

OK, NOW WHAT?

Breaking Bread

Forget the newspaper, in ancient times neighbors and travelers were your source of information about the goings-ons in the world around you. This, and hospitality that could also mean survival made breaking bread, meals, a vital part of human interaction in ancient times.

Damascus

Located NE of Israel, Damascus is the current capital of Syria and an important trade city during ancient times. Damascus was an ally of ancient Israel until it was taken over by the Assyrian empire in 732 BCE. In Jesus' day it was under control of the Roman Empire following the death of Cleopatra.

Snakes & Poison

The final paragraphs of the Gospel of Mark mention the drinking of poison and venom of snakes (methods of persecution tortures) would not effect the faithful. This passage was a late addition.



Careful What You Read...

Most Bible's have finally come around to recognizing a troubling fact for some Christians—the ending of the Gospel of Mark that resides in our Bibles likely was added long after the original Gospel, generations after the rest. Removing the obvious late addition leaves a difficult story of the resurrection...a story without a resurrection! Did the original Gospel include the resurrection story, replaced by the late addition? Did the original Gospel leave the world and the disciples in suspense, requiring faith in Jesus' resurrection? We will likely never know. What we do know is that the early disciples experienced a life-transforming moment in time that changed them, and the world, forever.





On the Road Again...

Let's look at the Emmaus Story...

No-one knows where the site of ancient Emmaus actually is. The place would have been less than 20 miles from Jerusalem based on clues in the text and the events that took place.

- Read the text: Luke 24:13-35
- Verses 19-21: The disciples were discussing their disappointments regarding Jesus death and the resurrection. In what ways have you experienced disappointment in your faith journey?
- Verses 22-24: The story of the women and resurrection hasn't been resolved for these two. When in the story does this take place? When have you experience God's presence in the middle of something not yet resolved?

In the breaking of the bread...

²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions



gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

[The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Lk 24:25–35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- ◆ When you experience something you don't quite understand, where do you go? Do you ask someone for help or do you go to the books? Do you try to make sense of it on your own or do you enlist trusted friends? What did the Emmaus disciples do?
- ◆ Have you ever experienced something that you thought was unusual or perhaps even unique? What was that experience? How easy or difficult was it to share with someone else?
- ◆ The scripture says that the disciples recognized Jesus, "In the breaking of the bread." How have you recognized the work of God in your life through prior experiences of either yourself, or the community of faith in modern or ancient times?