

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS: BURNING HEARTS AND BROKEN BREAD

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus's appearance to the two travelers on the road to Emmaus provides the reader with fascinating conversation, supernatural revelation, and mysterious elements. N. T. Wright calls Luke 24 a small masterpiece meant to finish off a work of art.<sup>1</sup> This story evokes many questions such as the following: why was the identity of Jesus obscured to the two disciples, what did Jesus open to them from Scripture, why did their hearts burn within them as he taught them, why is the language so similar to the Lord's Supper institution narrative found in Luke 22, and why did Jesus disappear after the breaking of the bread. This paper will delve into the Emmaus Road story and its relationship to the eucharist and early Christian liturgy. To accomplish this task, the following will be examined: the pericope of the Emmaus Road story, Jesus's use of Scripture in the account, the breaking of bread, their eyes being opened, the disappearing Jesus, and how this pericope is connected to the worshipping life of the community of faith.

### **A Summary of Luke 24:13–35**

The passage begins with “that very day” which hearkens one back to the beginning of Luke 24 in which we learn that it is the first day of the week. The pericope of Luke 24:13–35 is set on the same day. The text informs the reader that earlier that day the “women who had come with him from Galilee (Luke 23:55)” came to the tomb and found that the body was missing. Two men in dazzling apparel instructed the women that Jesus had risen just as he told them he would. The

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<sup>1</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, vol. 3 of *The Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 652.

women remembered the words of Jesus and hurried to tell the other followers of what had transpired. They came to the “eleven” and the other disciples to tell the news. The news was written off as “idle” talk by the other followers, but Peter decided to go and investigate this report. Peter saw the empty tomb, the linen clothes and went home, marveling at what he observed. Two of the disciples of Jesus were travelling on the road to Emmaus. As the two walked along, they talked about all the things that had transpired, and Jesus came close to them and walked with them. Luke 24:16 informs us that their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Robert Stein proposes that οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν displays a divine passive.<sup>2</sup> Daniel Wallace classifies τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶνα as an infinitive of result because of the restraining (ἐκρατοῦντο) with the result that their eyes could not see him.<sup>3</sup> Their inability to recognize Jesus on the way was not due to their disbelief in the report of the resurrection, but it appears to be something being done to them for a specific purpose.

As Jesus walks along with the men, he asks the two disciples what they are discussing, and they sadly ask Jesus in response, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days” (Luke 24:18 ESV)? In this question to Jesus, it is revealed to the reader that one of the travelers is named Cleopas. N. T. Wright proposes that the companion of Cleopas is his wife.<sup>4</sup> Wright also theorizes that the wife of Cleopas could be one of the many Marys in the gospel story.<sup>5</sup> Cleopas and his companion fill Jesus in on the

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24 of NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 724.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Greek Beyond the Basics an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 592–93.

<sup>4</sup> N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2004), 296.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 652.

details that they believed Jesus was a prophet, mighty indeed, but he was condemned and killed by decree of the chief priests and the rulers by crucifixion. To make matters worse, they believed Jesus was the one to “redeem” Israel, and it has been three days since his death. The two also inform Jesus that there has been a report by some of the women that Jesus had been raised.

Jesus replies to the two travelers by saying, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25–27). Later the two travelers will report to the other disciples that when Jesus was explaining the Scripture to them, their hearts were burning within them.

As they came close to the village, the two travelers encouraged Jesus to stay with them longer. While they were at the table, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it. When Jesus had broken the bread and distributed it, they recognized Jesus. Later in their report of the occurrence, the two will tell the others that “he was known to them in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:35). Once they recognized Jesus, he vanished from their sight. The two rose that hour and returned to Jerusalem to report to the others what had occurred.

### **Scripture – Moses and the Prophets**

One fascinating part of the Emmaus Road story is found in the mysterious explanation of Scripture that Jesus gives to the two travelers. Cleopas and his partner rightfully point out to Jesus on the road that his crucifixion should have negated his messianic claims when they state that “our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:20b-21a). The logic of the two

makes sense *prima facie*. Yet, the response of Jesus to the travelers is puzzling. In Luke 24:25–27, Jesus states, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” What had these two missed in their understanding of the Hebrew Bible?

