

Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus

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(Delivered in Fairview, Utah)

I have been asked to talk today, and have come to speak in response to that request. I am not here to promote myself or any book I have written. I am only here to respond to a request that I give a talk today.

As a result of the request, I have given some thought to remarks I might make which would be of value to anyone who took the trouble to come here today. After some prayerful thought, I concluded to speak on a subject about which I think no Latter-day Saint writer has bothered commenting in any detail as yet. If they have, I am unaware of it. Although I have read a good deal, I have certainly not read everything. Therefore I may be mistaken about whether there exists something already on this subject.

We just celebrated Easter. This annual reminder of the Lord's resurrection has always made me think about the choice of the springtime and its symbolic relationship to a return to life. It was clearly no accident the Lord chose this time of year as the time when He should defeat death itself. As a result, I thought speaking of the Lord's rise from death would not only be timely, but useful as a subject for today.

There was an incident recorded only one place in scripture which is very thought provoking. The incident is so rich in meaning you could potentially meditate on it for days. The more you bring with you in your own understanding, the more possibilities open up to view as you think about it. I am talking about the incident Luke records of two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day the Lord rose from the dead.¹ Since the distance of that walk would have been more than a "Sabbath's day journey," these disciples could not have left on the Sabbath. But the first day of the week, they were free to leave Jerusalem. This was the day the tomb was found empty.

Their meditative and deliberative walk back to Emmaus was interrupted by the visit of the resurrected Christ. The account of the Lord's visit with them is in the 24th Chapter of Luke. I hope you brought your scriptures to follow along. It reads as follows:

Luke 24: 13–32:

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they **should not know him.**

Christ has the capacity to withhold His identity. As Paul has reminded us in Hebrews, Chapter 13: 2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." From this incident on the road to Emmaus, we learn we

¹ I will use primarily Luke's Gospel in this talk, and the others only when Luke is

must not just be careful about the visit of veiled angels, but the Lord Himself can come to visit without disclosing His true identity. We really do need to realize when we do things to “the least” we literally risk doing it to the Lord.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

Don't you suspect this is merely rhetorical? The Lord makes no effort to displace their attention. He's just willing to join in where they are. It tells us much about Him. He wants to help us where He finds us. Our concerns are His.

18 And the one of them, whose name was **Cleopas,**

This is a Greek name, derived from Cleopatra. She was one of the Ptolemies, an Egyptian Dynasty founded by Ptolemy, one of the four generals of Alexander the Great involved in the partition of Alexander's empire. As they divided the kingdom among them, Ptolemy took authority over Egypt after Alexander's death. We can't be sure this was Cleopas' given name, however, since the scriptural translators felt no inhibitions about changing names from Hebrew to Greek. Jesus was, after all, a Greek name as well, unlike the Yeshua (or Joshua) of His Hebrew given name. If it were the real name, it might help explain the clearly Greek view this record contains of what was important on this occasion. A truly Hebrew mind would be captivated by the content of Christ's discourse rather than just the fact of His resurrection. We don't really know why the record omits all mention of the substance of Christ's remarks. It may even be we are supposed to put together our own reconstruction of what that talk must have included. If so, today's discussion is what the Lord wanted us to do.

... Cleopas answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, **What things?**

Christ asks about the “things” involving Himself. Clearly he already knows. But He asks for these men to tell Him about it. It is reminiscent of other events in scripture where it is clear the Lord prefers a dialogue with us, rather than just pontificating to us. He almost insists upon treating us as equals. He wants us to talk with Him. So He invites the ensuing dialogue.

... And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that **they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.**

I have to assume Luke is getting this story from the two disciples involved, and that Luke got their story right. With that assumption, these two omit from their comments the Lord Himself appeared to Mary at the tomb. They are willing to go so far as “angels”

having appeared, but do not affirm the Lord has been seen. Additionally, here again is another confirmation the Second Comforter is not inhibited by Priestly office or limited in His ministry to the Brethren. The first witness of the resurrection was a woman. That should tell us something. However, I am constantly amazed at our ability to ignore the obvious. We tend to read into texts what we already believe, and to read out of texts what we do not yet understand. It would be best, however, if we just let them inform us without predisposition.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

So far, you see, the men had only the witness of an empty tomb and the testimony of the women. They perhaps needed to grow in faith a bit more before they could behold Him. If law governs all things, and we are told it does, then faith needed to grow in these brethren before they could get what the sisters had already witnessed.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And **beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**

