

Revealed

Jesus reveals His identity to those seeking Him.

LUKE 24:18-31

MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 24:26

STUDY Luke 24:18-31, noticing the progression of the two disciples' understanding of Jesus. Reflect on how the review of Scripture helps the two men gain a clearer understanding of Jesus (PSG, p. 110).

CREATE a teaching plan for your group using the ideas on pages 130–132. Focus on helping the group recognize that all people should be encouraged to discover the truth about Jesus and that Jesus reveals His identity to those seeking Him. Consider ways of using the Music Idea (p. 132) in the group time.

GATHER the following items:

- Personal Study Guides (PSGs) for each group member

Prepare to display:

- Pack Item 3** (*Map: Jesus' Travels*)
- Pack Item 5** (*Poster: Remember*)

Make copies of:

- Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*)
- Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Passages Unique to Luke*)
- Pack Item 12** (*Handout: Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearances*)
- Pack Item 13** (*Handout: Proof of the Resurrection*)

CONSULT *QuickSource* for additional questions to use during the group time and review the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for more biblical insights (available for purchase from LifeWay.com).

REINFORCE the session by encouraging the group to look for people not involved in a Bible study group. Challenge them to invite the people they find to your group.

FIRST THOUGHTS

KEY DOCTRINE

Scripture

All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation (Heb. 1:1-2).

Math can be frustrating until something finally clicks and it all makes sense. We may have difficulty figuring out how to use a tool and then suddenly we get it. We may even have trouble remembering how we know someone until they do or say something that triggers our memory. Some people have a hard time understanding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus is ready to reveal the truth to those who seek Him.

(In PSG, p. 109) **What is something that you had difficulty doing or understanding, and then after several attempts suddenly everything made sense?**

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

BIBLE SKILL

Use a Bible atlas and Bible dictionary to locate and learn about places mentioned in Scripture.

Use a Bible atlas and a Bible dictionary to learn more about Emmaus. Find Emmaus on the map. Consider the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus. Read the entry in a Bible dictionary about Emmaus. How does knowing more about Emmaus and the topography help you appreciate the response of the two disciples after they realized who Jesus was?

LUKE 24:13-35

One of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances took place on the road to Emmaus. Several aspects of the story help build a three-dimensional view of the incident. First, the text identifies its location to be about seven miles from Jerusalem. The distance would have required a walk of about three to four hours over uneven terrain.

Second, the participants included Cleopas and an unknown disciple. They may have lived in Emmaus since they invited Jesus to spend the evening. While they could have stayed at an inn, the description of their shared meal suggests this place was more than a temporary accommodation. Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus, so they thought they were bringing a stranger into their home.

A third point involves where they had been. They were with the larger group when Mary and the other women reported the empty tomb. These two disciples must have been part of the close-knit followers of Jesus to be allowed into the place where the disciples hid themselves. Yet they were not members of the Eleven surviving apostles.

The fourth aspect of the narrative reveals the belief that the Messiah would deliver Israel from oppression. In spite of His teachings, they did not comprehend the full meaning of His kingdom. Their despair at His death was matched by their disappointment that He had not fulfilled their expectations.

Into this scene, Jesus joined them and began to teach the Scriptures. He explained how the Messiah had to die for the sins of the world and then rise again. Jesus used the Old Testament, beginning with the five books of Moses. The Scriptures are full of prophecies about the Messiah. Jesus had shown them these teachings in the past, but the reality of the cross overwhelmed their understanding.

Jesus finally revealed Himself following His blessing of the bread at dinner. The two disciples were amazed—not only by the fact Jesus had been with them, but by the way He had opened the Scriptures to them. Without delay, they rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what they had seen and heard.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

QUESTIONS (LUKE 24:18-24)

Verses 18-21

We can only imagine the discouragement these two disciples felt as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They were confused by the conflicting realities of the deadly cross and reports that His tomb was empty. Instead of staying in Jerusalem with the other disciples and the eleven apostles, **Cleopas** and a second disciple decided to go home to Emmaus.

Jesus joined the two disciples along the way but prevented them from recognizing Him. Asked what they were discussing, Cleopas **answered**. The term *answered* introduced a question by way of response. The disciple had difficulty believing this stranger had been a **visitor in Jerusalem** and did not know **the things that happened there**. His reference to **these days** indicates Cleopas had been with Jesus and His followers throughout the week from the triumphant entry to the crucifixion. If Emmaus were his home, Cleopas may have joined the disciples as Jesus arrived in Jerusalem.

Jesus did not deny knowing what Cleopas meant, but to draw him out He asked: **“What things?”** The two disciples’ description of Jesus in these verses offer insight into their conceptions of who Jesus was.

