

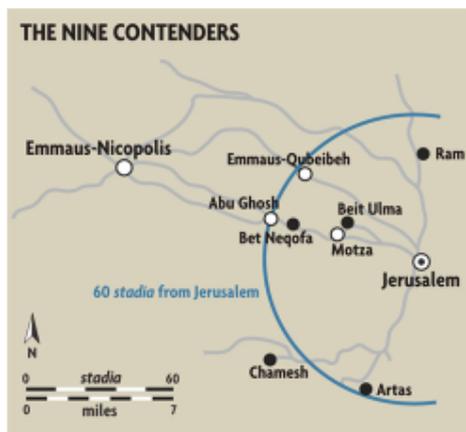
...we had hoped that he was the  
one to redeem Israel...

## The road to Emmaus

The Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets,  
Judaism itself clearly points to Jesus the Messiah and  
his Ministry, Death and Resurrection

The preceding story is the story of the  
resurrection Peter has just seen the empty tomb and the grave clothes and the women who found  
the tomb empty had just been spoken to by Angels

## Where was Emmaus? Why even mention it?



- There were many towns called Emmaus within 30km of Jerusalem
- But for people living in the first century Emmaus meant something very different.
- Military historians have suggested that to a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew Emmaus meant as much to them as Gallipoli means to us
- Emmaus was a battle that defined their Nation
- We celebrate Anzac day they celebrated Chanukah

The town of Emmaus was famous for one reason to the Jews reading this story, Luke could have chosen to omit the name of the town in the story but he did not so let me set the scene The Battle of Emmaus. The year was 166BC and the Seleucid Greeks were not only ruling Israel but attempting to convert Israel into a pagan nation by force. It would be fair to say it was another holocaust like event in the history of Israel but for a few thousand men of faith who chose to fight for the freedom of their nation.

*<sup>1</sup> Maccabees 4: <sup>6</sup> At daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords such as they desired. <sup>7</sup> And they saw the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified, with cavalry all around it; and these men were trained in war. <sup>8</sup> But Judas said to those who were with him, "Do not fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. <sup>9</sup> Remember how our ancestors were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his forces pursued them. <sup>10</sup> And now, let us cry to Heaven, to see whether he will favor us and remember his covenant with our ancestors and crush this army before us today. <sup>11</sup> Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel."*

Most of us protestants don't have the apocrypha included our bibles- but it is helpful to know that this story was not only familiar to Jesus and his followers but it was an intrinsic part of their faith.

The prayer of the battle of Emmaus is not merely a prayer resigning to fate, but rather a way of building trust in the covenant promises of God.

Some scholars have suggested that Jesus Himself prays like Judas Maccabeus prayer in the battle of Emmaus when he is praying in gethsemane:

*Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."*

And when he teaches us to pray in the Lord's prayer:

*Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

But the obvious second Allusion that Luke makes to the Jewish understanding of the significance of Emmaus is that of God the redeemer of Israel.

And so it is likely that on the road to Emmaus two disciples should think of a prayer from the battle of Emmaus while lamenting the loss of their teacher. They thought Jesus should be the one to redeem Israel ... did they mean the messiah, or perhaps as the passage from Maccabees suggests did they equate Jesus with God himself?

## Running in fear/ blinded by fear?

Luke 24:13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

24:14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

24:15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

**24:16** But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

In this story it is apparent that the travelers are not going to Emmaus to make their final stand but rather that they are running from Jerusalem- putting some distance between themselves and the events of the previous days but unable to stop reflecting on them.

Context about the same distance as Company Bay or Sunnyvale , a fit walking person [like most people in the time of Jesus] could do it in one and a half - two hours.

What is lovely about this is that Jesus draws near to them while they are walking

But why didn't they recognize him?

Maybe it was his scarred face, maybe it was a spiritual blindness or maybe it was from fear within? Perhaps one of the saddest things about our lives is also the saddest thing about this passage is that often in times of trouble we don't recognize that Jesus is walking with us.

Luke 24:17 And he said to them, “What is this conversation\* that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad.

1. Jesus is with us on our journey
2. Jesus informs our conversation [reasoning]

\*λογος = Logos

This is a good question to

ask – what is the logic that is driving you?