It appears that what Jesus taught was persuasive and brought about a paradigm shift for the travelers because of their reaction. Later in the text, the two relate to one another, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures” (Luke 24:32)? Orthodox scholar John Behr sheds some light on this passage from Luke 24 when he states:

Neither the Crucifixion, nor the empty tomb, nor even the appearances of the risen Christ are in themselves the starting point for Christian faith: the leader of the apostles denied Christ; the myrrh-bearing women did not understand the significance of the empty tomb; and the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize the risen Lord. Rather, only when the disciples finally understood the Passion “in accordance with Scripture” are they ready to encounter the risen Christ in the breaking of bread, and once they recognize him, he disappears from sight...The “Passion,” understood “in accordance with the Scriptures,” is the catalyst for reading Scripture, and the whole human existence and history, in a new manner, making everything new.<sup>6</sup>

As Behr points out just witnessing the events of Christ’s life and being his disciple before the resurrection was not enough for these earlier followers. Something else was needed. Keith Stanglin points out, “Although the NT writers were already recipients of a scriptural tradition, they began their interpretation of Scripture with assumptions outside of Scripture—namely, the

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<sup>6</sup> John Behr, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2006), kindle addition, 209.

revelation of Christ, their witness of the Christ event.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus does not give them some new vision from heaven or reveal mysteries from beyond the grave but he focuses on a patient exposition of Israel’s Scriptures.<sup>8</sup> Jesus doesn’t pull out a few isolated prooftexts but Luke informs the reader that “all the Scriptures” testify to Jesus.<sup>9</sup> The whole story of Israel builds to its narrative climax in Jesus.<sup>10</sup>

One must consider the point that the disciples on the road did not understand Jesus and his mission in light of the Passion alone. When they were turned back to Scripture by the risen Christ, the scales fell from their eyes, and they clearly understood Christ in the OT. Through the Passion of Jesus and his triumphant resurrection, the key to understanding Scripture was given to them. What had been a stumbling block before in the death of Jesus was now proven through Scripture to be necessary (Luke 24:27).<sup>11</sup>

One way to look at Scripture is through the lens of the sacramental. Hans Boersma provides an interesting assessment of early Christian hermeneutics as a “sacramental” interpretation of Scripture.<sup>12</sup> Boersma posits, “the church fathers were deeply invested in reading the OT Scriptures as a sacrament, whose historical basis or surface-level participates in the

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<sup>7</sup> Keith D. Stanglin, *The Letter and Spirit of Biblical Interpretation: from the Early Church to Modern Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 21.

<sup>8</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 222.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), xv.

mystery of the NT reality of the Christ event.”<sup>13</sup> Boersma makes the point that the OT as *sacramentum* already contains the NT reality of Christ.<sup>14</sup> Strict historical-grammatical exegesis does not see Christ as the hidden treasure in the field of the OT (Matt 13:44).<sup>15</sup> John Behr states, “This Christocentric reading of the Scripture, focused upon the Christ, enables seeing the Scriptures (again, the ‘Old Testament’) as a mosaic depicting Christ composed out of different tiles.”<sup>16</sup>

One source that helps tie all these points together is the early church father Irenaeus of Lyon (mid-second century BCE). In his debates with the Gnostics, Irenaeus shows that one should read each testament in the light of the other, and both should read with the history of salvation in mind.<sup>17</sup> Irenaeus lived in a time of a developing NT canon, but he still saw the OT and NT as unified because they were the product of one author.<sup>18</sup> Irenaeus captures these thoughts powerfully when he states the following:

“For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field that is in this world, but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since he was pointed out by means of types and parables. Hence His human nature could not be understood prior to his consummation of those things which had been predicted, that is, the advent of Christ. And therefore, it was said to Daniel the prophet, “Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of consummation, until many learn, and knowledge be completed. For at that time, when the dispersion shall be accomplished, they shall know all these things.” ...when at this present time the Law is read to the Jews, it is like a fable, for they do not possess the explanation of all things pertaining to the advent of the Son of God, which took

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<sup>13</sup> Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, xiii.