By identifying Him as **Jesus of Nazareth**, they focused on Jesus’ human identity. They did not yet understand His divine role as Messiah. They believed Him to be a **prophet**. Many people today would agree that Jesus was a great teacher—and even a prophet—but stop short of seeing Him as the Son of God. These disciples agreed Jesus was **powerful in action and speech**. His deeds and the power of His words were validated **before God and all the people**. The multitudes not only witnessed Jesus’ miracles but responded to His words as authoritative as opposed to the empty teachings of the scribes (Mark 1:22).

The two disciples sadly identified with the people who **handed him over to be sentenced to death**. They referred to them as **our chief priests and leaders**. They may have sensed some vicarious guilt because the persons responsible for Jesus’ death were leaders of their nation. These leaders could not condemn Jesus with the death penalty; they could only put Him into the hands of the Roman authorities. Although the Roman soldiers executed the order, the disciples knew their **chief priests and leaders** were actually the ones who **crucified him** (Luke 23:24-25).

Another indication of their misunderstanding of Jesus’ identity and mission was revealed in the source of their disappointment. The disciples’

VERSES 18-21

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ “What things?” he asked them. So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened.

hope was built on an inadequate concept of the Messiah. They believed Christ would **redeem Israel**. Most Israelites thought the Promised One would free their nation from captivity and restore the kingdom to the glory days of David. Even on the day of His ascension, the apostles wondered if Jesus was ready to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).

These two disciples did not realize their misunderstanding of the Messiah. They thought the problem was with Jesus. They hoped He was **the one**. In their view, if Jesus died at the hands of the Romans instead of conquering them, then He must not be the Messiah.

They may have made some connection to Jesus' predictions of rising again from the dead on the third day. Again, they were impatient and unbelieving. It was already **the third day since these things happened** yet He had not appeared.

Verses 22-24

VERSES 22-24

²² Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, ²³ and when they didn't find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn't see him."

The term **moreover** translates two words meaning "but also." It conveys the idea that not only were the previous statements important, but additional information made the situation even more puzzling. They did not name **the women from our group**, but obviously referred to Mary and the other women who **arrived early at the tomb** that very morning. The women's report **astounded** the disciples. They could not accept the implications of the women's statements.

These disciples focused on the fact that the women **didn't find his body**. Cleopas and his companion apparently had not accepted the reality of Jesus' resurrection. The women **came and reported**—meaning they returned to the room where the larger group of disciples were concealed for fear of the Jews. Instead of believing that Mary and the others had actually seen angels, they said the women had seen **a vision of angels who said he was alive**. Cleopas could not accept the reality of the angels' appearance or the reality that Jesus was indeed alive. He focused on the *vision* of angels and their supposed statement.

Further indication of their lack of faith involves the fact that Peter and John **found it** (the tomb) **just as the women had said**. So far, the women's testimony was verified. Then, Cleopas used the contrastive conjunction **but** (v. 24). At that moment, he betrayed his vanishing hope. They (Peter and John) **didn't see him**. These men had wanted proof positive. Anything less than an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ would not be enough for them to believe.

The evidence of Jesus' death and resurrection is overwhelming. Many skeptics have endeavored to disprove the empty tomb but failed. Instead, many inquirers have been convinced by the facts of history and the testimony of countless believers. Jesus is alive!

What questions did you have before trusting Christ? How could you respond to honest inquiry about Jesus' resurrection?"

ANSWERS (LUKE 24:25-27)

Verses 25-26

Jesus marveled at how **foolish** they were. The term *foolish* does not mean silly or even unintelligent. It refers to being unable or unwilling to understand something that should be obvious. Jesus did not say they were unbelievers but rather that they were **slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken**. The word *slow* translates a phrase meaning “slow in heart.” Theirs was not a problem of the head but of the heart. Certainly people do not think with their hearts, but this term denotes the totality of emotions, intellect, and inner being.

As disciples, they should have paid attention when Jesus told them about the necessity of His death and resurrection. Instead of reminding them of these occasions, Jesus reminded them about the words of the prophets. As usual, He appealed to the Scripture as the basis for truth. Like others, these two disciples needed to consider how Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection fit into the various prophecies throughout the Scriptures.

Jesus asked if they did not understand why it was **necessary** for the **Messiah to suffer these things**. Christ’s suffering and crucifixion was where these and other disciples struggled. They could not imagine the Messiah could suffer like Jesus. Humbled before the Roman governor, Jesus did not fit the model of the Messiah most Jews envisioned. They had read Isaiah, but could not identify the Messiah with the prophet’s description of God’s Suffering Servant (Isa. 53). They certainly couldn’t accept that His crucifixion was somehow necessary.

