**Jesus Denied - Luke 22:31-62**

**Verse 31** These words of Jesus are only recorded in Luke’s gospel- They reveal that Satan stood behind all the trials Peter and the disciples would soon face -– so Jesus is saying to Peter, Satan has asked that he sift/ test all of you. -to see if you will fall away, fall through, or be blown away like chaff. We know in hindsight that indeed all of the disciples were tested one way or the other. They withstood great trials and challenges and even martyrdom. Luke here in recording these words of Jesus draws attention to the spiritual warfare that would be raged against his disciples

**Verse 32** Jesus knew Peter well - better than Peter knew himself, Jesus prayed that Peter, when sifted would come through his failure and that his faith would stay strong and when he was strong and stable again that he would strengthen the other disciples-become a powerful and supportive influence.

**Verse 33** Peter seems to scoff at the idea of failure, it’s like he is saying “Let you down Lord? never “but with this false confidence Peter shows that he is beginning to slide toward spiritual disaster. **Betrayal and denial**- Love of money was Judas Iscariots’ weak point; pride was Peter’s weak point. Both men failed Jesus but suffered very different fates because Peter repented Judas did not.

**Verse 34** Jesus predicted Judas’s betrayal and now he predicts Peters denial and he is very specific in his prediction.

**Verse 35** Jesus seems to leave that point of conversation and moves on reminding the disciples of their “missionary” trips where he sent them out two by two (Luke 9:1-6,10:1-11). He asked them did you lack anything when I sent you out without provisions and resources? No, they answered

**Verse 36** he warns them things would now be different a totally different situation would arise-no generous hospitality towards them-tough times lay ahead as they went about their missionary work-they would face opposition, hatred, persecution and even death. Jesus is uses irony if you have a purse, bag and even a sword-take it It is Jesus’s way of assuring his disciples he understood the reality of the impending crisis and that they knew as well. the gravity and seriousness of their coming mission they needed to be prepared. (This is the only reference Jesus makes about the need for a weapon is it to be taken literally or is it a metaphor?) The way of Jesus was not by the sword but by love- The mention of a sword certainly vividly communicated the severe trails that lay ahead

**Verse 37** is a quote from Isaiah 53:12 Jesus here reveals he understands that he would be aligned with sinful humanity(transgressors) He was to soon be arrested as a criminal be sent to trial and be put to death- in fulfilment of scripture and as a result his followers would also be in danger

**Verse 38** That’s enough! Jesus draws the discussion of swords to an end- he is sharing with his disciples deeply relevant scriptural prophesy but -Once again his disciples failed to understand him. They were still caught up with the swords, they had taken him literally. It was not a time to think of using swords but to listen to him

**Verse 39-44** Throughout his ministry prayer was of great importance to Jesus and now at this most crucial time -Jesus prays to his father God. Here in these verses Luke records that Jesus returned after the Passover feast to the region of the Mount of Olives. (a journey of about 3 kilometres) During his time in Jerusalem this is where he had spent each night. His disciples followed him. On arrival, Jesus turns to them and urges them to pray, that will not fall into temptation amidst all that was to come -all that they would witness as he left them. Would their faith faulter? Would they come to doubt he was the messiah .Jesus then moves a short way ( a stone’s throw means a short way in biblical terms) from them- he kneels (this in itself is unusual as Jews stand to pray)In this prayer he pours out his human response to what he knew was about to happen to him **Cup: -** in the Old Testament the word cup was associated with suffering and the Just anger of God (Isaiah 51:17, Ezekiel 23:33).What Jesus was about to suffer physically, emotionally and mentally was beyond human comprehension-but Jesus knew! Yet the focus of his prayer was not on what he may want, but what God wanted (verse 42 “Father if you are willing”) There was no conflict of will-Jesus just wanted to know even at this late stage -could there be another way other than the cross. It is impossible to fully imagine the anguish that Jesus was experiencing at this time, in his mind’s eye the full impact of what he was about to endure would have being played out. As Jesus prayed- a ministering angel attended to him -Luke was a physician as well as a historian- he would have appreciated the physical symptoms (verse 43) that became apparent as Jesus prayed.

**Verse 45** After he had prayed Jesus got up to return to his disciples, he found them asleep in their exhaustion, grief and sorrow. The emotion awakened by Jesus words, what they witnessed, the uncertainty of what lay ahead put them in a state of grief for Jesus and for themselves. So, they lapsed into prayerlessness and sleep.