The world is having a very strange year and this is a question that is very worthwhile pondering.

We must bring Jesus into our reasoning, our words should always be informed by the Word of God.

Have you noticed the media use this language about having conversations?

But I don't know if you have noticed conversations today often don't leave us with much to think about.

It has become an age of tokenism, gesturing, speculation and staged appearances.

Someone once remarked “for an open an inclusive society who prides itself on not being shocked by anything, we are certainly good at pretending to get offended and outraged by lots of things”

## Political change or much more?

Luke 24:18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

24:19 And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

24:20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

24:21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

Cleopas means

the glory of the father-

Now I think Cleopas was expecting Jesus to be a better version of Judas Maccabeus. A zealous warrior who got rid of the political and cultural institutions that were oppressing him.

And I often wonder if we put too much emphasis on personality politics today and miss the point Jesus is making.

Did you know that according to Jesus the biggest problem in the world today is actually not Donald Trump?

Did you know that according to Jesus the best solution to the world's problems is not actually Jacinda Adern?

You see everything that you perceive that is going wrong out there is actually only a symptom, a result or a reaction to what is going on within the nature of Man.

So often people are fighting against phantom issues because they fail to address the real ones. The world is filled with people who want to rewrite history, redefine established scientific categories, redistribute wealth to try and fix problems that they have exaggerated in their mind to be entirely justified- not realizing that in the process they are creating an environment of hatred and oppression and pollution.

As a Historian I can tell you plainly that what happened in France 250 years ago and in Russia 100 years ago and in Germany and in China and in every other country where people have felt oppressed and responded with revenge is happening again now. There is a collective anger [often self-assured] that seeks to blame the past for the problems of the future. And we think we are so clever today we won't make the mistakes of the past, but please note: everyone from the past thought that they were clever too- Revolutions and war are often born out of irrational anger.

Cleopas is motivated by the restoration of Israel to Glory, but Judas Maccabeus and Jesus were motivated in bring Glory to God the Father. Remember the Maccabean revolt was about worshipping the true God- not mere political oppression. Cleopas Needs to learn what his name means. [ie how to bring Glory to his heavenly Father].

I have seen evangelical bible defending fundamentalist Christians and social justice warrior 'black lives matter' climate change advocate Christians both make the same mistake around this point.

**It is a message of truth that has to be delivered in a loving gracious way from a starting place of humility that recognizes we are all as bad as each other.**

**There is no room for a lack of forgiveness from us in our message. God is the only Judge- I may have to speak a tough message sometimes but Lord do not let me seem self-righteous or unmerciful.**

## Unexplained stuff makes us uncomfortable?

Luke 24:22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,

24:23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

24:24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

### Our entire culture

[western culture] is based on the illusion of control.

We like the thought that everything can be explained and predicted and controlled [this is the basis of our science and engineering].

This is why we love machines and computers and cars and bikes and musical instruments and systems and even drugs and psychology but spiritual things are not predictable – and the spiritually of death frankly scares us- we avoid and we even try to control it.

Sadly, I often hear people say that western Christians do not have a good understanding of Spiritual things, because the culture is not a spiritually aware one.

To which I respond that is only true if western Christians either don't read the Bible or don't believe it when it speaks about spiritual things that science has not yet explained. Frankly too many western Christians elevate scientific theories and hypothesis to a place where they dictate what can and cannot be true.

Please understand I am not attacking science but just noting that scientific enquiry is merely a measuring tool not a reason to stop having faith in a spiritual world.

When science is used to look at faith it is like a man using a radar to look at a picture of an aero plane.

It is possible that someone someday will eventually invent a spiritual measuring tool but until then we have to trust the picture of the spirit world painted in the Holy scriptures.

Things like God, the Holy Spirit, prayer, miracles, healing, supernatural empowerment, death, heaven, hell, angels, demons, human spirits and Resurrection are all portrayed in the scripture in ways that we can understand- There is room for some speculation around these topics- people have various views and we have to be careful we don't waste time in endless hypothesis- but likewise we must not avoid these topics because they are not explainable in the modern world.

Churches that deny the existence of a spiritual reality are actually just playing dress up. If there is not Spiritually then everything the church can offer you can get at a bowling club.

