**Mystery Solved, Christ is Lord!**

Based on [Luke 24:13-35](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk24.13-35)

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Easter 3

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*"But their eyes were kept from recognizing him." And later, "He was recognized in the breaking of the bread."*

On Easter Day, two of Jesus' Disciples were walking to a village called Emmaus. **And on the road, they were talking with one another. And they had a lot to talk about, for their Lord and master had been condemned to death on a cross and died there three days earlier.** And to such men who had followed him, they had a lot to talk about, to discuss, to work out in their hearts and minds. **They had followed this compelling companion, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.** He had done many signs and wonders, healed lepers, gave sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, forgiving sins in the sight of God and men, and causing the dead to rise again.

Their faith in this man now dead, must've hit them like a bad investment--that sinking feeling that you get--only worse. It hit them more than a lost loved one. **Anyone who has lost a spouse or a child, you might think that there's no worse pain on this earth.** Well, Jesus was a lost loved one who claimed to be the Christ, the messiah, the one promised to save their family, their nation, even all people. And now...what? This man is dead...or so they thought.

As these disciples are walking to Emmaus, behold, a stranger drew near to their company. But this was no stranger, it was the resurrected Lord, Jesus himself. And yet, they didn't recognize him. **It wasn't that he was wearing a disguise, nor did was it that Jesus looked angelic or holy now that he was raised, rays of light beaming from his person like on the mount of Transfiguration or on the road to Damascus.** Jesus was raised, but not yet ascended to his Father in heaven...not yet glorified. He was raised, never to die again, but he was raised looking like he did before. And yet they didn't *recognize* him.

As I understand, those who have lost loved ones sometimes have dreams or visions of their dearly departed. **You've seen movies, I'm sure where someone believes they've seen their lost one's face in a crowd**, but when they approach it's just a stranger. **Their mind or their eyes played tricks on them.** Their hope caused them to see something that was not there. That's not what happens here. Jesus joins the company of his disciples looking like himself, and these men who were in the process of talking about him didn't recognize him. And it's not that Jesus was in disguise...it's that, as the Scripture's say, **"Their eyes *were kept* from recognizing him."**

Jesus was with them, but they didn't know it was him. Why? Because of their lack of faith. Because they knew that Jesus was dead as dead can get. **They knew he had hung on a cross until he breathed his last and there's no coming back from death...at least not in the body.** And this man had a body to walk, lips and a mouth to talk...eyes to see. This man was not dead, therefore he was not Jesus. **Perhaps their *eyes* told them it was Jesus,** but subconsciously, without even thinking about it, their faithless "worldview" said "impossible."

Their lack of faith kept them from seeing Jesus. Jesus was there, even as himself, and they didn't "recognize" him, so powerful was their unbelief. And then, irony of ironies, they begin telling Jesus about Jesus, about how he died, and how they had *hoped, hoped* that he was the one to redeem Israel. **Irony of ironies, they begin to tell *him* that it is now the third day, and some women of their company had went to his tomb that very morning and saw that his body wasn't there.** Irony of ironies, the women had heard from angels that he was alive. And he was alive, standing there with them, listening to their story, themselves providing the evidence, or at least a basis for hope that he is still alive, but they couldn't recognize him, because they believed that the power of death was greater than the power of God. They believed the word of the world, over the word of Jesus.

In a word, Ladies and Gentlemen, they didn't recognize him because they didn't know how to read their bible. Now these disciples, they were probably good Jews. They knew their bible...**the scriptures about Adam and eve, Noah and the flood, Babel and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**. They knew about Moses, and Joshua and the promised land. They knew of king David and Solomon, the Babylonian exile and the remnant of Israel. They knew it all. **But like so many people today who boast as having "read the bible cover to cover," they were still at a loss to explain *how it all comes together*; it's *thesis*...what it all *means*.** If the bible is just a bunch of disconnected stories, then you could read it a thousand times and be no closer to God for it. **But the Holy Spirit caused the scriptures to be written for one purpose, and one purpose only**...to testify to Jesus who is the Christ.

If you've ever read a mystery novel, you might know that it's good to read it twice**. Because once you realize at the end "whodunit?"...the second time through you *see* the clues everywhere, clues planted by the author on purpose, but you didn't recognize them because the truth hadn't yet been revealed**. Once you know who the story is about, the story becomes meaningful. So it is with the Old Testament...it is all about Jesus. **Adam was tempted and all were lost; Jesus overcame temptation and all were redeemed**. Cain murdered Abel for offering the more perfect sacrifice to God. The Chief Priests and scribes murdered Jesus for offering the more perfect sacrifice to God.