This discourse perhaps would rival even the Sermon on the Mount, if we had it preserved for us. However, other than mentioning the subject, we have nothing left of this talk. What they will tell us is: "He Lives!" These apparently Greek-influenced disciples are most taken by the fact a man has returned from death to life. It is unprecedented, of course, even though purportedly believed to be true by many Jews. In contrast to their fixation on the miraculous return to life, Christ wanted to impart some intelligence about the scriptures. He wanted them to understand how these things were foreshadowed by everything done under the Law of Moses, and was spoken of by the prophets.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

Here it seems the Lord was willing to leave them, had they not asked Him to stay. Again, this confirms the need to ask the Lord. Unless you are willing to "constrain" Him, He may very well depart and go visit someone else.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.

This walk was approximately 7 miles or so. It occupied apparently the whole of the day, however. To have a discourse begin early in the day, and end "toward evening" was perhaps one of the reasons Cleopas never attempted a reconstruction of the talk. He may have been overwhelmed at even the thought. To be fair, it is possible the talk was recorded, and just not preserved to our time. It is apparent Luke knew nothing of the content apart from what he wrote. We are the poorer for the loss of any record of the talk.

... And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

It would be interesting to know if this blessing on this bread was Sacramental in nature, allowing them to then “see” who it was who spoke with them. It does not take much imagination to understand how the Lord would easily make the transition from convenient stranger into the Risen Lord by performing the priestly ordinance of blessing bread and breaking it. It is interesting this breaking of bread is the signal event for the “opening” of these disciples’ eyes.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, **Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?**

In *The Second Comforter* I wrote about their hearts burning within them. Today I’d like to speak about the second part of this: “While he opened the scriptures to us.” I’d like to have us take some time to reflect on what would necessarily be included in His talk. We cannot now recreate it without revelation. And since revelation on that order is confined to the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,² (a wise limitation to prevent chaos in the Church) it would be more than presumptuous for anyone else to claim they are producing an actual account of that day’s discourse; it would be outright rebellion against the scriptural injunction against it. So for our purposes, we can only use our best efforts to recreate what might be known now only from the same Person who originally delivered the discourse.

We turn, then, to “Moses and all the prophets.” As we do so, try and imagine yourself in company with the newly risen Lord, walking a dusty Judean back-road northwest of Jerusalem:

The ordinances of the Old Testament beginning with Exodus were revealed through Moses. To speak of “Moses and all the prophets” we should expect Christ would necessarily begin with the ordinances of the Law of Moses. Those ordinances are never more relevant a revelation about the sacrifice required as a part of the mission of the Messiah than in the Temple rites themselves. They pointed to the great atoning sacrifice which He would perform. We will, therefore, look at them to find what Christ must have included when He asked: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” in the discourse.

The temple of Solomon had three divisions relevant to priestly service. There was an outer area in which the slaughter of animals took place, the altar was located, the vessels for washing were located, and where Priests and Israelites mingled in performing the prescribed rites. This was open to the air, and outside the building enclosure. In this area all Israel was welcomed. Only Israel was invited, however. This was set apart from the world, and Gentiles were not permitted to enter this area. The “court of the Gentiles” was still further separated from this part of the Temple, and we ignore the court of the Gentiles for our purposes today.

Below is a drawing to represent the areas in which the Temple was divided. It is not drawn to scale, and is only intended to provide the roughest of orientations to the Temple precincts.

² See D&C 28: 2: “But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses.”

The Temple had ascending levels of holiness, which were symbolically separated by degrees on the basis of who was excluded. The fewer the number of people permitted to enter, the greater the associated holiness. In ascending degrees of holiness, the outer court area where sacrifices and killings took place was the first degree of holiness. All Israel was welcomed here. The second degree of holiness was the area immediately inside the Temple building was called the Holy Place. In it there was a table for showbread, an altar of incense, and the Menorah or seven branched candlestick. In this area the Priests alone were permitted to enter. They entered twice daily, in the morning and in the evening, to attend to the rites of burning incense and lighting the candles. Weekly they would replace the showbread. The third, or highest degree of holiness was the Holy of Holies, in which only the High Priest was permitted to enter, and only one time a year for a specific set of ordinances.