Jesus went further. He wanted them to know that the suffering and death (*these things*) were **necessary** for the Messiah to **enter into his glory**. If Jesus had taken Satan’s shortcut (Luke 4:6-7), He could have sidestepped the cross but could not have entered into His glory. Jesus’ glory includes His return to heaven where He reigns with God the Father (Luke 9:26). It also referred to His second coming when He returns in power and glory (Luke 21:27). Some scholars identify Christ’s glory with the salvation of believers, which could not have been possible apart from His atoning suffering and death on their behalf.

Verse 27

Jesus took His companions on a tour of Scripture, **beginning with Moses and all the Prophets**. He did not limit His discourse to these portions but showed how **all the Scriptures** pointed to Him. They had heard these passages in the synagogue but the texts needed to be **interpreted for them**. They understood the words but did not comprehend their meaning.

Moses said God would raise up One like himself, but this One would have grander status and be received as the Anointed One of God (Deut. 18:15-19). The psalmist described His suffering, death, and resurrection (Pss. 22; 16:8-11). Isaiah predicted the Messiah would be born of a virgin and later die painfully for others (Isa. 7:14; 53:4-6). Zechariah foretold how Jesus would enter Jerusalem on a donkey before being pierced for the transgressions of others (Zech. 9:9; 12:10). From Genesis through Malachi, the story of the

VERSES 25-26

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

VERSE 27

²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

Messiah is laid out, culminating in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

God reveals His truth through His Word. Jesus' miracles certainly attest to His deity, but our basis of belief rests in Scripture. Even if we did not have any of Jesus' wondrous works, the fulfillment of scores of prophecies over thousands of years points to one undeniable truth—Jesus is the Messiah.

How do most people seek answers about Jesus? Why should we simply rely on the Bible when sharing about Jesus?

RECOGNIZED (LUKE 24:28-31)

Verses 28-29

VERSES 28-29

²⁸ They came near the village where they were going, and he gave the impression that he was going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, “Stay with us, because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

As the trio walked, they **came near the village** where the two disciples had been going. Having identified Emmaus earlier, Luke did not specify the name of the village again. The more important detail was this place was their destination. They arrived at their home but apparently had not yet comprehended all Jesus had been teaching them. They later remarked about how Jesus' words affected them but offered no indication that they understood His nature as Messiah.

The road wound past the village, and Jesus **gave the impression that he was going farther**. The word *impression* suggests pretending, but in Jesus was no pretense. He knew what was about to happen but did not wish to appear presumptuous. He wanted these two to initiate further engagement.

Seeing Jesus was about to depart, the two disciples **urged him** to remain. Theirs was more than a casual invitation. To *urge* suggests compelling someone vigorously. Their invitation to **stay with us** translates a word meaning “to abide.” It involved accepting accommodations overnight. Their reason was timing: it was **almost evening**. The day was almost over. In Hebrew custom, a day began at sunset and continued to the following sunset. This statement could imply the previous day was nearly ended, or it could simply refer to daylight in a more common use. In either case, the sun was setting. Their traveling companion obviously had no place to spend the night.

Hospitality would have been a strong motivator for the two disciples to invite Jesus to come to their home for a meal and a place to sleep. However, the urgency of their invitation suggests they were being more than courteous. Jesus' explanation of Scripture had moved them deeply, and they wanted to hear more. The word **so** in verse 29 could be translated “accordingly” and links their offer with Jesus' response. **He went in to stay with them**. Jesus planned to leave soon but before doing so wanted them to see Him clearly.

Verses 30-31

In this culture, people did not sit in chairs but **reclined** on low couches or pillows **at the table**. After their long and dusty journey, the two disciples would have offered Jesus the opportunity to wash and relax. Too, a little time would pass in preparation of the meal. This picture is important lest we see the following events as rushed. They came into the home and conversed as they got ready for supper.

Although Jesus was the guest, **he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them**. This day occurred within the seven days following Passover, known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During this week-long observance, Jews ate the same kind of unleavened bread that accompanied the Passover.

Jesus assumed an unusual role when He blessed and broke it. This act was usually done by the host of the home. Jesus was not re-enacting the Lord's Supper, although some scholars point out the similarity and symbolism. These two disciples were not in the upper room with the apostles at the Passover meal. Unless the apostles had discussed it with the other disciples, they may not have understood how the bread represented His body that was broken for them.