<sup>14</sup> Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, xv.

<sup>15</sup> Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, xv.

<sup>16</sup> John Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 110.

<sup>17</sup> Stanglin, *Letter and Spirit*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Stanglin, *Letter and Spirit*, 30.

place by human nature; but when it is read by the Christians, it is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ...”<sup>19</sup>

Irenaeus presents the reader with a fascinating proposal. The treasure of the OT was unlocked and revealed by the *risen Christ*. What once seemed like disconnected pieces of a puzzle are put together by the complete picture of the Passion and resurrection of Jesus.

Now consider how an early worshipping Christian community could have heard the words of Luke 24. These early Christians did not have personal leather-bound Tommy Nelson bibles at home to read individually. Instead, the Scripture they encountered would be read, recited, or discussed in the church's liturgy. The Lord's Day gatherings would be where Scripture would come alive and become a “sacramental” experience. Through the perspective of the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the entire corpus of Scripture is unified and makes sense. The results of this “sacramental” experience of Scripture would be the burning hearts of the worshipper as they came to understand the power of the resurrected one who is truly Lord over all.

### **Breaking of the Bread**

Many scholars point to the Emmaus Road story as having robust eucharistic overtones, but Joel B. Green is a dissenting voice.<sup>20</sup> Green proposes that it is impossible to truly know the shape of the eucharistic service in the early Christian community and therefore discards any notion that Luke is telling this with eucharistic practices in mind.<sup>21</sup> The problem with Green's view is that

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<sup>19</sup> F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, *A Treatise of Irenaeus of Lugdunum Against the Heresies: A Translation of the Principal Passages, with Notes and Arguments* (London: SPCK, 1916), 56.

<sup>20</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 843.

<sup>21</sup> Green, *Luke*, 843.



he fails to notice possible allusions to early Christian liturgical practices in the biblical text in places such as Acts 2:42. In his second volume of Acts, Luke states, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Daniel Wallace notes that Acts 2:42 displays the feature of the “well known” or “familiar” article.<sup>22</sup> The Greek text reads, “Ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες **τῇ διδαχῇ** τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ **τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει** τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ **ταῖς προσευχαῖς.**” Wallace states, “Either this pattern of worship was well known in the early church because it was the common manner in which it was done, or Luke was attempting to convey that each element of the worship was the one deserving of the name (par excellence).”<sup>23</sup>

One clue that the latter part of Wallace’s assessment of this passage is true comes from early Christian testimony concerning the structure of early Christian liturgy. Justin Martyr (c. 155 CE) describes a mid-second century Sunday liturgy in the following way in his First Apology, 67:

On the day called Sunday, there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a given city or rural district. The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then when the reader ceases, the president in a discourse admonishes and urges the imitation of these good things. Next, we all rise together and send up prayers. When we cease from our prayer, bread is presented with wine and water. The president in the same manner sends up prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people sing out their assent, saying the “Amen.” A distribution and participation of the elements for which thanks have been given is made to each person, and to those who are not present they are sent by the deacons. Those who have means and are willing, each according to his own choice, gives what he wills, and what is collected is deposited with the president. . . . We all make our assembly in common on Sunday, since it is the first day, on which God changed the darkness and matter and made the world, and Jesus Christ our

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<sup>22</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 225.

<sup>23</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 225.