And Noah...Noah saved his family through waters of the flood by bringing his them into the wooden ark. Jesus saved his people through the waters of baptism by bringing them into the wooden cross. **Moses rescued his people from their captivity to pharaoh and slavery; Jesus rescued his people from their captivity to Satan and sin**. Joshua lead God's people into the promised land; Jesus leads god's people to heaven. The prophet Isaiah said the messiah would be born of a virgin and be pierced for our transgressions. The Prophet Micah said he'd be born in Bethlehem.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the OT is not just a bunch of random stories about how God helps people who are ***faithful enough***; and punishes those who aren't. It's a story of a nation through whom all nations are blessed by the seed of Abraham..even Jesus Christ.

The Emmaus disciples knew the scriptures but they didn't recognize Jesus there; and so too they didn't recognize him here...now...before their very eyes either. And so, when they were done telling Jesus about Jesus dying and their crushed hope in him; Jesus said back to them, "**O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer death 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.

The scriptures are not just a bunch of disconnected and meaningless stories. They are stories to be interpreted, and Jesus himself interprets them. **He brings them to the end of the mystery novel and reveals himself as the one whom the mystery is about, and then he shows them how the clues pointed to him the whole time**. You watch a movie the second time through, you notice how the whole time the plot was building to the one inevitable conclusion, **but you didn't see it the first time through.** Once you know the ending, it would be silly to expect any other conclusion the second time through.

So too we don't read the scriptures in a vacuum...we know how they end, and the ending was all the while hidden in the beginning. As we read every chapter of every verse of every word of every letter of the Old Testament and New, we are to ask of it, "**What does this say about Christ AND his bride, the church?**" Then you will see that in the OT God was working for his people. In the time of the OT, before Christ, God directed the whole history salvation and was *plotting towards* this Jesus of Nazareth, Christ who is the Lord.

But after Jesus had taught them all things concerning himself in Moses and the Prophets, they still didn't recognize him. They saw the truth in their minds and they remembered the scriptures and the teachings of the messiah to come...but they didn't yet recognize Jesus. Then they stopped and ate with him, and our reading says, "**When Jesus was at table** with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them." Sound familiar?

**"Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed took bread. And when he had blessed it he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said "Take, eat, this is my body given for you."**  Jesus was celebrating Holy Communion with these two disciples. First he taught them about himself, and THEN he *Communed* with them in the Lord's Supper, himself being the host and "the host." **And then, at that moment, their eyes were opened,** and finally...they recognized him. And once that happened, he vanished from their sight.

Today we will celebrate Holy Communion, and Jesus is there to be recognized by faith. He is present in his body and blood here, not because we see him with our eyes, but because he promised to be. These untaught disciples didn't recognize Jesus, even though he was right before their eyes. **So the bible teaches Closed Communion...saying that only those who have been rightly taught God's Word and believe it are invited to the Lord's Supper.** Jesus practiced it, right here when he refused to reveal himself to them until they were taught all things concerning himself. **Then, once they were confirmed and catechized, they saw him in the breaking of the bread**. It's as if Jesus was saying, "**You will no longer see me in my body; but with eyes of faith in my Words, you will henceforth see me in the breaking of the bread.**"

Isn't it amazing?...when they finally recognized him, he vanished. Why? "Because faith is the assurance in what *we do not see*...but what we hear." **Because as Jesus said to Thomas a week later, "Do you believe me because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed."** I wish he would have said, "Blessed are those who have **heard** and believed." But of course that's what he meant. Faith doesn't come through seeing with the eyes, or feeling with the heart. **Faith comes through hearing with the ears the promises of God and believing them**.

If the disciples had only listened to Jesus, and believed him on when he had said, "**It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things, die at the hands of sinful men, and on the third day rise again**", they would have recognized him immediately. But because they didn't believe what he had told them, they were blind. Today many come to the altar of Holy Communion *blind* because they don't believe Jesus' words when he said, "**This is my body, given for you for the forgiveness of sins**." And no one sees his body there with eyes of the flesh, or tastes him. We believe he is there because we have heard him promise it. **Therefore Believe it, and Receive it!** After all, the Christ is no longer hidden. We know the whole story. We know "whodunnit"...Mystery solved; Christ is Lord and he is Risen. Alleluiah!