It is in the Holy Place, or first room inside the Temple in which the chronological account of the New Testament begins. Interestingly, it is also in this same room the New Testament record ends. The Book of Revelation was set in the Holy Place, in which Christ's comments begin among the seven-branched candle sticks of the Menorah.

So we turn to the Holy Place for the moment in which the Dispensation of Meridian of Time began:

Luke 1: 5–25:

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of **the course of Abia**:

“About fifteen months prior to the Savior's birth, Zacharias, a priest of the Aaronic order, was officiating in the functions of his office in the temple at Jerusalem. His wife, Elisabeth, was also of a priestly family, being numbered among the descendants of Aaron. The couple had never been blessed with children; and at the time of which we speak they were both well stricken in years and had sorrowfully given up hope of posterity. Zacharias belonged to the course of priests named after Abijah, and known in later time as the course of Abia. This was the eighth in the order of the twenty-four courses established by David the king, each course being appointed to serve in turn a week at the sanctuary. It will be remembered that on the return of the people from Babylon only four of the courses were represented; but of these four each averaged over fourteen hundred men.

“During his week of service each priest was required to maintain scrupulously a state of ceremonial cleanliness of person; he had to abstain from wine, and from food except that specifically prescribed; he had to bathe frequently; he lived within the temple precincts and thus was cut off from family association; he was not allowed to come near the dead, nor to mourn in the formal manner if death should rob him of even his nearest and dearest of kin. We learn that the daily selection of the priest who should enter the Holy Place, and there burn incense on the golden altar, was determined by lot; and furthermore we gather, from non-scriptural history, that because of the great number of priests the honor of so officiating seldom fell twice to the same person.” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, p.71.*)

Later Jewish tradition regarded anyone selected to perform this duty once in their life as having led a “rich life” because of the spiritual value of such service.

...and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that **while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,**

9 **According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.**

This would require him to enter the Holy Place. He would enter with two assistants, but would be left alone to burn the incense and offer a prayer. As he prayed he would be alone, standing before the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies and the symbolic presence of God. The table of incense would burn incense, with the pillar or column of smoke ascending to the ceiling of the room. This symbolized the prayers of Israel ascending to heaven. Once it reached the ceiling and spread about, the pattern of the column and the spreading overhead cloud would symbolize the tree of life from the Garden of Eden.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without **at the time of incense.**

11 And there appeared unto him **an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.**

This location would be where any person would emerge if they came from inside the Holy of Holies, or the symbolic presence of God. Luke mentions this location to orient us to what is happening. He wants us to realize this location shows the messenger has appeared from the Holy of Holies, or at least seemed to have done so.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for **thy prayer is heard;** and **thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son,** and thou shalt call his name John.

This statement does not mean Zacharias was praying for a son. In fact, his reaction would indicate that was the last thing on his mind. He was there to offer prayer for Israel. We know what the prayer would include from Alfred Edersheim's work. Zacharias would have offered a prescribed prayer which would have included, among other things, the following:

"...Be graciously pleased, Jehovah our God with thy people Israel, and with their prayer. Restore the service to the oracle of Thy house... So preserve us and keep us, and **gather the scattered ones into Thy holy courts,** to keep Thy statutes, and to do Thy good pleasure, and to serve Thee with our whole heart... **Bless us, O our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Thy countenance.** For in the light of Thy countenance hast Thou, Jehovah, our God, given us the law of life, and loving mercy, and righteousness, and blessing, and compassion, and life, and peace. And **may it please Thee to bless Thy people Israel at all times, and at every hour with Thy peace.**" (Edersheim, Alfred. The Temple: Its Ministry and Services. Hendrickson: Peabody, Mass., 1994, p. 129.)

As a result, we can conclude the Angel's announcement to Zacharias that his prayer was heard, would have meant to him Israel was to be gathered and visited by the Lord. The angel's association of gathering and visitation on the one hand, with the promise of a son on the other hand, would be unexpected and surprising.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and **many shall rejoice at his birth.**

Although there is no mention of “many” rejoicing at John’s birth in the Gospel accounts, nevertheless it would appear the Angel promises John’s birth would be the cause of rejoicing among “many.” Herod would later specifically target John for death after the wise men from the east came searching for a new-born king.