Savior arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified him on the day before Saturn's day, and on the day after (which is the day of the Sun) he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught these things, which we have offered for your consideration<sup>24</sup>

Notice that early in the church's life, there is a basic outline of liturgy that includes the following: readings from Scripture, exhortation and teaching, prayers, and the Lord's Supper. It appears that Wallace's proposal that Acts 2:42 is referring to a well-known early pattern of worship is upheld by Justin Martyr's testimony. Justin's description is remarkably similar to what one observes in Acts 2:42. Early Christian worship consisted of "the apostolic teaching," "the fellowship," "the breaking of bread," and "the prayers." Green's assertion that there was no early shape to Christian liturgy is not upheld by scriptural testimony and early church father testimony. One notices that the basic structure of Luke 24 and Jesus's interaction with the two travelers on the road to Emmaus bears a striking resemblance to the makeup of early Christian worship. First, Jesus teaches from Scripture and opens it up to them. After this, they break bread, and Jesus is "recognized" in the breaking of the bread. To say that Luke is writing his gospel to an already existing worshipping community is not an over exaggeration. Arthur A. Just believes that one of the primary concerns of Luke's writing is to address an audience he calls the "hearers of the Word."<sup>25</sup> Just contends that the best way to understand Luke is to read it through the perspective of a worshipping community.

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<sup>24</sup> David W. Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 38.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur A. Just, "Hearers of the Word": Luke's Gospel as Sacramental Formation for a Liturgical Community," *Institute of Liturgical Studies Occasional Papers*, 1999, 173-74.

What is also interesting is the similarity of the language of Luke 24:30 to the Institution Narrative of the Lord's Supper in other parts of Scripture. The chart below displays the similarities in the text:

<b>Luke 24:30 NA<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Luke 22:19a NA<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Matt 26:26a NA<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Mark 14:22a NA<sup>28</sup></b>
καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ	Καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον	Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν	Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν
κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν	εὐχαριστήσας	λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς	λαβὼν ἄρτον
μετ' αὐτῶν λαβὼν	ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν	ἄρτον καὶ	εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν
τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν	αὐτοῖς	εὐλογήσας ἔκλασεν	καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς
καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδον		καὶ δοὺς τοῖς	
αὐτοῖς,		μαθηταῖς	

Luke intentionally connects the table that Jesus shares with Cleopas and the other traveler with the Lord's Supper. Luke 24:30 has connections with the eucharistic meal already being celebrated in the churches that read Luke's gospel. N. T. Wright helpfully states, "Luke describes the four actions of Jesus in the taking bread, blessing it, breaking it and giving it in such a way as to echo deliberately the eucharistic action non only described in the Last Supper texts but also by John the desert feeding and Paul in 1 Corinthians."<sup>26</sup> Luke wants to link the resurrection appearance of Jesus to the eucharistic action of the church.

### **Eyes Were Opened**

One peculiar thing about the Emmaus Road story is the inability of the two travelers to recognize Jesus. They had been part of Jesus's disciple group and spent time with Jesus. Robert Stein asserts,

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<sup>26</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 660.

“their eyes were restrained so that they could not recognize him.”<sup>27</sup> Stein also believes that this divine passive of obscuring their ability to recognize Jesus “allowed Jesus to teach the necessity of his death and resurrection and to show how this his resurrection was the fulfilment of Scripture (Luke 24:25-27).”<sup>28</sup> The evidence from the grammar shows that the restraining of their sight is intentional. It was in the breaking of bread that they recognized Jesus. Could this restraining of their sight be connected to another place in Scripture where human beings had their eyes opened in connection with eating?

When one reads the Genesis account and realizes that Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened by eating from the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, there appears to be a connection to Luke 24. Genesis 3:7 states, “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.” These two passages include two people that have their eyes opened in connection to eating. Dane Ortlund’s investigation of scholarly sources on Luke found that in most of the noteworthy commentaries on Luke, there is a glaring omission of connecting Gen 3 to Luke 24.<sup>29</sup> Even though the commentary testimony is scant for connecting these two passages there is still a strong case to be made for the allusion to Eden in Luke 24.

Ortlund gives three pieces of compelling evidence for the connection between Gen 3 and Luke 24. First, Ortlund points out the linguistic similarities.<sup>30</sup> Ortlund demonstrates the similar

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<sup>27</sup> Stein, *Luke*, 610.

