

Burning Hearts and Opened Eyes*

BY REV. KRISTOPHER WHITBY

At meals, much more can happen than the mere consuming of food. Around the table, as friends and family gather for a meal, relationships can be deepened, special occasions can be celebrated, important life matters can be discussed. In short, life is often shared over a meal. Many significant things happened over a meal during Jesus' earthly ministry. This study invites us to journey into the Scriptures and take a seat around the meal table where Jesus dines.



Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, may the Holy Spirit use this study to deepen our understanding of what grace our Savior extends to those who get to dine with Him, and how He continues to set a place for us to be nurtured by Him. Amen.

Setting the Scene: It had looked like all was lost. The One who had shown such promise, whom they had hoped would redeem Israel, now lay dead for some three days. Some women from their group had reported Jesus to have risen, but as these disheartened disciples make their way home to Emmaus for an evening meal, their hopes seem far from alive. Yet, in the next hours, they will be joined by a "Stranger" who will kindle their hearts again with the promise of God's Word and open their eyes in a meal symbolic of the Church they will share in founding.

Into the Text: Read **Luke 24:13-31**.

How does Luke establish the setting for this event? _____

What exactly were the two disciples discussing? _____

How does Luke introduce Jesus to the situation? _____

What does Jesus ask them? _____

How do they answer? _____

What does their answer reveal about their Christology? _____

The Christology of chief priests and rulers? _____

Why might Cleopas have been mentioned by name? See **John 19:25**. _____

How does Jesus switch roles at this point (verses 25-27)? _____

What passages of Scripture could you imagine Jesus using to teach these disciples about His mission as Messiah? _____

How does the action shift focus in verses 28-29? _____

Discuss the significance of the meal in verses 30-32. _____

In verses 33-35, what is the response of the disciples? _____

What further lessons are here for the Church today? _____

Final Thought: Jesus was a visitor, a sojourner, in Jerusalem during that first holy week, come from heaven and soon to return, having accomplished His Father's will for our salvation. Yet, before He physically departs, He draws near to these two ordinary followers. Before they embark on a journey of following this Messiah, He will equip them well. They will be taught all the things concerning Himself from God's Word, and their hearts, once slow to believe, will now burn with that Word. They will also have their eyes opened to recognize that their Savior will be with them in the breaking of the bread, where He will continually welcome and feed His children. His very grace that will sustain them ... now sojourners themselves. In the Emmaus disciples we see ourselves — the life-long journey the same, the provision of our Savior, the same, and the sure hope of sitting at His table forever, the same.

Closing: Sing or say together verses 1 and 4 of "Look, Ye Saints, the Sight Is Glorious" (LSB #495; TLH #222) "O Splendor of the Father's Light" (LW #481), and close with the Lord's Prayer.

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