Joseph Smith taught about Zacharias the following:

“Let us come into New Testament times-so many are ever praising the Lord and His apostles. We will commence with John the Baptist. When Herod’s edict went forth to destroy the young children, John was about six months older than Jesus, and came under this hellish edict, and Zacharias caused his mother to take him into the mountains, where he was raised on locusts and wild honey. When his father refused to disclose his hiding place, and being the officiating high priest at the Temple that year, was slain by Herod’s order, between the porch and the altar, as Jesus said. John’s head was taken to Herod, the son of this infant murderer, in a charger not with standing there was never a greater prophet born of a woman than him!” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.261)

John was therefore known, and Herod targeted him for death. His reputation because of the circumstances of his birth apparently caused some to rejoice, and others to fear.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.

16 And **many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.**

17 **And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias**, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

In the context of the prayer he offered, Zacharias is being told his son will go before the One who will be the “light of Thy countenance” and prepare people to receive Him.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, **Whereby shall I know this?** for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

This is not an unusual request. For example, we read about Gideon’s request for some proof as follows:

36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.” (Judges 6: 36–37.)

So for Zacharias to have made a request for a sign to confirm this promise is not an unusual demand, nor some great sign of faithlessness. I’m fairly certain Gabriel has not been sent on any occasion to appear to any faithless mortal. Angels only appear to those of a firm mind in every form of godliness. (Moroni 7: 30.) So I do not believe this request was a sign of Zacharias’ lack of faith.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, **I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.**

Not only did this angel come from the symbolic presence of God (by emerging from the Temple's veil on the right side of the altar), but he came from the actual presence of God. Therefore, he could speak with authority given him from God.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the **people waited for Zacharias**, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

That is the thing about signs: Oftentimes they involve your own discomfort. As a general rule, therefore, asking the Lord for signs is not a good move. In this case, however, everyone knew what the prayer would include and approximately how long it would take. Much like Sacrament prayers today, we expect them to conclude in a specific length of time. Here the audience outside would know something unusual was afoot because of the time taken.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

So the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time begins; inside the Temple, in the Holy Place. A messenger has come and stood "on the right side of the altar" beside the table of incense to announce the Lord intends to send His presence to visit and gather Israel. The Lord has heard the prayer of Zacharias offered for Israel. He has sent a messenger to stand in the symbolic spot which shows the messenger has emerged from the symbolic presence of God. But the messenger announces he has come from the actual presence of God, and there are now events set in motion which will answer the prayers of Israel.

At this point in the Dispensation narrative, however, we are still standing on this side of the veil. We will not pass through the veil until later in the events of the Meridian of Time.

When Moses passed through the veil, the presence of the Lord was shielded by a covering of thick cloud. This cloud operated as a veil to on-looking Israel. Moses, however, was permitted to enter through the cloud into the very presence of God. It is recorded in Exodus as follows:

Exo. 24: 15–18: "And Moses went up into the mount, and **a cloud covered the mount.** And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day **he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.** And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes

of the children of Israel. And **Moses went into the midst of the cloud**, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”

While Israel saw a cloud or veil separating them from the Lord, Moses was permitted to enter into the cloud and see the presence of the Lord.

In the Dispensation of Meridian of Time, the Lord also passed through the cloud and entered into the presence of the Father. The disciples were able to see Moses and Elias, but not the Father. Though they heard the voice of the Father from inside the cloud, only Christ was able to pass into the Father’s presence. It is recorded in Matthew in the following account:

Matthew 17: 1–8: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, **a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.** And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

Although Christ charged His disciples to: “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead,” (id. v. 9) at the time of the conversation on the Road to Emmaus He was risen from the dead. Therefore this event is also available to be included in the conversation of that day.

In the rites of Moses, there was one occasion when it was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies. It took place only one time a year, on a specific day. The day is set in Leviticus, Chapter 23. It says:

Leviticus 23: 26–28: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the **tenth day of this seventh month** there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is **a day of atonement**, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.

This orientation to the time was symbolically significant. The tenth day reminds us of the number of the “Ten Commandments” given at Sinai. It is the number of a man’s fingers, and is the basis for our numeric systems. Ten is whole, or complete. As for seven, it is the number of days of creation. It signifies perfection. So these two numbers combine in symbolic testimony of the significance, completion and perfection of the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) was originally associated with the deaths of Aaron’s two sons. They had taken incense into the Holy of Holies and burned it there in an unauthorized manner. Their offense caused their deaths.