Their **eyes**, which had been prevented from recognizing Jesus earlier in the evening, **were opened**. This phrase reminds us of other occasions when people were prevented from seeing spiritual matters until God opened their eyes (Num. 22:31; 2 Kings 6:17).

Instantly, **they recognized him**. Imagine their wonder as to how they didn't know Him until this moment! Immediately, Jesus **disappeared from their sight**. This incident involves two important issues. First, after the resurrection Jesus had a glorified body that was no longer limited by time and space. It was a physical body that could be touched and take nourishment (Luke 24:39-43). At the same time, He could appear in a room even though the door was locked (John 20:19).

Second, if Jesus had not left them, they would have stayed with Him in Emmaus. Instead, they quickly returned to the gathering of the Eleven and other disciples in Jerusalem. While they were there, Jesus appeared in their midst and revealed Himself (Luke 24:36). At first, the other disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, but these two saw and knew this was Jesus.

The Holy Spirit helps people understand the truth about Jesus. The Spirit never draws attention to Himself but is the Spirit of truth who magnifies Christ. Like the two in Emmaus, we need our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit so we can see Jesus in His glorified reality and worship Him.

When did you first recognize Jesus as more than a historical figure? How could the Holy Spirit use you to reveal Jesus to someone else?

VERSES 30-31

³⁰ It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION

RESPOND: Prior to the group's arrival, write several math problems on the board. After most have arrived, note that solving math problems sometimes takes persistence. Ask: ***What is something that you had difficulty doing or understanding, and then after several attempts suddenly everything made sense?*** (PSG, p. 109) Other responses may include learning foreign languages or text-message abbreviations or utilizing electronic devices.

TRANSITION: Summarize the information found in the first paragraph on page 109 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG). Say: *Some people have a tough time understanding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Last week's session ended with Jesus' death, but today's session will focus on how Jesus is ready to reveal the truth to people seeking Him.*

HIGHLIGHT: Using **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: Passages Unique to Luke*), point out that today's entire Scripture passage is unique to the Book of Luke.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

SUMMARIZE: Briefly summarize Luke 23:50–24:17, which records Jesus' burial and discovery of the empty tomb. Use information from Understand the Context (p. 110) to give more details, including the significance of the days of the week.

LOCATE: Direct attention to **Pack Item 3** (*Map: Jesus' Travels*). Locate Emmaus. Point out today's session will focus on Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus, the first of His three resurrection appearances in Luke. Invite a volunteer to summarize Luke 24:13-17.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **Luke 24:18-24**, as the group listens for information about Jesus the disciples shared with the mysterious visitor. Ask: ***How do these details give insight into the depth of the disciples' ponderings about Jesus' death?***

EXAMINE: Direct the group to read the comments under verses 18-24 in the PSG (pp. 111–113). Guide them to discuss with a partner the comments read, especially those that apply to what the disciples were expecting as compared with what they were experiencing.

DISCUSS: Invite partners to share their response to the question at the end of verses 22-24: ***What questions do people have about Jesus? What questions do you have about Him?*** (PSG, p. 113)

TRANSITION: *All people should be encouraged to discover the truth about Jesus. God reveals His truth through His Word.*

READ: Read aloud **Luke 24:25-27**, asking the group to notice how Jesus responded to the disciples with Scripture.

CLARIFY: *These disciples were initially unwilling to believe the report of Jesus' resurrection, so the traveler (Jesus) rebuked them. They had failed to understand that Jesus came to fulfill all that the Old Testament pointed toward.*

MINI-LECTURE: Use information under verses 25-26 (PSG, pp. 113–114) to explain how the disciples did not identify Jesus with the prophet Isaiah's description of the Suffering Servant—they couldn't accept that His crucifixion was somehow necessary. Note that Jesus' comments to them included His return and second coming.

HIGHLIGHT: Explain that verse 26 is the memory verse for this week. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Memory Verses Bookmark*). Lead the group to re-state the verse as a declaration rather than a question, and write the new statement on their handout.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to verse 27. Point out that Jesus used the Old Testament to reveal God's truth about Him. Ask: **What role should the Bible play in us helping people understand Jesus?** (PSG, p. 114). Use **Pack Item 13** (*Handout: Proof of the Resurrection*) to show how biblical and historical data work together to support Jesus' literal, physical resurrection. Then emphasize: *God reveals His truth through Scripture—the basis of our belief. The fulfillment of scores of prophecies over thousands of years points to one undeniable truth—Jesus is the Messiah* (PSG, p. 114).

TRANSITION: *God reveals His truth through His Word, and the Holy Spirit helps people understand the truth about Jesus.*

READ: Direct the group to read silently **Luke 24:28-31**, noting the instant when the disciples recognized Jesus.