**Verse 47-53** The arrest of Jesus occurred suddenly- he was actually still speaking to his disciples-when the arresting party turned up lead by Judas Iscariot- it was dark Judas Identified Jesus with a kiss (verse 48). Judas had turned a normal traditional greeting between family and friends into an act of betrayal. Judas betrayed Jesus with a prearranged signal that was normally an act of affection and respect

Judas had been with Jesus for three years (Luke 6:16) but he had his own agenda, he proved that he was not teachable, he was a unrepentant thief (John 12:6) and now he took money from the Jewish leaders in exchange for information of Jesus’s whereabouts- He told them where they could find him after dark – where they could arrest him away from prying eyes -Judas was a traitor.

As the betrayal of Jesus became evident some of his disciples seem to leap into action- they asked Jesus if they should use their swords. One of them (John’s gospel says it was Peter) used his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus called a stop to the use of swords and fixed the ear of the injured man. Jesus was never about force and violence his ministry was about love compassion and service and peace- To achieve his ultimate rule and for God’s plans to be fulfilled Jesus would have to endure his arrest, trial and execution without resistance. Jesus speaks directly to the arresting party. They came armed treating him no better than a common criminal -this was pure theatre -they had had every opportunity to arrest him during the previous week -. No! dark forces were at work behind their actions -pure evil. – “The hour darkness reigns”. The forces of evil were at work -at this hour -but the powers of darkness were still in line with God’s plan!

Verse 54-62 Jesus was immediately arrested and taken as a prisoner to the house of the high priest. The disciples were just left there-except Peter who followed at a distance. Over the next few hours, Jesus predictions about Peter denying him were to be fulfilled. During the night Peter, in the courtyard of the house he was challenged three times about his identity and whether he was one of Jesus’s followers- When questioned Peter panicked, did, he feel fear? was he embarrassed? On his third denial as the rooster crowed, he remembered Jesus words

Jesus turned and looked directly at Peter (verse 61) What was in Jesus’s look? was it reproach? Or I told you so? No more likely it was a look of compassion, love and **forgiveness**. Whatever Peter saw in the look from the Lord it had great effect on him and he went out from the courtyard and wept bitterly.

Why was Peter crying?

Was it because he had failed his Lord, master, friend and teacher?

Was it because he was a hypocrite?

Or was he crying tears of sorrow, shame, repentance as he responded to the steadfast love of Jesus. Did he accept the humiliating truth he was weak and failed Jesus? He had just said, when under stress, that he didn’t know him, that he was not a disciple and he even said that he had no idea who they were talking about

Peter returned to the rest of the disciples -could he accept God’s forgiveness -we know in hindsight that Peter was indeed restored.

**Jesus on Trial Luke 22:63-23:12**

**Verses 63-65**. The men guarding Jesus began mocking him and beating him

We are talking about an era when prisoners-not just Jesus, were treated at the pleasure of their guards those who were arrested had no rights. People who were arrested were not considered innocent until proven guilty -there was no due process of law. To the guards Jesus was good sport to have some fun- they were brutal -they just used this opportunity to mock him, beat him and generally mistreat him.

These guards had heard said that Jesus was a prophet -so they blindfolded him and taunted him to tell them who was hitting him and he was generally assaulted and insulted.

**Verse 66.** Jesus first formal trial takes place at Daybreak. The trial is before the Sanhedrin.

(John’s gospel- records there were informal hearings before the high priests throughout the previous night).

**Verse 67**. Jesus was being tried for the capital offence of blasphemy although the authorities wanted him found guilty and found guilty quickly-formal trials were not permitted during the night so early morning was their first opportunity. Speed was at the essence -they wanted Jesus out of the way before the formalities of the Passover festival commenced.

The trial started but no formal charges were brought against Jesus, rather the court adapted a question-and-answer technique -what they wanted was for Jesus to condemn himself with his own words. They wanted him to agree with them that he was the Messiah the anointed one of God.