The Day of Atonement was the day in which there was a method provided to Aaron to enter into the Holy of Holies without being destroyed. The entirety of the ordinance reaches out to cleanse first Aaron or his successor High Priests, then to cleanse the Temple, then to cleanse all of Israel.

In the context of the Day of Atonement, there is a prescribed use of incense. It symbolizes the cloud covering the presence of God, just as the cloud covered Sinai when Moses entered the Lord’s presence. The full account of the rite is set out in Leviticus, Chapter 16. The account reads in part:

Leviticus 16: 1–34: “And the Lord spake unto Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron**,³ when they offered before the Lord, and died; And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that **he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat**, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for **I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat**. ... And he shall take a **censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense** beaten small, and **bring it within the vail**: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, **that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not**:

Here we have the elements from Sinai put into the Holy of Holies. The High Priest is to enter with coals from the altar of sacrifice. Onto the coals the incense is placed to produce the smoke and scent of this holy cloud which symbolizes the bright cloud associated with God’s presence. Unlike the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies was a small cubical room, which would fill with the smoke of incense rather quickly. The cloud was to envelope both the High Priest and the Mercy Seat. Inside that cloud the High Priest would be in the symbolic presence of God. This is a clearly symbolic recreation of the elements we find when God associated with Moses on the Mount.

So the Messiah’s life necessarily included ascension through a cloud, or veil, into the presence of God. He was touching on one of the required elements of His ministry in this event. Therefore, the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration satisfied one of the required elements of the Law of Moses which identifies the Lord’s anointed.

In all things, however, Christ was required to fulfill what had been foretold of Him. When He asked: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” His question was intended to make us focus on the foreshadowed suffering of His Messianic calling.

The great Day of Atonement had elements included through ritual which should associate with the events of Christ’s life and sacrifice. His conversation on the road to Emmaus surely turned, therefore, to the Day of Atonement to show the necessity of what He suffered.

Christ’s sufferings were described by Luke as follows:

Luke 22: 39–46:

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

³ Lev. 10: 1–3: “And Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and **offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not**. And **there went out fire from the Lord**, and devoured them, and **they died before the Lord**. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, **I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me**, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” In this context, “come nigh me” refers to entry into the Holy of Holies.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Here Luke clearly identifies three elements of the Day of Atonement. First he orients us to the place involved. It is the Mount of Olives. This Mount was to the east of the Temple.

Second, he identifies sprinkling the blood of the offering upon the ground. Luke tells us Christ, at the eastern location, suffering until “drops” of His blood fall to the ground.

Third, Luke tells us Christ is left alone at the moment of these events. No-man accompanies Him. Those who were a stone’s throw away lapsed into sleep. So as the blood is sprinkled upon the ground, Christ is alone. The distance from Himself to the others (“a stone’s throw) is the same approximate distance as those who would wait outside the Holy Place in the Outer Court while the High Priest is in the Holy of Holies sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice. In later revelation in our own Dispensation He commented about His suffering as follows: “I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me.” (D&C 133: 50.)

This description by Luke compares exactly to three parts of the rites in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. In the Temple rite, the steps taken by the High Priest are described in relevant part as follows:

Leviticus Chapter 16: 14–17: “And he shall take of **the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.** Then shall he **kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:** And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there **shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place,** until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.”

Christ’s suffering and the “sprinkling” of His blood on the Mount of Olives was “necessary” to the Law of Moses. He needed to suffer these things to fulfill the symbols of the rites. And He needed to suffer these things alone. It would be more correct, however, to say the rites needed to include these elements because the events would include them.⁴

Continuing with the events in Luke, we read Christ was taken before Israel and an option was given to let either Him or another man go free. As Luke describes it:

Luke 23: 16–25:

16 I will therefore chastise him, and **release him.**

⁴ See e.g., D&C 130: 6–8: “The angels do not reside on a planet like this earth; But they reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord. The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim.” These verses confirm the events of the actual Atonement were foreseen and thereby incorporated into the Day of Atonement rites.

17 (For of necessity **he must release one unto them at the feast.**)
18 And they cried out all at once, saying, **Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:**
19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)
20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.
21 But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.
22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.
23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.
25 And **he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.**

The account from Luke again conforms to elements from the Day of Atonement rites. They include: First, offering one to be sacrificed and one to be released. Second, the choice is made before all the congregation. Third, after the choice has been made, one is sacrificed for sin. Fourth, the other, laden with sins, is set free.

