

On the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24: 13-32

About from 4 to 6 pm on Sunday the seventeenth of Nisan

DIG: List some of the common misconceptions about the Lord and His ministry. What prevents people from recognizing and accepting Jesus as Savior? In what different ways does Yeshua reveal Himself to people? Why did Messiah make Himself known to some people and not to others? What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping us see Jesus?

REFLECT: In what way can meeting Jesus change a person's life? Describe your first encounter with the Chief Shepherd. To what expectations are you still clinging? In what ways has your relationship with Yeshua Messiah grown and matured? In what ways can life's problems and disappointments interfere with our communion with ADONAI?

As the sun rose on Sunday morning and the Passover feast came to an end, **two** of Yeshua's disciples left for home, clearly disillusioned and resolving to leave **their** foolish dreams in Tziyon forever. Even as rumors of resurrection circulated, the dejected pair began their walk. And as **they** walked and talked, **they** were joined by another **man** - a **man** who asked interesting questions and seemed curiously ignorant of the recent events in Tziyon. **The two travelers** were amazed at how much **the stranger** knew about Yeshua and the TaNaKh. His companionship was so warm that **they** couldn't resist inviting **him** to stay with **them** for the evening. However, that's when **their** eyes were really opened.¹⁶⁷⁰

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles or eleven kilometers from the Holy City (Luke 24:13). The exact location of Emmaus is just off the highway from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and adjacent to the modern suburb of Moza. The ancient Moza (or Mozah) was mentioned as a village of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:26). **In the days of the Second Temple, according to the Talmud, Mozah was the place where Jews collected willow branches for the Feast of Tabernacles.**

They were talking with each other about everything that had happened relative to Yeshua during the past week. As they walked they talked and discussed these things with each other (Luke 24:14). Luke describes the disciples' conversation as bantering ideas back and forth with great emotion in a shared search for answers. Luke uses the term *antiballo*, which means *to throw back and forth*. Since they had no knowledge of the fact of the resurrection, **they**, like all the other disciples found **themselves** in dismay and despair. **The disillusioned disciples** desperately wanted to know why **their** expectations of **the Messiah** had come to such a tragic end.

It was customary for travelers headed in the same direction to join together in order to pass the time talking as they **walked** along. So **the two** thought little of it when a third **man** had joined **them**. **Jesus Himself** came up and **walked along with them**. But it was not **Christ's** intention to reveal **Himself** immediately, so **they were kept from recognizing Him** (Luke 24:14-16). To **them** He was just a **stranger** out of the shadows joining **them** on their way. **This was the third appearance of Jesus after His resurrection.**

As He noticed a lull in the conversation, He asked them: **What are you discussing together as you walk along?** As Luke recorded the story, he employed a clever narrative device called literary irony, in which the reader is aware of important facts that are hidden from the characters. Surprised, **they stood still, their faces downcast** (Luke 24:17).

One of them, named **Cleopas**, asked Him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" His question is laughable, given whom **he** was talking to. If anyone understood what had happened, it was **Jesus!** And if anyone was oblivious, it was **Cleopas!** Nevertheless, **Christ** encouraged **the two disciples** to talk, not to humiliate or criticize **them**, but for a very different purpose. He played along with **them** and asked: **What things** (Luke 24:18-19a)?

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The Sadducees and the Pharisees handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him; but we had hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Isra'el (Luke 24:19b-21a). In other words, these Zealot-sympathizers had hoped He would turn out to be **the Messiah** - for **they** had not yet grasped the notion of a suffering **Messiah** who would die for sins (see **Mv** - **The Jewish Concept of Two Messiah's**). Even after **His talmidim** had seen the resurrected **Yeshua** a number of times and been taught by **Him** for forty days **they** still expected **Him** to "liberate **Israel**" without delay (**Acts 1:6**)? Yet, **Cleopas and his companion** still did not recognize **they** were talking to **Christ Himself**. It was only when **He broke the matzah . . . and handed it to them** that **their eyes were opened** (Luke 24:30-31).¹⁶⁷¹

In addition to not understanding that the redemption of Isra'el had in fact taken place, there was something else that caused their sadness. **And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place** (Luke 24:21b). It was **the third day** by Jewish reckoning of time, where the night precedes the day, not Gentile time.

In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus (Luke 24:22-24). These two verses give a short summary of Luke 24:1-12.