**Verse 68.** Jesus of course was aware of their techniques and purpose. Jesus knew there was no point in answering them -they had no understanding of the true nature of the Messiah-and as had happened before during his ministry they would not answer any clarifying questions he put to them. Jesus knew it was all too futile to engage with them- their minds were made up – **Verse 69 -71** but what he did say is a quote from Daniel 7:3

Which speaks of a –unique man- thought to be the Messiah coming from God and with God’s authority was to reign supreme- Jesus had used the phrase the son of man to speak of himself so in verse 69 he is indicating he was the Messiah.

Just like that he had answered his accusers and given himself up to them and given them what they wanted.

They pounced “Are you **the** son of God, then?

The all-important word here is THE as all Jews were referred to as sons of God

He replied “You are right in saying that I am” some translations say that Jesus said “You say I am “he put the responsibility back on them as the questioners.

The Sanhedrin had heard enough – They had him he was in their judgement a blasphemer they found him gulity

**Chapter 23 Verse 1:** The Sanhedrin as a group took Jesus to Pilate-the governor of Judea. The seat of Roman government was in Caesarea; however, Pilate was in Jerusalem for the Passover Celebration. The Sanhedrin wanted Jesus executed but only Rome could impose the death penalty within the Roman Empire. **Verse 2**: we see that three political charges were brought by the Sanhedrin against Jesus. Pilate would not be interested or impressed unless they put a political spin on the charges.

1. Subverting (misleading) the nation
2. Opposing Payment of taxes to Caesar
3. Claiming to be a King

**Verses 3- 8** Pilate questions Jesus and from the verse we see Jesus’s answer. It seems from the text that

Pilate was cautious -he seems to have an awareness that this man brought before him was not your ordinary everyday rebel and freedom fighter. It is not recorded by Luke if Pilate questioned Jesus on the first two charges. Only the third. He asks “Are you king of the Jews?”

**Verse 4:** Pilate seems to be ready to dismiss the charge

**Verse 5-8:** the Sanhedrin were adamant – they were not giving up. Pilate on hearing Jesus was from Galilee – which was not his area of governance-He sent Jesus to Herod -Galilee was his jurisdiction-Herod too was in Jerusalem

Luke includes these facts of the encounter with Pilate and Herod because he wants to demonstrate to his readers that neither Herod or Pilate thought Jesus was guilty of these charges -they did not take it at all seriously.

**Verse 9**-12 Tells us Herod plied Jesus with questions- attempting to put Jesus under pressure. Herod had heard of Jesus and his reputation he wanted to see miracles etc. Jesus remained silent. The responsibility for his death by execution would lay squarely at the feet of his accusers

Note: Isaiah 53:7 would be good to read at this point.

Herod was disappointed he didn’t get his entertainment so he joined with the soldiers in their contempt and mockery of Jesus. Whilst the Sanhedrin kept up their accusations

They dressed Jesus in a splendid robe. Herod was not taking this seriously at all-It is important to realise neither Herod nor Pilate found Jesus guilty of the charges brought against him but neither of them really investigated or inquired further into the matter, as a court of law even in those times would normally do. Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate-it is not clear from the text why Pilate and Herod previously rivals became friends at this time- maybe it was just the shared experience but we can only speculate.

**Jesus Instead of Us - Luke 23:13-25- Leaders notes**

Verse 13-16: Jesus is now back in front of Pilate -he is declared innocent- Pilate wanted to release Jesus.

Pilate tells the assembled group that as far as he and Herod were concerned Jesus was **innocent**- He actually says it **four** times (Luke 23: 4,14,15 22.) but as he did so- he came up against the determination of the Jewish leadership- they were determined to have Jesus condemned.

The word **examined** (for further details on Pilate’s examination of Jesus see John 18:28-19:16) which is used in **verse 14** was a legal term and does at least indicate that unlike Herod, Pilate had reviewed the charges and questioned Jesus in some depth Pilate also adds that Herod agrees with him that Jesus is innocent of the charges! Otherwise, he says why would Herod send him back to us here? Pilate’s decision- this man Jesus is innocent he does not deserve the death penalty.

