

April 15, 2001 by Steve Brandon



The Prophecies Concerning Jesus

Luke 24:32

1. Necessary for Christ to suffer these things

2. Necessary for Christ to enter into His glory

This morning, at Kishwaukee Bible Church, we celebrated Easter. We celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The church has been doing this for nearly two thousand years. In our Good Friday service, Don Dumbacher asked the question, "Why is Good Friday called 'Good' Friday?" That was the day on which Jesus died! How can that be good.

There are many reasons why Good Friday is 'Good'...

It was on that Friday that Jesus was slain for our sins.
It was on that Friday that we were made righteous.
It was on that Friday that Jesus defeated Satan.
It was on that Friday that the entire course of the world was changed.

However, I would like for you to put yourself in the situation of the disciples when Christ was crucified. As a disciple of Jesus at that time, I don't think that we would have called it good. Let's face it, your leader has gone to Jerusalem and has been killed. Though righteous and holy He was, He died the death of a criminal, among criminals. Though claiming to be the Messiah, He didn't appear to fulfill the promises of what the Messiah would be. There was no physical deliverance from the bondage of the Roman tyranny.

In fact, if you were one of his disciples, I think that you might very well have been called that day, 'Bad' Friday! It was the day in which all of your hopes were dashed. It was the day you discovered that you had been deceived. You had thought that Jesus was the Messiah. You had thought that Jesus would deliver you and your people from Rome. What fools you were!

As a disciple of Jesus, you may have had some hope in some of the cryptic statements he made about the rising again from the dead. But that's not the easiest thing to believe. So, put yourself in the situation of disciples several days later. As far as you know, Jesus is still dead. The Passover is finished and was uneventful. What kind of thoughts would go on in your mind? What would you be thinking?

Here was your hope! It was vested in Jesus of Nazareth, who appears to have been defeated! You will appear as a fool for following this false-Messiah. The only thing that would ever make Good Friday "Good" is the Resurrection. If Christ never raised, he was still defeated. But He has raised! And the cross was victorious! He conquered death!

Well, tonight, we are going to look at one of the most interesting stories in all of the Scriptures, that places us right where I have just mentioned - in the midst of hopeless disciples, who have seen their leader crucified upon the cross at Calvary! We were here last week and this week, we return there. Please open your Bibles to Luke, chapter 24.

If you remember, last week, we took verse 31 as the main launching point for our study. This verse came within the context of Jesus Christ revealing himself to these disciples, who were without hope. They didn't understand the full scope of the Messiah's ministry and didn't believe that He would rise from the dead, as He said that He would.

We read in Luke 24:31, "And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight."

This verse really formed the framework of our study. We see here that Jesus Christ revealed Himself to the disciples. At first, they were prevented from recognizing Him, "their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him" (verse 16).

But here, in verse 31, their eyes were opened. Their eyes were opened and now they could see Him for Whom He was! They recognized Him. Last week, we used this verse as a starting point to go through the "post-resurrection appearances of Jesus." Remember, we went through 16 such appearances of Jesus, examining each of them briefly as they actually happened.

Jesus appeared ...

... first to the women who found the empty tomb.
... then to Peter.
... then to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.
... then to all of the disciples (several times).
... then to more than 500.
... then to James and the apostles.
... then to Stephen, Paul and the apostle John.

As we traced out these appearances, we saw a pattern emerge, just as it did here in verse 31. "And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight" (v. 31). In Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, He often veiled his appearances -- it took some time before others recognized Him. Additionally, He often left their presence quickly - not to continue to dwell with them.

Then, using this verse as a starting point, we continued to ask, "As clear as God made the resurrection, why didn't He make it clearer?" Jesus could have stayed with the disciples for longer than He did. He could have appeared to more over a longer period of time. He could have manifested Himself to the Romans who killed Him, or to the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees. But God choose not to. And the big question is, "Why?"

The simple answer is that **God wants us to have to trust Him in faith.**

The faith of the apostles was different in experience than ours, because they actually saw the risen Jesus. But it was not different in kind. They still trusted Jesus.

The main point of application to us is to ask the question of whether we have faith or not? The appearances we looked at last week are only one piece of physical evidence that makes the resurrection of Jesus Christ a solid a fact in history. He appeared to many people in many different ways over a sustained period of time. The testimony was always the same - Jesus has risen from the dead.

I'm not sure about you, but this past week at work, I had several opportunities to speak with others at work about this very fact -- and how this **is** the hope of Easter! I prayed for opportunities and God gave them.

Tonight, we will let verse 32 form the thoughts of our study this evening. "And they said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?'"