These elements are mirrored in the Mosaic rites as follows: Leviticus 16: 7–10, 20–22: “And he shall take the **two goats**, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall **cast lots upon the two goats**; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall **bring the goat upon which the Lord’s lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering**. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be **the scapegoat, shall be presented alive** before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to **let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness**. ... And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them **upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness**: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

These elements are not inadvertent. The Lord foresaw the events of the day when His own life would be laid down as a sacrifice for all mankind. The rituals Moses received were fashioned after the future real events of the sacrifice itself.

The “two goats” are alike in the ritual. Just so, too, are the positions of Christ, the Son of God on the one hand, and Barabbas, on the other. The name Barabbas is two conjoined words: “Bar” meaning “the son of,” and “Abba” meaning “the father.” (Christ referred to God the Father as “Abba” in Mark 14: 36.) So in both we have the actual Son of God, on the one hand, and a man whose name refers to him also as the son of God. The record of events in Christ’s life and the rites of Moses fold, therefore, one upon the other.

The “two goats” are treated differently in the ritual. One is killed. The other, laden with sins, is freed. Barabbas, set free, is described by Luke: “him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison.” The scapegoat is described in Leviticus: “confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.” The similarities are striking. No doubt the risen Lord would have pointed these things out on the Road to Emmaus.

The next element was the location. Luke describes the place of Christ’s killing as follows:

Luke 23: 33:

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

There is some controversy about the location of the crucifixion. The controversy arises from Constantine's mother visiting the Holy Land in the Fourth Century and identifying various events and relics which were then accepted by Historic Christianity as authentic. In contrast, Latter-day Saint Apostles and Prophets have felt no obligation to accept Queen Helena's enthusiastic but incredible claims. The Church's publication of the King James Version of the Bible maps the probable site of the crucifixion in map 12 found at the back of the scriptures. The probable site was a spot to the north of the Temple. Assuming this location is correct, it would correspond with the location where Aaron would have slain the sacrifices.

In Leviticus Chapter 16, verse 11 we read: "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, ... and **shall kill the bullock** of the sin offering which is for himself."

The site of this would be in the northern part of the Outer Court of the Temple. The location of the actual crucifixion corresponding to the location of the rites performed within the Temple: The crucifixion having occurred outside the walls of Jerusalem, corresponding once again with killing the sacrifice outside the walls of the Temple building.

Once the sacrifice occurred, Aaron was required to bring it to the Holy of Holies, which was the symbolic presence of God. Unless the blood of the sacrifice was brought and presented to God, the ordinance was not acknowledged. So it was, in Leviticus, Chapter 16, verse 15, that the rites included these steps: "Then shall he ... **bring his blood within the veil**, and ... **sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.**"

The mercy seat is located inside the Holy of Holies. This was located inside the veil of the Temple. It was the most holy spot in the Temple itself. When, therefore, the actual events of the Day of Atonement occurred, it would be necessary for the offering to be brought to the notice of the holiest place. The events of the crucifixion, once again, correspond exactly with the rites of Moses. We read in Luke 23: 45:

45 And the sun was darkened, and **the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.**

Matthew recorded this same event in Matthew 27: 51 as follows: "And, behold, **the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom**; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

In the actual Day of Atonement, as Christ completed His sacrifice, the Holy of Holies opened to acknowledge and accept the offering. This renting of the veil is a great mystery to Historic Christianity. They generally regard it merely as a sign the Old Covenant was completed and replaced. However, it was a sign of God the Father accepting into His presence and approving the actual atoning sacrifice of His Son. It completed the acts required under the rites to confirm this Atoning One was the Son of God, the Messiah of the Lord, the Savior of mankind and the One to whom all the rites and ordinances pointed as our common Hope.

Christ's discourse on the Road to Emmaus was not limited to the rites of Moses, you will recall. Rather, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto

them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” This included more than Moses. So we will take a few of the scriptures which concerned Him.

First, it was Christ’s death which concerned these two disciples. They did not understand why He had to die. So let’s first read the account of Christ’s death from Matthew’s Gospel to call to mind the details of His humiliation:

Matthew: 27: 33–54: “And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.”

Bearing these details in mind, let’s read the account from 22nd Psalm:

Psalms 22: 1–8, 11, 13–19, 25–28: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. ... Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. ... They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. ... My praise shall be of thee in the great

congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations."

