ashes spread at sea? Where do the thoughts of the young couple go when they finally recover from the anguish and grief of losing their baby? What about the tragic news when mothers and fathers hear their child was murdered, parents killed in a plane crash, child overdosed on drugs? What single truth becomes their whole focus? What is the final answer to pain, mourning, senility, insanity, terminal diseases, sudden calamities and fatal accidents? Have you guessed correctly? It is the hope of the bodily resurrection!

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JESUS: The Savior In Disguise (vv.13-16)

Luke 24:13–35 (NKJV) 13Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

Notice how our passage begins with an unexpected reunion (vv.13-16). Jesus joins two people in a heated discussion “of all these things which had happened” (v.14). The text says “their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him”—neither disciple recognized the Lord (v.16).

This is the third resurrection appearance of Jesus to His friends and disciples. He has shown himself alive to Mary Magdalene. The second appearance takes place in Mark 16:2-8 and Luke’s version appears in chapter 24:1-11. But now Jesus appears incognito, in disguise to the unsuspecting disciples. Jesus is in disguise for very good reasons. The Bible says (Romans 10:17) “That faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” These sad travelers were in for the Bible Study of a lifetime!

One of the travelers name is Cleopas (v.18) the other remains unnamed. The village of Emmaus was some 7 or 8 miles (60 stadia) west of Jerusalem.

It may be that one or both lived in Emmaus since they later ask Jesus to “abide with us” (v.29). One thing we do know—Emmaus is the wrong direction! The greatest event in human history had just occurred in Jerusalem. Because of the resurrection fellowship was to be found in Jerusalem. Before the day is up—the disciples will return to Jerusalem.

14And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

We know they spoke of the events surrounding the arrest, crucifixion and death of Jesus. Jesus will later probe them for further details (v.17) and Cleopas will provide further details.

15So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

While they spoke and reasoned Jesus Himself draws near and listens in to the conversation.

Have you stopped to consider that Jesus shows up when we gather in His name? But is it possible that Jesus can show up in our conversations about Him with our family, our friends, with skeptics and cynics and those simply unfamiliar with Jesus?

You may have come to church at the urging of a friend or out of respect for your family or to observe the religious holiday. **But you never anticipated that Jesus would show up and listen in to the thoughts of your mind and the reveal the condition of your heart.**

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The word ‘reasoned’ in this passage can also mean ‘debate’ (no body, empty tomb, angelic visit, eye-witness testimony).

16But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

This was an act of divine intervention. Jesus can and will withhold His identity when it suits His purposes.

It would not have been unusual for a Jewish pilgrim to join others since so many people had come up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

JESUS: The Hope In Shattered Dreams (vv.17-26)

17And He said to them, “What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”

Wuest translates this verse; “What are these words you are tossing to an fro to one another in animated, heated conversation as you are walking? And they came to a standstill, with gloomy countenances”. Our modern vernacular; “Dudes—why art thou so bummed out?”

18Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

Did you just fall off a potato truck? How could you **not know what is going on?** We live in an age of instant access to news! We have radio, TV, cable, internet, social media and hand held devices that link in a constant barrage of information.

The events in Jerusalem a few days earlier had an enormous impact on the general public. Hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions of visitors visited Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus may have been a country preacher from a small village in the Galilee but he had made a lasting impact in the entire region. The ministry of Jesus was public. The execution of Jesus was public. Soon the whole country and eventually the whole world would hear the news about Jesus. **The same is true today. People cram into churches all across the world. They know something happened some two thousand years ago.**

People distance themselves from “the things which happened there (Jerusalem) in these days”.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead in the way the Bible describes? Why are so many people willing to hold on to religion but let go of Christ?

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Did Jesus really rise from the dead? If Jesus did not really rise from the dead why are we content to feed each other moral messages and talk about the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and the neighborhood of Denver? Was the resurrection of Jesus a hoax, a fantasy, a fabrication? Was His resurrection physical or spiritual? Did Jesus rise in the same body in which he died or did he rise with a different body? Do the answers really matter? Of course they matter.

19And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

The answer of Jesus borders on the comical! "What things?" The disciples had placed their hopes and dreams on Jesus!

21But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

But now their hopes were shattered and their dreams dissolved. He was going to redeem Israel. In what sense? From its political bondage to Rome? From its spiritual bondage to sin? Jesus is dead. Besides—this is the third day since these things happened. What things? The arrest. The trial. The painful execution.

What do you do when you stake all your hopes and all our dreams on single idea or a single person or a group of ideas or a group of people and it doesn't work out? What do you do when you have bet the farm on a single person and that person walks out on you? What do you do when **life takes an unexpected turn**? Who plans an accident? Who plans for chronic pain? Many people are afraid to plan or dream or hope because they cannot bear the disappointment if they fail. These disciples were in part expecting a political Messiah to liberate them from the oppression of Rome and the bondage of occupation. They were still unable to come to grips with the fact that Jesus would suffer and die to liberate them from the tyranny of sin and bondage of pride—that sin always was—and always will be man's greatest plague and the greatest threat.

22Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

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23When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

In verses 19-24 we see Cleopas communicate the facts as he understands them. In verse 19 he calls Jesus a prophet (so do Muslims and even some Jews and others). Cleopas is either unwilling or unable to call Jesus the Messiah. Many people today know the circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus, can cite the Scriptures and can articulate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. **But they don't really believe it in their hearts.**

Someone has likened belief in the resurrection to four different stages—

1. Fairy tale, myth, unbelievable (see v.22).
2. Skeptical but willing to check out the facts (see v. 23).
3. They have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (see v.31).
4. They commit themselves to the reality of the presence of Jesus (see vv.32-35).

Some like Peter go to the empty tomb, puzzled but still unconvinced. Others have a personal encounter with the risen Jesus which results in true belief.

The *Life Application Bible* has this little note (p.1541); **“We are likely to miss Jesus and withdraw from the strength found in other believers when we become preoccupied with our dashed hopes and frustrated plans”.**

Are you still wondering whether or not Jesus can show up on Easter and change your life forever? He did for these disciples! But they were unbelieving!

They had the testimony of the angels and did not believe (v.22). “Yes, and certain women in our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us” (v.23). “When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said **He was alive.**”

These disciples had access to the testimony of the women on Resurrection Sunday and did not believe them. They had heard the angels testimony and did not believe it. They had access to an empty tomb and did not believe it. Warren Wiersbe writes; “Their real problem was not in their heads but in their hearts. They could have discussed the subject for days and never arrived at a satisfactory answer. **What they needed was a fresh understanding of the Word of God, and Jesus gave the understanding to them. He opened the Scriptures and then opened their eyes, and they realized that Jesus was not only alive but right there with them.**”

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25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

JESUS: The Promise In All The Scripture (vv.27-35)

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Conclusion