Last week we looked at the "Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus." Tonight we will look at the "Prophecies Concerning Jesus." We will find out that just as we need faith (to believe the resurrection), with the prophecies concerning Jesus, we need God to open our hearts.

Let's begin looking at this account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Look at **verses 13-14**, "And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place."

The first thing we notice is that there were two men leaving Jerusalem after the events of the Passover weekend. It was the yearly custom for many to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. It happened every year on the 14th day of the 1st month, that the Passover lamb would be slaughtered and eaten as part of the feast (according to Exodus 12). Since the time of Moses (1500 years prior to Jesus), this had been a tradition (that is still kept up through today). When the Israelites took the land and gain possession of Jerusalem, they made it their habit to gather in Jerusalem each year. In fact, as a part of present day Jewish ritual, they often say, "Next year in Jerusalem!"

They were return home on Sunday evening, which makes tonight, a Sunday evening, a perfect time for preaching from this text. These men were returning to a village named Emmaus, which possibly was where these two people lived. Perhaps they had friends in this area. They were returning home after a holiday.

They had probably made this trip for years. They had probably returned after a Passover celebration in high spirits. What joy there was in celebrating God's deliverance of Israel from the tyranny and bondage of Egypt. This is similar to your familiar feelings after you and your family have celebrated some holiday together. What a joyous time it often is.

However, this year, these disciples had lost their joy. As one commentator said, "they seem to have given up all for lost, and to have come to the conclusion that Jesus was not the Messiah, though they naturally conversed about it, and there were many things which they could not explain. Their Master had been crucified contrary to their expectation, their hopes dashed, their anticipation disappointed, and they were now returning in sadness, and very naturally conversed, in the way, of the things which had happened in Jerusalem" (Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament: Luke and John, p. 160).

Though the text simply says that they were discussing with each other, "all these things which had taken place," we certainly have a good idea of what was on their minds and what they were talking about. They were certainly discussing the disappointing things concerning Jesus...

- ... how they thought Him to be the Messiah.
- ... how He was crucified.
- ... how they thought He would deliver them.

But certainly what provoked their discussion, more than anything else was what the women had told them!...

- ... how the tomb was empty!
- ... how they claimed to see Jesus.
- ... how Jesus had sent them to tell the disciples!

It was all foggy in their mind. They were trying to sort it out. As Yvonne and I are looking for a house to purchase here in Rockford, we have had many discussions about our future home. When either of us come up with another idea or a thought or a suggestion, we verbalize it to each other. The mere speaking of it to one another causes things to be more focused. We have been talking about location of the house, features, benefits, disadvantages, ...

So were the disciples. Looking at it from all angles.

Perhaps they had a conversation that went something like this....

"Surely this Man was more than a false hope. After all, there is the report of His being seen."

"You mean by the three women?"

"Yes, by them."

"My dear friend, God knows there are no more honest and righteous women in all of Israel than Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James, but ... their account of what they have seen ... it defies logic."

"I am aware of that, but why would they fabricate such a tale?"

"Fabricate? Friend your use of words is much too harsh. No, these dear women would never *fabricate* such a story. On that we can agree."

"Then we can agree that they fabricated this story?"

"Not so fast. I only agree that their story was not made up. But what they *think* they saw in their distress is entirely another matter" (David Ettinger, *Zion's Fire Magazine*, p. 17).

Which is nothing more than the current view of the neo-orthodox, who suppose that the resurrection really took place -- only in the minds of the disciples. (I touched upon this last week).

Perhaps they discussed the merits of another slant on explaining the resurrection.

"But what about the chief priests?"

"What do you mean?"

"I was in the temple when they announced to everybody present that Jesus' body was stolen from the tomb."

"How did they know about that? Did they see somebody steal the body?"

"No, but they have the testimony of the soldiers who were appointed by Pilate, Himself, to guard the tomb. These soldiers said that people came and took the body at night while they were sleeping."

"My dear friend, have you ever known a Roman soldier to sleep at his post?"

"Well, no. Of course not, for if they did, they would lose their head."

"Exactly. Furthermore, the testimony from their mouth is that one of Jesus' disciples stole the body. Which of His followers do you know would do such a thing?"

"You are most correct. I know not one of His disciples who attempt to roll such a large stone away, in the close presence of sleeping Roman soldiers. Even the noise of the stone rolling would be enough to awake them."

Which is nothing more than a theory proposed today as well -- that the body was stolen.

Perhaps the disciples said,

"I've been thinking more about these women."

"And?..."

"Are you sure they went to the right tomb?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, perhaps they didn't know where Jesus was actually buried and went to the wrong place."

"No, that can't be true. You remember how they said that they were there sitting outside the tomb when Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus' body in the tomb and rolled the stone against the entrance."