That should have been the end of the matter, but no it did not end there- Pilate realising the extreme hostility of the Jewish Leaders knew he had to take some action hoping to mollify them. Justice was not his priority under pressure- probably self-preservation was upper most in his mind- So he said that he would have Jesus flogged before releasing him. **Verse 16**- The grounds for the flogging was most probably something like “disturbing the peace” Pilate probably thought Jesus did deserve to be flogged for in his opinion provoking and aggravating the Jewish Leaders- so his verdict and sentencing was acquittal with admonition- the flogging for this “offence “was a light flogging. Not 40 lashes minus 1- (the minus one was in case you were innocent.) Pilate was technically correct in his rulings according to Roman Law in regard to disturbing the peace \*

*Some translations omit verse 17 not sure as to why- - and it says something like this Now Pilate was obliged to release a Jewish prisoner during the feast of Passover- if you want to know more about why this verse has been omitted in some translations, or someone asks the question- your own research could help or ask someone with more insight than I- Linda*

**Verse 18-25**: The Jewish leaders would have none of it- - Now Barabbas does seem to appear out of left field but there is evidence that agitators for his release were present- he was a popular figure -so it makes some sense- but probably not to Pilate- it is totally unexpected- Luke in his record wants to make the point clear- The exchange -an innocent man for a guilty man- a murderer and insurrectionist-for an innocent man. Jesus was to die for a convicted traitor and a murderer- Barabbas went free .

These Jewish leaders were an exclusive group they had great influence in the affairs of Jerusalem -there is evidence that they were “family” intermarrying- and very exclusive aristocrats – At this point these leaders technically were responsible for the death of Jesus not all the Jewish people.

It should be remembered it was Friday morning when all this was occurring. Apart from his disciples Jesus ‘s followers, who had welcomed him into the city and heard him teach in the temple, were probably preparing for the Sabbath and Passover they would not be in the gathered group-They would not have even known of his arrest- Probably the people mentioned in **verse 13** were the Jewish Leaders, chief priest etc and the others agitators for and supporters of this man Barabbas- they wanted a reprieve for him.

If we look at the text -Luke never describes the assembled group as a crowd- just a group of people and the group had to be small enough to fit into the judgement hall of Pilate which was modest in size- verified by archaeologist discoveries. Pilate did want to release Jesus but the tempo of the opposition was so intense, urgent and insistent he capitulated to their demands and their will. There would have been intense pressure on Pilate -middle eastern politics were at play- as Roman governor of Judea it was his responsibility to keep the peace -his roman superiors would not be pleased or accepting of rioting and unrest. He realised this group of people were on the verge of rioting-(verse 21 and 23). \*\* Matthew Mark and John all record the intensity of the demands for Jesus crucifixion and also record the exchange of Jesus for Barabbas- All four gospels stress that Pilate found Jesus innocent. However, he still released the guilty murderer and rebel Barabbas to them in exchange for Jesus. Jesus was condemned to death -Barabbas went free. 1 Peter 3:18

\*Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament oxford university press

**Jesus is Crucified - Luke 23:26-56 - Leaders notes**

**Simon of Cyrene**

**Verse 26:** The gospels of Mark and Matthew and John concur that Jesus was indeed flogged prior to his execution, as a result he was weakened physically by the lash so much so the innocent Jesus was unable to carry his cross- something that a guilty condemned man was required to do.

Simon was from Cyrene (a coastal city in Libya) he was just a visitor to Jerusalem but he was pressed into this onerous duty-

**Daughters of Jerusalem**

**Verse 27-28** Jesus was still respected in Jerusalem (or were people just curious) as we can see from these verses-People had now come onto the streets to witness what was happening to him -however any crucifixion attracted a crowd maybe they came out of compassion or mere curiosity – The women could have been genuine in their grief and distress for Jesus - they were from Jerusalem (verse 28) not Galilee but they may have been women who wailed at all crucifixion parades - we don’t know ,However what Jesus says to them is recorded here by Luke. Even at this point of distress and agony Jesus reaches out to those around him.

**Verse 29-31** Here Jesus was in a dreadful physical state yet he called not for sympathy– note: He did not tell them not to grieve - rather He calls on them not to weep for him but to mourn for themselves. The time is coming he says when they would feel it would be preferable not to have given birth to children because those children would have to endure dreadful suffering and they would hope that some natural disaster would put an end to their suffering. Jesus knows what is coming in less than 40 years the city would be destroyed by the Romans and the people of Jerusalem would suffer dreadfully**. Verse 31** seems to be in the form of a proverb Jesus seems to be saying something like -If an innocent man (green tree) (like me Jesus) suffers like this what will happen to those who are guilty (Jerusalem dry Tree)-*it should be noted this verse is not at all easy to interpret as there are only vague cross references to be found*

**The crucifixion**

**Verse 32-33**: Luke like the other gospel writers does not dwell on the horror of the execution. As a doctor he would have been all too aware of the physical agony of crucifixion- but as an historian he just focuses on the facts- The two other men being executed were criminals and they were to be crucified with Jesus at a place called the skull (Latin -calvaria hence calvary) Jesus was just another criminal to the roman soldiers- all three to be executed together (Isaiah 53:9 & 12)

He execution proceeded.