Still speaking as an anonymous stranger, Jesus said to them: **Foolish people! So unwilling to put your trust in everything the prophets spoke! Didn't the Messiah have to die like this before entering glory?** Then, starting with Moshe and all the prophets, the Living Word explained to them the things that can be found throughout the TaNaKh concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-27 CJB). Suddenly it all became clear that the Messiah had to suffer and it was part of God's plan. Through His suffering He would bring salvation. Then repeatedly in Acts, over and over again we read that motif: The preaching of the Gospel is that the Messiah must suffer. Jesus said the same thing when He appeared to the Twelve before His ascension: **This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day** (Luke 24:46).

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther (Luke 24:28). This gave the two disciples the opportunity to practice hospitality to the stranger. And they were so intrigued they urged Him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So He accepted their offer, while maintaining His anonymity and went in to stay with them (Luke 24:29).

As the afternoon sun drifted closer to the horizon, the Expected One and the two disciples prepared the evening meal and, not doubt, continued their discussion about the need for the Messiah to die. As Yeshua was reclining with them at the table, instead of acting as a guest, He took the role of the host. Jesus took the matzah, made the b'rakhah, broke it and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him (Luke 24:30-31a CJB). When this Greek phrase is translated, it literally means their eyes were *completely opened and they fully comprehended Him*. This was more than a passive, casual recognition of Christ's physical features. They came to recognize the Good Shepherd in *all His* significance as the Meshiach, the Suffering Servant, the Son of God and the risen Lord! Luke doesn't tell us why or how the breaking of the matzah opened their eyes. All we know for certain is that the scales fell from the eyes of the two disciples, and they saw everything clearly for the first time.

But He became invisible to them (Luke 24:31b CJB). A literal translation of this would be: *he, invisible, became away from them*, meaning that **Jesus** suddenly vanished from **their** midst once **their** spiritual eyes were opened. **The two disciples** had been staring into the face of the risen **Lord**, yet **they** were prevented from seeing **Him**. Why? Were **they** divinely prevented, or did **their** faulty expectations blind **them** to anything else? Probably both.

The Lord allowed **their** pain to continue until **their** own desires no longer held **them** captive. When **they** wearied of **their** pain, **they** willingly released **their** own expectation, **they** very thing that hurt **them** and kept **them** from seeing **Yeshua** in **their** presence. To help **them** release **their** faulty perspective, **Christ** offered **them** truth - a supernatural, divine perspective - that came from a careful review of **the TaNaKh**.

As long as we hold onto our own desires and remain fixed on having our way, we will be unable to see **God**, even if **He** were to stand right before our eyes. **God** is patient, sometimes painful mercy, allows us to hold our desires as tightly as we wish until we tire of the pain and loosen our grip. Meanwhile, **He** holds before us a divine alternative, one that offers great abundance in exchange for the trinkets we clutch with such desperate resolve.¹⁶⁷²

They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened up the TaNaKh to us" (Luke 24:32 CJB)?

Jesus. Have you seen **Him**? Those who first did were never the same.

My Lord and my God! cried **Thomas**.

I have seen the Lord, exclaimed **Mary Magdalene**.

We have seen His glory, declared **Yochanan**.

Were not our hearts burning within us while He opened up the TaNaKh to us? rejoiced the two Emmaus-bound disciples.

But **Kefa** said it best: **We saw His majesty with our own eyes.**

His majesty. The emperor of Judah. The soaring eagle of eternity. The noble admiral of the Kingdom. All the splendor of heaven wrapped up in a **human body**. For a period ever so brief, the doors to the throne room were open and **God** came near. **His majesty** was seen. Heaven touched the earth and, as a result, earth can know heaven. In astounding combination a human body housed **divinity**. Holiness and earthliness were **One**.

This is no run-of-the-mill **Meshiach**. **His** story was out of this world. **He** called **Himself** **divine**, yet allowed a minimum-wage Roman soldier to drive nails into **His** wrists, and drive a single nail through the Achilles' tendon of both heels at the same time. **He** demanded purity, yet stood for the rights of a repentant prostitute. **He** called men to march, yet refused to allow them to call **Him King**. **He** sent us into the whole world, yet equipped us with only bended knees and memories of a resurrected carpenter.

We can't regard **Him** as simply a good teacher. **His** claims are too outrageous to limit **Him** to the company of Socrates or Aristotle. Nor can we categorize **Him** as one of the many prophets sent to reveal eternal truths. **His** own claims eliminate that possibility.

Has it been a while since you have seen **Him**? If your prayers seem stale, it probably has. If your faith seems to be trembling, perhaps your vision of **Him** has blurred. If you can't find the power to face your problems . . . perhaps it is time to face **Him**.¹⁶⁷³