"You're right. ... Hey, maybe they were confused. I mean, it was quite early in the morning when they say they saw Jesus."

"But what about Peter and John? They came to the tomb and saw it empty also. Were they confused also?"

"I guess you are right."

"What about Joseph of Arimathea? It was his tomb, on his property. Have you seen him?"

"In fact, I have."

"Well, did he say anything about Jesus' body still being in his tomb?"

"No, he was strangely silent like the rest of us."

This also is another theory put forth today about Jesus' being raised from the dead -- that the disciples went to the wrong tomb.

We could go on and on and speculate about what they were discussing along the way. But it is enough to know that they were confused and trying to figure out what really happened. Fortunately, Luke does give us more insight, "And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and [began] traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him" (**Luke 24:15-16**).

Some, who try to refute the resurrection, try to say that they couldn't recognize Him, because they were travelling into the sun, which blinded them or that they weren't expecting to see Jesus along the way. Others try to say that they didn't recognize Him, because Jesus was in a

different form.

All of these explanations simply miss the meaning of the text. It says that their eyes were "prevented from recognizing Him." This word comes from *krateo*(*krateo*), to be strong. Literally, they were "restrained." They were "held." Like the angels holding back the four winds of the earth in Rev. 7:1. The KJV can teach us a good word, "Their eyes were holden." The NKJV says, "Their eyes were restrained."

I believe this to be a miraculous blinding of the eyes. This text says nothing about Jesus manifesting Himself in a different form. This text says nothing about the sun - only that it is evening. But you know that when you walk, it isn't like the windshield glare that we get in our cars. When you walk, you are shifting yourself about. Sometime a tree comes between you and the sun. Furthermore, the disciples at times "stood still" (v. 17) at which time they would have shifted themselves.

They were miraculously prevented from recognizing Jesus who said to them, "'What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?' And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,'" (Luke 24:17-19).

Though they originally thought him to be the Messiah, they didn't call Him by this title, "Messiah." Instead, they called him a "prophet" and such he was Yet, I believe that it was with reluctance that they called Jesus a "prophet." Prophets were consistently persecuted and killed. So as the saying goes, "let the prophet suffer the fate of a prophet." They were convinced that He was something greater! But now they were confused.

"and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened" (Luke 24:20-21).

We notice that they were looking for the physical redemption of Israel from Roman bondage. But, what made their conversation most interesting was what came next...

"But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see" (Luke 24:22-24).

At this point, they were probably ready for this stranger to join in their wonder and amazement at the peculiar things that had taken place. Perhaps this stranger would ask them questions. Perhaps this stranger would have some insight that would help them. But, they never expected this Man to respond as He did! Instead of probing questions, they received a rebuke! Jesus said,

"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25-26).

Jesus said that the prophets spoke of how it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer first! They had missed that. They wanted physical redemption, rather than a suffering Savior who would enter glory and redeem us from our sins, rather than from the Romans!

And I would say right here. What would you rather have? A suffering Savior, who would save from sin? Or a reigning Messiah, who would deliver us from the Romans! One is temporal. One is eternal.

But it was necessary that the Messiah would suffer first. So Jesus, "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

"He explained ... the things concerning Himself." Can you imagine? What better sermon would you want to hear? "Jesus preaching on Jesus!" As Spurgeon said, "the diamond cutting the diamond" (Morning and Evening reading for 1/18 p.m.).

I love the fact that though Jesus could have revealed new truth, He chose to expound the old. It tells us that the Scriptures are sufficient. The disciples were caught up in the present events of the day, rather than the truth of the Scriptures from generations ago. Jesus went to them and demonstrated how the things that happened in Jerusalem must have occurred. They were predicted. They must come to pass! Jesus basically took the Old Testament Scriptures and explained to them of "The Prophecies Concerning Jesus."

So, now we come to actually looking at the "Prophecies Concerning Jesus."

Last week, we looked at some 16 appearances of Jesus. In order to get through them, we really flew. Tonight, I would like to do some of the same. Except tonight, we will not be able to turn to each of the verses. So, sit back and listen to simply a few of the Scriptures to which Jesus must have referred, because they speak so clearly of Him. Think yourself to be one of the doubting disciples and think upon these things.

We will use verse 26 as our basic outline, "Was it not necessary for the Christ (1) to suffer these things and (2) to enter into His glory?"

1. Necessary for Christ to suffer these things

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and **you shall bruise him** on the heel" (Gen. 3:15).

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he

looks at it, he shall live." And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived" (Num. 21:8,9. Cf. John 3:14).

"Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and **against His Anointed**" (Psalm 2:1-2).

"For You will not abandon **my soul to Sheol**; Neither will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Psalm 16:10).