**Verse 34**

**Jesus’s Prayer**

Most probably everyone present watching the crucifixion of Jesus that day- knew Jesus was innocent -a gross injustice was occurring – Yet the response of Jesus was to pray.

Who was he praying for? Was he praying for just the soldiers who were carrying out their duty? If he was its strange because they **did** know what they were doing -they were doing as they were commanded to do.

Was he praying for the Jewish Leaders? Possibly- because in their ignorance they did not know what they were doing………

\*\*\*Dividing up the clothes among executioners was a recognised custom

The last piece of the prayer **verse 34** -Jesus is praying that God his father will forgive ignorance -he is praying for those who were shutting their minds to the truth- Even in that hour of crisis Jesus prayed for his enemies and demonstrated forgiveness.

**The Mockery Continues**

**Verse 35-38**

The hateful taunting mockery and ridicule of the **rulers** (verse 35) was disgraceful and the soldiers joined in (verse 36)- yet Jesus forgave.

The inscription of charges (from the charge sheet) put above Jesus’s head was normal practice -The inscription **This** is the King of the Jews is Pilate quoting back to the Jewish leaders what they accused Jesus of.

**A request and A promise**

**Verse 39-43**: Luke records one of the hanging criminals joined in hurling insults at Jesus

Luke then records the conversation from the cross between the criminals and Jesus. This conversation demonstrates there are two ways to die- for all people

People either die with Jesus or they die without him

One criminal showed contempt (read the text again-) he died -no peace no hope. The other criminal seemed shocked at the fellow’s attitude of contempt and he seems to have chosen the other path- Whilst he did not pretend to be “good “he does reflect upon his guilt and unworthiness before God. He compares his guilt with the innocence of Jesus. His conscience seemed to be stirred and he seems genuine in his petitioning of Jesus. Who knows how long it had been since this criminal thought on spiritual matters, even reflected on the scriptures, how long had it been since he was in the synagogue or the temple- How long since he had been taught about the coming Messiah -but it is obvious he saw something in Jesus? However, “bad” his life was and all he had done -he feared God sufficiently to recognise his need and hope. His repentance came in the closing hours of his life -his faith may have been no bigger than a seed but Jesus made him a promise.

Paradise: originally a Persian word meaning garden – thus the Garden of Eden in the OT. Paradise is a metaphor for the experience of God’s blessing in the world or the age to come- Jesus was assuring this man of the blessing he would know on his death -he had hope and his experience of “paradise” would be immediate that day – no hell- no purgatory.

**Jesus’ death, burial Verse 44-56**

**A Shout** There is something obviously supernatural about the last three hours of Jesus ‘s life- From midday as the text says- the sixth hour. All the mocking voices would have been silenced as darkness descends-The sun did not shine again for three hours-It could not have been a natural eclipse for it was Passover time and therefore it was a full moon which marked the time of the Passover. The conjunction of the sun, moon and earth makes a natural eclipse impossible. (solar eclipses only occur when there is a new moon) The darkness was supernatural.

**verse 45** during the darkness, back in Jerusalem something very significant happened -the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38) i.e.- from God down. The curtain carried great symbolic significance -the curtain (veil)separated the holy of holies from the outer parts of the temple- The veil symbolized the division between a holy God and an unholy people. The tearing of this curtain would have been deeply disturbing for any God-fearing Jew. The significance-the tearing of the curtain from top to bottom when Jesus’ died signalled the way to God was open. At the death of Jesus there was now direct access to God for his people -Jesus had made this possible. The punishment for sin was laid upon him. God in his love acted, he reached out- through human injustice and the blood shed by Jesus on calvary God had opened the way for reconciliation with him-the necessary sacrifice had been paid- the price for sin- once and for all.