From Isaiah's writings we have this reminder of the things Christ necessarily suffered:

Isaiah 53: 2: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

This is a misunderstood reference. Although the King James translation refers to "beauty" other translations render this "no charm, that we should find him pleasing" (The Jewish Study Bible; Oxford University Press: 2004); "no pleasing aspect, that we should find him attractive" (Avraham Gileadi; Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah, (Hebraeus Press: Provo: 1982). Perhaps the best way of viewing this reference is: "he was uncredentialed, and there was no reason to defer to him." This is not speaking to His physical appearance, but to His lowly position inside a society which had no reason to acknowledge or respect Him. He had no rank or station, and lacked an appropriate Priestly Office from which to command respect. Only someone who was willing to "let their heart burn within them" as He spoke would find Him different from other common men.

Continuing with Isaiah 53: 3–10: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

This is another interesting turn of a phrase. Here Isaiah is claiming it would "please" God to bruise Christ. Some folks, most recently an Anglican Bishop, claim this is nonsense. Yet no less a prophet and seer than Enoch was taken by the joy which came from Christ's sacrifice. Enoch saw it in vision. He described the joyous reaction to Christ's atoning death in these words: "And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world; and through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me." (Moses 7: 45–47.) The atonement conferred such blessings upon mankind that it was a happy event, causing actual joy for those who understood or understand it.

Continuing with Isaiah 53: 11–12: “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Christ’s question to the Cleopas and his companion is a good place to return as we conclude: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” The answer is, as the messages from Moses and all the prophets clearly informs us: “Yes.” Christ was meticulous in His life. He lived His days following the patterns set out in scripture for Him to follow. His death, too, conformed to the patterns of the rites revealed to Moses. Every detail of His death was necessary.

The personal lessons we can take from this include the following:

-The Lord is willing to answer our questions.

-He accepts us where we are.

-We need to impose upon Him to have Him stay with us; otherwise He will move on.

-The Lord is a teacher, first and foremost.

-He is not necessarily able to get His message through to us, however, because we are not His equal as students.

-He would like us to understand and appreciate the wonderful mosaic of symbolic information He took the trouble to build into the script of scripture, the prose of the prophets and the rites of His religion. [There’s some Maxwellian alliteration for those of you who miss him as I do.⁵]

-He has appeared to men and women in the flesh after His resurrection.

-He appeared to women first, then to two disciples who required some considerable teaching and perhaps even an ordinance in breaking bread before they were able to open their eyes and “see” Him.

-He was unable to visit with His apostolic witnesses until they had been prepared to see Him by the testimony of the women and these two disciples first. They, the Apostles, saw Him thirdly.

-From this we learn there is no controlling or managing the Lord through hierarchical limitations.

-One of the first witnesses of the resurrection was named Cleopas. Other than this mention of him, we have no reliable other information about him.

-Another of the witnesses of the Lord’s resurrection does not even have a name given him.

-Notice or recognition, let alone fame, is not required of someone who has seen the resurrected Lord. Indeed, it is irrelevant.

-It is possible these witnesses withheld information about the Lord’s communications to them because they were asked to do so.

-Although there are scriptural limitations on what we may teach or disclose from personal revelation, there is no limit on what the Lord may choose to reveal to any given disciple.

-All scriptures are focused on the Lord’s ministry and message; they are all one, and we err when we fail to see a consistent, overall testimony of God’s great plan of happiness for us all within it.

⁵ Elder Neal Maxwell’s sermons as an Apostle were punctuated by his proclivity to produce prose with panache. Some of us delighted in his command of the language.

-Christ's apparent defeat in crucifixion and death was but a prelude to His great triumph over death itself. -For those who follow Him, mortal defeat is also temporary.

There are more lessons, of course. But we've now taken about as much time as the walk to Emmaus from Jerusalem, and so this needs to come to a close.

Jesus Christ died according to a plan designed to glorify Him and bless us all. He did not just die, but rose from the dead. There have been and are now witnesses of that fact. He has been seen of so many witnesses because death did not confine Him. That is one of the great truths about Him. The Spring of each year all of nature reawakens from the sleep of winter to bear testimony of the Risen Lord. He submitted to satisfying all the requirements of the Law of Moses. He conformed perfectly to the Father's great plan. His rhetorical question remains the best way to think of His successful ministry: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into His glory?

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.