"All who see me **sneer** at me; They separate with the lip, they **wag the head**, saying, 'Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.' ..."I am **poured out** like water, And all my bones are **out of joint**; My heart is like wax. It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of **death**. For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; **They pierced** my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me" (Psalm 22:7-8; 14-17).

"Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has **lifted up his heel against me**" (Psalm 41:9).

"The stone which the builders **rejected** Has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech Thee; O LORD, we beseech Thee, do send prosperity!" (Psalm 118:22-25).

"Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, [My people,] So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand. Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no [stately] form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was **despised and forsaken** of men, A man of **sorrows**, and **acquainted with grief**; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was **despised**, and we did **not esteem** Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him **stricken**, **Smitten** of God, and **afflicted**. But He was **pierced through** for our transgressions, He was **crushed** for our iniquities; The **chastening** for our well-being [fell] upon Him, And by His **scourging** we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was **oppressed** and He was **afflicted**, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By **oppression** and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke [was due?] His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD was pleased To **crush** Him, putting [Him] to grief; If He would render Himself [as] a guilt offering, He will see [His] offspring, He will prolong [His] days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the **anguish of His soul**, He will see [it] and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors" (Is. 52:13-53:12).

"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and mot, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined" (Daniel 9:25-26).

"Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; They have laid siege against us; With a rod they will **smite the judge of Israel** on the cheek. But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from days of eternity" (Micah 5:1-2).

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom **they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born" (Zech. 12:10).

2. Necessary for Christ to enter into His glory

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10).

Thus says the LORD... "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of **his kingdom forever**. I will be a father to him and he will be a sons to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your **throne shall be established forever**" (2 Sam. 7:12-16).

"But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain. ... Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!" (Psalm 2:6,12).

"My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me" (Psalm 89:34-36).

"The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.' The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.' ... The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.' The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country" (Psalm 110:1-2,4-6).

"The LORD has sworn to David, a truth from which He will not turn back; 'Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.'" (Psalm 132:11).

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this" (Is. 9:6,7).

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).

So Jesus expounded the Scriptures, "Was it not necessary for the Christ (1) to suffer these things and (2) to enter into His glory?"

The narrative continues, "And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. And they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is [getting] toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." And He went in to stay with them. And it came about that when He had reclined [at the table] with them, He took the bread and blessed [it,] and breaking [it,] He [began] giving [it] to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:28-32). We started on verse 32 and now we are going to end on verse 32.

We have looked at the "Prophecies Concerning Jesus." And again tonight, like last week, I have a question for you, "As clear as these prophecies are, why aren't they believed?"

Many people don't. I think especially of the Jewish people, who intently study the OT scriptures that we have quoted tonight. I think of the liberal church, who seeks to deny these at every opportunity. I think of those in the true church, who profess a believe in them, but by their lives they demonstrate that they have no real understanding of this.

The key to answering this questions comes in verse 32. "And they said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?'"

You see, when Jesus was explaining the Scriptures, something was happening inside the disciples. It wasn't so much that they were thinking in their minds, "hey, **now** I understand!" The disciples understood when Jesus said that he was going to the cross to die. Perhaps you remember that when Jesus revealed for the first time that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day, that Peter rebuked him and said, "God forbid it Lord!" (Matt. 16:21-23). Jesus told them again and again what was going to happen.

So, it wasn't so much that they were understanding in their minds, but more that they were being convinced of it. Look what the text says, "Were not our hearts burning within us?"

Something was happening within them. May I propose that the very thing that was happening in their hearts is the very thing that we need to occur in our hearts to truly see and believe the Scriptures? We need God to open our hearts! People don't simply come to understand the Scriptures because they try hard enough.

"If sinners could be saved from sin by philosophical debate,
the wise, the brilliant might get in;
but what of those of low estate?"
(James Montgomery Boice)

To believe, it is the power and work of the Spirit of God in our hearts to believe. What is it that makes the word of the cross to be foolishness to some and the wisdom of God to others? (1 Cor. 1:18)? It is because God opens the hearts of some and not others! "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). God opens the hearts!

If God blinds the eyes so as not to recognize Jesus (Luke 24:16), so God blinds the hearts not to understand the prophecies. But God opens the eyes so that they can recognize Jesus (Luke 24:31), and so God opens the hearts to believe the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). Indeed, God "opened" their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

We need faith to believe the resurrection (as we saw last week).

We need God to open our hearts to believe the prophecies concerning Jesus (as we saw tonight).

"And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, 'The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon.' And they [began] to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread (**Luke 24:33-35**).

May we go from this place and relate the experience of our own eyes being opened to understand the Scriptures to others who need to hear.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 15, 2001 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.