<sup>28</sup> Stein, *Luke* 610.

<sup>29</sup> Dane C. Ortlund, “‘And their Eyes Were Opened, and they Knew’: An Inter-Canonical Note on Luke 24:31” *JETS* 53/4 (2010): 718.

<sup>30</sup> Ortlund, “Eyes Were Opened,” 723.

wording in Gen 3:7 to Luke 24, which reads in the LXX, και διηνοιχθησαν οι οφθαλμοι των δυο και εγνωσαν (and the eyes of both were opened and they knew).<sup>31</sup> The corresponding phrase of Luke 24:31 reads αυτων δε διηνοιχθησαν οι οφθαλμοι και επεγνωσαν αυτον (and their eyes were opened and they knew him).<sup>32</sup> The similarities are more convincing when they are observed side by side.

<b>Gen 3:7</b>	<b>Luke 24:31</b>
και διηνοιχθησαν οι οφθαλμοι των δυο και εγνωσαν	αυτων δε διηνοιχθησαν οι οφθαλμοι και επεγνωσαν αυτον

Next, there are similarities in the narrative of the episodes. The narrative similarities are the following: two people are involved, the human pair are offered food (Gen 3:1–5; Luke 24:30), the one offering the food is a supernatural being (Rev 12:9 and 20:2 in light of Gen 3:1–15; Luke 24:52), the human pair do not recognize the one offering food for who they are (Gen 3:1–7; Luke 24:16), the eating of the food produces a profound new perception of reality (Gen 3:7–10; Luke 24:32), the new understanding is described by the words “and their eyes were opened, and they knew” (Gen 3:7; Luke 24:31), after the eye-opening, there is a divine visitation that frightens them and the divine visitor questions them (Gen 3:9–13; Luke 24:36–41), and the human pair immediately physically relocate (Gen 3:23; Luke 24:33).<sup>33</sup> Last, Ortlund demonstrates how the passages are connected in salvation history and the *telos* of Scripture. In

<sup>31</sup> Ortlund, “Eyes Were Opened,” 723.

<sup>32</sup> Ortlund, “Eyes Were Opened,” 723.

<sup>33</sup> Ortlund, “Eyes Were Opened,” 725.

the original creation, Adam and Eve's eyes are opened to their new reality of sin and alienation, and now in the new creation of Luke 24, the two traveler's eyes are opened to the reality of the risen Savior.<sup>34</sup> There is good evidence that Gen 3 and Luke 24 are intertextually connected.

### **The Vanishing Jesus**

In an enigmatic verse, Luke informs the reader that after Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, "their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31). This narrative moves into the area of mystery in that Jesus vanishes once they recognize him. Now that the two disciples recognize Jesus, what would be the purpose of Jesus vanishing from their sight?

One way to solve this mystery is to look back to the earlier parts of Luke's Gospel. Rob James calls Luke 2:41–51 a prequel to the sequel of Luke 24:13–35.<sup>35</sup> This paper proposes that the pericope of Jesus in the Temple at twelve years old sheds light on why he vanishes from sight in Luke 24 after he is recognized. There are interesting parallels between the Emmaus Road story and the boy in the Temple. First, in Luke 2 and Luke 24, Mary and Joseph and the two travelers are walking away from Jerusalem, and both pairs return to Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup> Next, both pairs are wrong about the presence of Jesus. Mary and Joseph believe that Jesus is with them, and Cleopas and his companion believe Jesus is not with them. Third, both events occur during the Passover festival.<sup>37</sup> Next, there is a three-day period in which Jesus is lost in the Luke 2 narrative, and in

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<sup>34</sup> Ortlund, "Eyes Were Opened," 727.

<sup>35</sup> Rob James, "Intratextuality in Luke: Connecting the Emmaus Road with the Boy in the Temple," *ExTim* 132 (2020): 64.

<sup>36</sup> James, "Intratextuality," 65.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 650.