**Verse 46** records that Jesus called out in a loud voice- one thing a crucified man on the verge of death cannot do is shout-his lungs are so compressed he cannot breathe he dies of asphyxiation. To be able to summon the strength to call out with a loud voice suggests that Jesus was not physically about to die **YET HE DID!**

The words Father into your hands I commit my spirit underline the point -death did not conquer Jesus -rather he voluntarily surrendered his life at the right time- his work was done-the sacrifice complete -the gate to God was open-Jesus laid down his life

**Verse 47:**

The centurion was Roman -he would have been the officer in charge of crucifixions on that day (crucifixion days were held on a regular basis). This centurion would have witnessed many deaths by crucifixion-he would have heard many agonised helpless voices and seen much suffering-it was part and parcel of his duty but as we read the text, we can see this was a different experience for him. He had witnessed the darkness and heard the victory shout of Jesus.

What did he say? Surely this man was a righteous man -what did he mean? -to be righteous is to be innocent- (Isaiah 53:9 and 12) *The gospels of Matthew and Mark record that the centurion actually declared they thought Jesus was the son of God*

**Verse 48 -49**

The end had come- the gathered people saddened even distressed dispersed. However, Jesus close followers which included the women who had come with him from Galilee stood at a distance watching it’s not hard to work out they would have been watchful but in a state of shock and grief.

**Verses 50-56:** Joseph of Arimathea he was a member of the Sanhedrin but the text says he had not consented to the actions against Jesus’ (verse 51) -he was obviously not present for the court proceedings -earlier that day he may have been a follower of Jesus- to do all he did. The text tells us he was waiting /looking forward for/to the Kingdom of God-the time of the ruling of the Messiah

He was a man of influence in high places -as he had access to Pilate and able to obtain permission from Pilate himself- to remove Jesus body from the cross and bury Jesus in his own tomb before the sabbath started -so speed was at the essence- as it was late of the Friday afternoon sabbath was nearly upon them. Jesus body once taken down from the cross was wrapped in a linen shroud and then placed in this new unused tomb. -- tombs were very expensive -Joseph must have been wealthy. While this was happening the women from Galilee were observing and following -they knew the location of the tomb and the placement of the body- after the sabbath they would return at dawn on the Sunday and complete the burial rituals anointing the body of Jesus with oils and ointments which they would prepare themselves prior to the start of sabbath again speed was in deed the essence. According to Jewish law nothing could be done on the Sabbath day- the commandment given to Moses declared it was a day of rest.

**LUKE 24:1-35 JESUS IS RISEN**

**Verse 1-3** When Jesus was crucified his disciples- his close followers- would have been devastated -he was not only their friend, teacher and master but they really thought he was the one who would bring God’s rule on Earth-now they had watched him die -it is probable that they would have been torn with confusion, grief and despair. There would have been absolutely no joy in the hearts of the women -on that Sunday morning as they took the prepared spices to the tomb for the final stage of Jesus’s burial rites. When they reached the tomb provided by Joseph, they found that the stone which had been sealing the tomb entrance had been rolled away—when they entered the tomb- Jesus’s body -which they had seen laid there on Friday afternoon was gone  
We can only imagine just how distressed, shaken and well out of their depth they felt

**Verse 4-7** But then another shock (verse 4) suddenly two men in gleaming clothes appeared -the other gospels record that these men were angels- messengers or envoys from God- These angels looked like men- the women of course were overawed as you can see by their consequent action (Verse 5.) The men/angels asked them the question that we read at the end of verse 5. “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” They then tell the women- Jesus is not here He is Risen! i.e. He is not dead he is alive- Then they told the women to remember what Jesus had told them in Galilee verse 7.

Here at the tomb entrance the angels did not give their explanation as to what happened they didn’t have to because Jesus had already explained- they used Jesus’s words. The angels just reminded the women in what seems a gentle rebuke of what Jesus had told his followers which was- **it was necessary** that the Son of Man would be betrayed to sinful men, arrested, tried and executed but that he would rise from the dead (Luke 9:22,44. Luke 18:31-33)

**Verse 8-12**  In verse eight it is recorded the women then remembered what Jesus had said.

Then the women reacted, they returned to the city from the tomb, they told the eleven and others what they had witnessed first-hand. Luke a historian makes a point of actually naming the first witnesses to the empty tomb and recording what they said-they were reliable and sensible women and this was especially important -because although the witness of these women was perfectly true – women as witnesses in general at that time were not thought by that society both Roman and Jewish to be “reliable”.

