**Luke 23:50-24:53 – Burial, Resurrection and Revelation**

***23:50-56: the burial***

**Joseph of Arimathea was a good and righteous man, looking for the kingdom of God. This description is similar to the description of the righteous Jews who were part of the beginning of the story: Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5-6), Simeon (2:25), and Anna (2:36-38). We, like they, should be also looking for the coming of his kingdom, the consolation and redemption of Israel. This and many other elements of the narrative tie the end of the story back to the beginning. Luke continues to bring the coming of God’s kingdom to the fore. Not all of the Jewish leaders were against Jesus. He saw to it that Jesus was given an honorable burial. There is no hint of hope in this section. The hopelessness of the followers of Jesus is reflected in the story.**

**The women, who followed Jesus throughout his ministry and were witnesses of His death, were now also witnesses of His burial and the only ones to follow him all the way to the grave. (vs. 55: “The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid.”) It is no wonder that they play the most prominent role of Jesus’ followers in the last two chapters.**

***24:1-12: the report of the resurrection***

**Jesus died late on Friday and was buried before the Sabbath began on Friday evening. On the third day, early Sunday morning he rose again. The women, still without hope, arrived at the tomb to complete the burial process, and were perplexed to find the tomb empty.**

**Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James are named along with “the other women.” They must have been prominent, well-known women in the early church, with reputations that were recognized even by Luke’s predominantly gentile audience.**

**When the angels reminded the women of Jesus’ prediction that he would be delivered up, was crucified, and would rise again (9:22, 44; 18:32-33), they remembered and finally understood. But when the reported it to the apostles and the rest, the men did not believe them. Only Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself and marveled. In the Gospel of John, Peter was not alone, but Luke is calling attention to Peter’s restoration and the beginning of the faith for which Jesus Himself had prayed (Luke 22:32). That he marveled may not indicate full belief, but it is at least a beginning.**

***24:23-35: the road to Emmaus***

**This story supports the theme of temporarily lost hope (vs. 21: “we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel”) which was a major theme of the hope in the infancy narrative (1:68; 2:38). The “two of them” should be two of the apostles, mentioned in the previous story, but Cleopas is not a known apostle.**

**The main point of this story is to confirm what Luke has already said multiple times, that it was necessary and predicted that the Messiah would suffer, be killed, and rise again. The disciples had heard this all before, but did not understand. Just as their eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus until the breaking of the bread (a pre-enactment of the communion meal), so their minds were prevented from understanding his mission until “he opened to us the Scriptures” (vs. 32). This story encourages us to see the death and resurrection of Jesus as a fulfilment of God’s eternal plan and to read the Old Testament in the light of Jesus coming, life, death, resurrection, and ascension.**

**The two return to Jerusalem to report their encounter with Jesus, and when they arrive, they meet the eleven (remaining) disciples and others, who report to them that the Lord has appeared to Simon. So there is a confirming testimony of the two groups reporting to each other. Some of the translations are unclear about who is speaking in vs 34. In the Greek text, it is clearly the eleven, which makes sense.**

**Like every other story since 22:39, the women are mentioned as witnesses of the events. Their collective testimony must have been very important to the early church.**

***24:36-43: the appearance of Jesus to the assembled disciples***

**Like the angels who appeared to Mary and Zechariah to announce the births of John and Jesus, Jesus greets those to whom he appears with “Peace be to you.” And like Zechariah and Mary, the disciples’ response was one of fear and disbelief. This shows that Jesus is now in the realm of the angles, and no longer part of this worldly existence. On the other hand, Jesus demonstrated the reality of his resurrection and the continuity of the earthly body with His eternal existence by pointing out the wounds from the nails and spear and by eating.**

***24:44-49: explaining the Scriptures***

**As he explained to Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus, Jesus repeats the reminder of his teaching about the necessity of his death and resurrection. By this time, and as a result of Jesus revelatory explanation, the disciples seem to have returned to full faith. This time he adds the need to proclaim repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This brings us full circle back to the initial preaching of John the Baptist who performed “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3). It also reflects the calling of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 to “preach the good news…” and “to proclaim liberty.” The same Greek word that is translated “liberty” in Jesus’ calling is translated “forgiveness” in the commission of the disciples in 24:47. The disciples (and we) have inherited the mission of John the Baptist and of Jesus. That it begins in Jerusalem and extends to the whole world confirms that many hints throughout the gospel that the kingdom of God is for the whole world. As in Acts 1:7 (where Jesus instructs the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit who would empower them to be witnesses from Jerusalem to the whole world) Jesus instructs them to wait for “the promise from my Father” and “power from on high.” Jesus last words are to prepare his disciples to be his global witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned an emphasized repeatedly in the first few chapters of Luke to explain Jesus’ birth and all the events surrounding the birth. Now we see that the “birth” of the church is also by the power of the same Holy Spirit.**

***24:50-53: the ascension***

**Jesus final act in the gospel was to bless his followers and be “carried up to heaven” (by angels? by God the Father, like Elijah in a chariot of file (2 Kings 2:11)?). As we read in Acts, they returned to Jerusalem and blessed God daily in the temple. This serves as Luke’s transition to his second book about the spread of the gospel and kingdom of God through the disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit.**