Luke 24, Jesus is raised after three days in the tomb. Karen Chakoian makes the case that the three days in Luke 2 point forward to the three days in the tomb.<sup>38</sup> Last, both Mary and Joseph and the two Emmaus Road travelers receive a word of “divine necessity” when they meet Jesus.<sup>39</sup> Mary and Joseph are told by the child Jesus, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must (δεῖ) be in my Father’s house” (Luke 2:49)? Cleopas and his companion are told by the risen Jesus, “Was it not necessary (ἔδει) that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory” (Luke 24:26). The evidence points toward the intentional connection of these stories. Wright believes that Luke is intentionally weaving into the framework of his gospel the idea of resurrection and the redemption of Israel.<sup>40</sup> When the reader gets to the end of Luke’s gospel and is presented with the resurrection, it should be no surprise to those reading carefully.

How does this connection of the boy in the Temple at twelve and the Emmaus Road appearance help with the current question as to the vanishing of the resurrected Jesus in Luke 24? P. W. van der Horst points to the possible Aramaic background of Luke 2:49, in which Jesus gives his answer to his parents.<sup>41</sup> Jesus could be using a double entendre.<sup>42</sup> The double entendre would place the referent to both the physical Temple and the idea that ‘I must be in/about the things/affairs of my Father.’<sup>43</sup> When he appears to his disciples on the road, he is no longer in the Temple but in a domestic setting.

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<sup>38</sup> Karen Chakoian, “Luke 2:41–52,” *Int* 52/2 (1998): 185–90, 187.

<sup>39</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 651.

<sup>40</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 649–50.

<sup>41</sup> P. W. van der Horst, “Notes on the Aramaic Background of Luke 2.41–52,” *JSNT* 7 (1980): 63.

<sup>42</sup> van der Horst, “Aramaic,” 63.

<sup>43</sup> van der Horst, “Aramaic,” 63.

Wright proposes that the table fellowship that Jesus shares with the two on the road to Emmaus may be the eighth time Jesus shared table fellowship with others in Luke's gospel.<sup>44</sup> If that is the case, then the motif of eight could be symbolic of new creation. In essence, Luke could be explaining to his audience that the table fellowship in Luke 24 is the first of such in the new creation. Luke is signaling an important point that God's presence is with his people now. The resurrection and the eventual sending of the Spirit will make it possible for God to be present with his people at all times in all places instead of localized in the Jerusalem Temple.

Taking this idea of God's presence, a step further, consider that when the two on the road have had the experience of the risen Jesus and now understand who he is, they turn and go back to Jerusalem. Thinking back to the story of the boy in the Temple, a fascinating point emerges. When Mary and Joseph return to Jerusalem to find the boy Jesus they go to the Temple. At that time, the Temple was the place of God's presence and dwelling. When the two on the road to Emmaus return to Jerusalem, they do not return to the Temple. It would make no sense to go to the Temple because the locus of God's presence is no longer the Temple. Instead, they return to the eleven (Luke 24:33) in Jerusalem to give the report of their experience on the road. This paper proposes that Jesus disappeared from their presence because Christ would now be present in the church. John Behr observes, "in fact, it is now they who have become his body—being conformed to his image (by taking up the cross), being his presence here on earth, the ones through whom he works. One could say that he disappears because if the church is his body, we cannot look upon him elsewhere! We are now his body, manifesting and realizing his coming!"<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 652.

<sup>45</sup> John Behr, "The Spirit and the Bride Say "Come": the Eschatological Dimensions of the Liturgy," *Communio* 38 (2010): 473.



In summation, Jesus disappears because now his followers have become his presence here on earth.

### **Conclusion - The Resurrected Jesus is Connected to the Liturgical Life of the Church**

The big question this paper proposes is, “how would the original recipients of Luke’s gospel have received and understood the Emmaus Road story?” John Nolland states, “Luke wants to make the point that the Christians of his day were able to have the living Lord made known to them in the Eucharist celebration in a manner that was at least analogous to the experience of the Emmaus disciples.”<sup>46</sup> The road to Emmaus points Christians to the idea that to truly know Christ; one experiences him in the worshipping community of his people.