\*\**Jewish Law, delineates the rules governing who may provide written or oral testimony. A valid witness in a Jewish court must be an adult free man, not a woman or a slave, and not be related to any of the other witnesses or judges. The witness must be an honest person who can be trusted not to lie*

Luke names: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James but he does not mention the “others” by name.

Perfectly sensible sane women all were followers and/or supporters of Jesus, women of integrity-When Luke wrote his gospel AD 60 -it is possible that some of these women would have still been alive and able to give verbal witness.

As recorded in verse 11 -the disciples did not believe the women they thought it was nonsense they were talking.

\*\*\*Nonsense: In biblical times nonsense was in fact a medical term used for confused delirious talk –

Peter however reacted- he probably needed to get to the bottom of it all and find out if these women were indeed speaking the truth or they were confused-so he- the one who had just a day or so ago denied knowing Christ -still no doubt bearing the burden of guilt, rushed to the tomb and he too found that the tomb was empty except for the shroud-he left the tomb wondering what had happened. Did Peter at **this moment** in time believe that Jesus was alive? Luke does not record that he did. Later in the chapter verse 34 the text does record that Jesus not long after this appeared to Peter.

**Verses 13-35**

Luke now records an unexpected and moving meeting that took place on that same Sunday- he tells of a conversation between two of Jesus’s followers and a “stranger” who joined them as they left Jerusalem- along the road to the little village of Emmaus. It could have been two men or a husband and wife -the text seems to indicate that they shared a home. The text tells us these travellers were in deep conversation the text said they were despondent- therefore preoccupied when a stranger, they did not recognise to be Jesus, joined with them. Why did they not recognise him?

We can only speculate- Were they filled with “blinding” grief – is there such a thing? Or they did not see what they “knew” to be impossible -no one survived Roman crucifixion- and the dead do not come back to life or was their blindness God directed -to meet God’s purposes at that time?

Jesus asks them a question - - what are you talking about? -they were feeling downcast- but they stopped. Cleopas one of the two then asks a question of the stranger “are you the only visitor to/in Jerusalem who does not know what happened there (HCSB) or (NIV) are you only a visitor to Jerusalem is that why you do not know what things have been going on? Jesus asks them another question- verse 19

What things? The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth they answer. Jesus now gives them the opportunity to verbalise their observations, grief, confusion, their dashed hopes, their thoughts and their understanding- to explain the reason for being so downcast. Which they do (read the text carefully)

In recording this conversation Luke reveals eye witness accounts of all that had happened, who these two people thought Jesus was, their hopes, all that Jesus had said and done- this eye witness account came directly from Jesus’s followers those who knew him- not a third hand account. (It is good to remember here again that Luke is writing his account as an historian and investigator predominantly for gentile readers (originally Theophilus) so they can understand with certainty what they had been taught- the book of ACTS also written by Luke was addressed originally to Theophilus means one who loves God)

These travellers also testify that their **chief priests** had delivered Jesus up to the Roman rulers to be executed

They testified to the women’s discovery, the appearance of angels, the empty tomb and the angels stating Jesus was alive-

They also said some of their companions had witnessed the empty tomb as well but did not see Jesus. As they were so downcast does that reveal they did not believe the women?

What was Jesus’s response? (verse 25-27) He is basically said to them wake up! Remember! During the course of his ministry Jesus had spoken very clearly and in detail about his death and resurrection and further more- so had the Old Testament prophets- Jesus along that country road proceeded to correct and re-educate these two followers of his (verse 27.)

Jesus pulled together all the threads for them – **It was necessary** he says- for the Messiah to die and enter glory- it was God’s plan to enable rescue of flawed and fallen men and women. Did they understand? Did they see? No! Not at that moment!

Verses 28-32 It was getting late when they arrived in the village -Jesus was still with them. Jesus acted like he intended to keep going but they invited him to stay with them. They all “sat down” to dinner-strangely it was not Cleopas -the host-who “gave thanks” it was the “stranger” who led the blessing.

As Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread- the penny dropped for the Cleopas and his companion. Was it because of the familiar words and actions? was it the movement of Jesus’s hands whilst breaking the bread that revealed the nail marks? -or did God open their eyes -we do not know- Luke does not say- whatever- their eyes were opened and they saw that the “stranger” was Jesus. They understood that the stranger was the risen Lord. At that moment Jesus left them. They mulled over the effect that Jesus had, had on them as he taught them as they walked along the road

**Verses 33-35** Their next reaction was really impulsive -despite the late hour and potential danger on the road they returned the 7 miles to Jerusalem to tell the others what had happened.

They found the others assembled together and they were told the **Lord had risen** as Peter had seen him. Jesus must have sought Peter out- that in itself is a sign of love and forgiveness from Jesus. Peter had been one of the first to see the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:5) The companions from Emmaus then added that they too had seen Jesus and they described what they had experienced along the road and that Jesus had made himself known as he broke bread.

**Luke 24:36-53 The Next Chapter**

**Verse 36-41**

While they Jesus’s followers were still talking together Jesus comes to them-yes, they were startled and yes, they were frightened, yes, they were troubled and doubtful- they were thinking spirit, ghost- When Jesus showed them his hands and feet where-the nail imprints and injuries would have been-visible (see John 20:25-27) they were joyous! But strangely their joy was not translating into belief -what did it all mean? (verse 41) they were still finding it all so hard to take in-they were amazed, confused, perplexed and still doubtful

**Verse 42-43** Jesus was very aware of their doubts -he tells them to feel him, touch him, look at him, feed him-he was no ghost/spirit he was flesh and bones-they were then convinced of his physical presence and therefore his bodily resurrection.

**Verse 44-46:**  During the time Jesus was with them before his ascension - 40 days (Acts 1:2) *(Some of that time was spent in Galilee Matthew28:16, John 21)* he proceeded to open their minds -to teach them- to explain to them why all that had happened to him was **necessary,** It had to happen, it was fulfilment of scripture

They needed to understand his death and resurrection -He took them back to the scriptures- The Law, The prophets and The Psalms. These very scriptures revealed God’s plans to send a king (the messiah) who would come as a man -this man would have the power and compassion of God but he would walk the path of suffering -even though he would be sinless, the most righteous (innocent) man that ever lived-he would be arrested by his enemies ,tried, found guilty and be put to death - but that would not be the end -God would act! -God would acquit him raising him from the dead and bringing him to glory.

**Verse 47-49:** What must now happen? What are they the disciples to do now? Repentance and forgiveness of sins would /will be proclaimed/preached **in his name** to **all** nations beginning from Jerusalem by whom? His witnesses his disciples -

Jesus’ death and resurrection is not the story of a dead man who came back to life. It is not the story of a dying and rising God. It is not the story about death not being the end. It is the story of the shameful death by execution of God’s Messiah -his suffering of pain and being forsaken by God on behalf of men and women who had, have and do break God’s perfect law. Without this death -Jesus resurrection has no significance for fallen men and women -sin has to be dealt with then resurrection can point to forgiveness and new life. The resurrection makes sense of Jesus’s death and now Jesus is crowned with the highest honour, glory and authority. Jesus Death and resurrection man’s repentance and forgiveness all connect together

***What is repentance****: changing one’s mind and lifestyle, bringing your mind and heart alongside the mind and heart of God-unless there is change of mind and heart towards Jesus which is reflected in attitude and lifestyle there is no forgiveness*.

All these truths were not just for the Jewish people but **all nations** -look at the text that is what Jesus says- The work that the Jewish Messiah had accomplished was to the benefit of all people from all nations-Here Jesus is commissioning his first disciples – to go out as his witnesses to preach the gospel

They were not to go into action immediately. Jesus told them to wait- he knew they didn’t have the inner resources to go out into the nations and preach repentance and forgiveness -They would need the Holy Spirit -his spirit to empower them with the necessary gifts, understanding of the truth, clarity of thought and speech, wisdom and inner strength to speak out in the face of fierce opposition.

**Verse 50-53** Jesus then led the way to Bethany which is on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives-it was there that he prayed for them and blessed them and whilst doing this -he parted from them *(for more on the ascension read Luke’s account in Acts 1).* He was taken into heaven. Jesus departed the Earth in human form -after worshipping him the disciples returned to Jerusalem. Luke’s gospel concludes on a high note of Joy, wonder and worship.