DISCUSS: Use comments under verses 28-29 (PSG, p. 115) to explain the use of the word “urged.” Point out that the urgency of the disciples’ invitation suggests it was more than hospitality; the Scripture had moved them deeply and they wanted to hear more. Ask: **How does spending time with God open the door for greater understanding of Him and His truth?** (PSG, p. 115)

HIGHLIGHT: Explain that Jesus was not re-enacting the Lord’s Supper, although some scholars point out the similarity and symbolism. Note the timing of the disciples’ awareness of Jesus, or when “their eyes were opened” (v. 31). Invite volunteers to read aloud Numbers 22:31 and 2 Kings 6:17,

which describe other occasions when people were prevented from seeing spiritual matters until God opened their eyes. Connect the work of God in those passages with the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Ask: **What is the role of the Holy Spirit in helping people understand the truth about Jesus?** (PSG, p. 116)

HIGHLIGHT: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 12** (*Handout: Jesus’ Post-Resurrection Appearances*). Review the list of people and Jesus’ encounter with each. Ask: **While we can’t physically see Jesus the way these people did, what are some ways we can regularly encounter Him in our daily lives?**

TRANSITION: *Only when we sit with Jesus, experience His presence, and have our eyes opened to see who He is by the Spirit, do we then understand who He is.*

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

RESPOND: Point to the second question set under Apply the Text (PSG, p. 117): **As a group, share about your Bible reading practices. What can the group do to encourage each other to be more disciplined in regularly reading the Bible?** Invite volunteers to share with the group their responses. Then consider a time of “popcorn testimonies,” in which volunteers “pop up” and praise Jesus for revealing Himself to them.

REINFORCE: Invite the group to select one of the three summary statements under Apply the Text (PSG, p. 117) for focus this week. Direct them to record in the margin their reasons for selecting that statement, assuring them they won’t be asked to share aloud. Encourage them to reflect each day this week on that statement.

PRAY: Conclude the group time with prayer, thanking Jesus for revealing His identity to those who seek Him.

OPTIONS

Use these options to supplement and enhance the group plans on the previous pages.

MUSIC

Lead the group to sing or listen to “Surely the Presence (of the Lord Is in This Place),” by Lanny Wolfe. Use the song to introduce the study about the disciples who experienced Jesus’ presence, beginning with an encounter on the road to Emmaus.

OBJECTS

Gather objects that represent “reveal” shows on television (a mask, costumes, and tools for home improvement).

Lead the group to brainstorm a television series that involves a reveal. These can include reality shows that conceal a famous person’s identity or home renovations that conclude with a big reveal. Direct attention to the session title (PSG, p. 109): *Revealed*. Introduce the study by emphasizing that Jesus’ resurrection was the greatest reveal that ever occurred: *Jesus reveals His identity to those seeking Him*.

RECORD

Point out **Pack Item 5** (*Poster: Remember*). Read the passage, guiding the group to share ways they’ve marked special occasions in their faith. Discuss the importance of remembering what God has faithfully brought us through as a way to prepare for the future.

MONOLOGUE

Pre-enlist a volunteer to develop a monologue from one of the disciples based on Luke 24:18-24. Encourage the volunteer to use information from the PSG as well as commentaries to convey how the disciples grappled with Jesus’ crucifixion and death.

VISUAL

Gather art supplies.

Provide art supplies, and invite the group to create images that represent Luke 24:31, which records when the disciples recognized Jesus. Allow volunteers to explain their image and the symbolism they included.

PHYSICAL

Set up a section of the room as if it were a road. Make two road signs: one that points to Emmaus and another that points to Jerusalem. Refer to **Pack Item 3** (*Map: Jesus’ Travels*). As the group arrives, greet them and welcome them to the road to Emmaus. Begin the session by reading Luke 24:18-24 as you “walk” along the road. Invite the group to follow physically or listen and envision themselves along the road.

PRESENTATION

Prepare a presentation about Emmaus using the Bible Skill (PSG, p. 111). During the session, direct attention to **Pack Item 3** (*Map: Jesus’ Travels*). Lead the group to consider the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus. Ask: ***How does knowing more about Emmaus and the topography help you appreciate the response of the two disciples after they realized who Jesus was?*** (PSG, p. 111)

TESTIMONY

Prepare a testimony about an experience when Jesus revealed Himself to you. Include the context. (Was it during worship, Bible study, prayer, or another time?) Include how you felt before and how you were changed by the experience. Invite volunteers to share similar testimonies.