The worship of the church connects the Christian through symbols and actions to a reality that is hidden from sight but is there. Joseph Ratzinger stated, “the theology of the liturgy is in a special way a “symbolic theology,” a theology of symbols, which connects us to what is present but hidden.”<sup>47</sup> In looking at the Emmaus Road story, Scripture has given us a matrix to see Christian worship that is deeply symbolic and powerful. This essay also tried to demonstrate that Scripture is best understood in light of the post resurrected Christ and within the heart of a worshipping community.

First, one learns that Scripture is best read and understood in light of the risen Christ and experienced in fellowship with others. A point that may be neglected is that worship is not

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<sup>46</sup> John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* Vol. 35c, WBC (Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 1206.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 60.

Scripture's stepchild, but the liturgy of the church is Scripture's home.<sup>48</sup> Yes, the individual should read and learn Scripture, but it finds its home in the worshipping community. John Behr points out that when one considers how the disciples came to "know" Jesus as the Lord, the Son of God, it becomes obvious that the way they came to know him was extraordinary.<sup>49</sup> The two travelers on the Emmaus Road saw Jesus in the flesh, they knew his teachings, accompanied him, saw him in his resurrected state, but they still did not truly "know" Jesus. Emmaus shows that the ordinary means of human knowledge such as scientific analysis, historical inquiry, and philosophical reflection are inadequate in the quest to obtain knowledge about God.<sup>50</sup> The report of the empty tomb and the encounter with the risen Christ were not enough. The disciples came to know and recognize Jesus by the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread. It is not until the Scriptures have been opened to them and they can see the mosaic of Jesus found in them along with the breaking of bread that it all comes together for them.<sup>51</sup>

Notice too that it is at the moment of the breaking of bread where the identity of Christ is indeed known. The teaching of Scripture through the lens of the Christ event along with the table makes Christ known. Emmaus helps contemporary Christians understand that even though the historical resurrected Christ is separated from them by two millennia, he is just as accessible. He is "knowable" through the Scripture and the table. This form of knowing Jesus is as viable as an encounter with the historical Jesus in the first-century. In the Emmaus story, one sees that it is

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<sup>48</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, "Scriptural Word and Liturgical Worship," in *Reclaiming the Bible for the Church*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 131.

<sup>49</sup> Behr, *The Mystery of Christ*, 209 (kindle)

<sup>50</sup> Behr, *The Mystery of Christ*, 209 (kindle)

<sup>51</sup> Behr, *The Mystery of Christ*, 209 (kindle)

only through the breaking open of Scripture and through the breaking of bread that one truly knows Jesus.

The Emmaus Road story opens up an entirely new way to know Jesus. With the coming of postmodernity, society has struggled with the issue of epistemology. Postmodernity has challenged our traditional notions of a truly objective observer. What the two travelers experience on the road is an answer that cuts through the postmodern challenge. Emmaus opens one up to a new epistemology that Wright calls an “epistemology of love.”<sup>52</sup> One realizes objectively that Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and raised after the third day. To know Jesus truly, something else must happen. Simply looking at the resurrection as a historical enterprise is not enough. Luke 24:13–35 demonstrates powerfully that there is a deeper type of knowing. It is a knowledge of Christ in the Scriptures that are unlocked by the Christ event. It is knowledge of Christ in the breaking of the bread. The ultimate knowing is when the church realizes that it has become the body of Christ. When Christ vanishes from the sight of his followers in Emmaus, it is a reminder to God’s people that the mission of love and self-giving is now given to the followers of Jesus. The Emmaus Road story is telling Christians from the first century until now that when they come together to worship, their hearts should burn as Jesus is present in the Scriptures, he feeds his people new creation life at his table, and in recognizing him, they realize that the church embodies his self-giving love.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Wright, *Hope*, 239.

<sup>53</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Meal that Jesus Gave Us: Understanding Holy Communion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 58.

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