## Jesus takes us back to our foundations

Luke 24:25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

24:26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Was this the greatest crash course sermon on the messiah revealed Old Testament ever given? Was this post resurrection Sermon the basis for Peters sermon in Acts 2?

This is perhaps the part of the sermon where I could spend the most time in speculation...but the text does not allow for this...I think it stands as a strong encouragement to all believers to continue reading the Old Testament throughout the ages to come, with the expectation that they will shed a great deal of light onto who Jesus is.

You can be certain of one thing – Jesus made it very clear that the real problems for Israel were not the external one's nations and empires wanting to dominate them- the real problem is within, not obeying the commands of God.

The Israelites did not need a particular type of hero to save them from the nations around them- they needed to hear the voice of God. The voice that cries out in creation- the voice that cries out in the pages of the scriptures and the voice that was heard when Jesus spoke.

Jesus is not merely a nice guy like who told us all to be kind to one another- a personality politician who everyone decided to worship...

He is not merely a powerful guy, possibly immune to virus's who leads the free world.

And in an ancient sense he is not merely a man who can claim to descend from the gods...

**Jesus is the Plan of God from the very beginning, who is also the God of the plan.**

Do you believe the words of this book?

Perhaps you too are inspired by the faith of others? Judas Maccabeus, Moses, the prophets, the heroes of Faith throughout the ages?

But have you ever stopped to think what really matters? what inspired them?

IS that alive in you too?

**Luke 24:28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,

24:29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

24:30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

24:32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

24:33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

A key indication of whether we have the life of God in us is our reaction to the truth when we are in its presence.

These men could not let the truth slip away – they wanted to hear more

And what they did hear they want to share with others.

Maybe the hurt these men felt when Jesus died had made them blind to who he was on the road but now through conversation, Bible study and fellowship their eyes were opened again.

**Your wounds will  
either become  
walls of offense  
or windows of  
revelation  
depending on how  
you respond.**  
UNKNOWN

This could easily have been true of anyone who suffered

like Jesus

This could have been true of Jesus disciples on this particular day

And this can still be true about you and me.

Three months ago I made a stupid mistake and responded to a text message saying that my bank credit card was making odd transactions

I clicked the link on the text that took me to my bank login page and I logged in...sadly it was a fake website and when I realised and called the bank within 7 minutes the people responsible made off with all a large sum of our money and a much larger sum of credit card debt.

For the next 6 weeks Marcie and I worried, several wonderful friends [including people in this room] were great encouragement and even helped us financially when we couldn't even afford to fill the car with petrol.

We were very anxious and honestly had no idea how it would all turn out. I was so angry and sad and full of doubt and fear that I even yelled my prayers to God. On top of all this I was terribly embarrassed and humbled by the support we received from so many good people. The lowest point for me was after 4 weeks the news came that the criminals had got away with all our money and would never be brought to justice.

And this is where God challenged me...I had to choose to put my trust in him for our finances [I should have never responded to that text in fear].

I had to trust that this test of faith was growing my faith...

I had to stand against feelings of embarrassment and tell you all this story today...hopefully some of you won't make the same mistake and if you have you can be assured that I will not judge you.

But worst of all I had to forgive the cowardly criminals whom I will never meet who took our personal money and by my convictions I had to pray that it would bless them.

In the end God answered our prayers the bank paid off the debt for us but as I said earlier and have told you all in many sermons over many years; I think God had a plan in all of this- yes he planned it before time began and he knew I would be preaching today on the journey on the Road to Emmaus and he meant for me to tell you how he came alongside us in our journey. So please don't be too hard on these disciples when you read this story at least they recognised Jesus in their journey by the end of the night.

## Summary

- The redeemer God and Emmaus were redefined in history not merely as ideas about Jews defeating gentile invaders but as a God who come alongside people struggling to make sense of this world and giving them faith in spite of great fear.
- This insight can only be gained by allowing Jesus to explain the scriptures to us.

Final thought:

*It is not what God blesses or curses  
you with that ultimately matters....  
It is how you prepare for it that will  
determine your response.*

Do not lose heart You can start preparing even in the midst of struggles, that is exactly what happened to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus  
The best preparation for life is ... walking the road with Jesus