**Monday Evening Bible Study**

**May 15, 2023 – Luke 24:44-53**

Immediate Context

Luke 23:26-49 The Crucifixion of Jesus

Luke 23:50-56 The Burial of Jesus

Luke 24:1-12 The Resurrection of Jesus

Luke 24:13-35 The Walk to Emmaus

**Luke 24:36-49 Jesus appears to his disciples**

**Luke 24:50-53 The Ascension of Jesus**

The Servant Songs

The servant songs are five songs in the Book of Isaiah written about a certain “servant of YHWH.” YHWH calls the servant to lead the nations, but the servant is horribly abused by them. In the end, the servant is rewarded. The last song doesn’t mention the servant; therefore, some scholars disregard it as a servant song.

**Isaiah 42:1–4 (NRSV)**

*1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.*

**Isaiah 49:1–6 (NRSV)**

*1 Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother’s womb he named me. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” 4 But I said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God.” 5 And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”*

**Isaiah 50:4–11 (NRSV)**

*4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. 7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up. 10 Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God? 11 But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.*

**Isaiah 52:13–53:12 (NRSV)**

*13 See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 Just as there were many who were astonished at him —so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— 15 so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. 1 Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. 4 Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. 9 They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. 11 Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

**Isaiah 61:1–3 (NRSV)**

*1 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.*

The Text **Luke 24:44–53 (NRSV)**

44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” 50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Key Words

**HE SAID TO THEM –** “He” is Jesus and “Them” are the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them (see v. 33).

**WHILE I WAS STILL WITH YOU –** Isn’t Jesus with them right now? Jesus has just appeared to them and demonstrated his presence by eating food in their presence. We get the impression the disciples are watching Jesus in stunned silence. Now Jesus takes the next step in the revelatory process, first reminding the disciples of what he said to them earlier—and then helping them to understand the scriptures—scriptures that speak of the Messiah suffering and rising from the dead on the third day (v. 45) scriptures that say that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem (v. 47).

There’s no mention of which scriptures Jesus opens their minds to understand. There is no single Old Testament scripture that incorporates all the three major themes of verses 46-47—three themes that will form the core of the church’s message:

1. The suffering and death of the Messiah
2. His resurrection on the third day; and
3. The proclamation of repentance and forgiveness to all nations.

There are, however, a number of Old Testament scriptures that address particular elements. Luke alludes to or quotes a number of these in the gospel of Luke and in Acts.

**Isaiah 53:7–8** (NRSV): *7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people.* (see Acts 8:32-35).

**Psalm 16:10** (NRSV): *10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.* (see Acts 2:27; 13:35).

**Hosea 6:2** (NRSV): *2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.* (see Luke 24:46).

**Isaiah 49:6** (NRSV): *6 he says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”* (see Luke 2:32; Acts 1:8, 13:47).

**Joel 2:32** (NRSV): *32 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.* (see Acts 2:21).

Other possibilities include Psalm 22, Psalm 31:5; Psalm 69; Psalm 110:1; Psalm 118:22-26; and Isaiah 11:10.

**PREACHED IN HIS NAME TO ALL THE NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM** – The proclamation is to begin in Jerusalem, but it will not be limited to Jerusalem. The disciples are to be Jesus’ “witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Prior to Jesus, the Jews assumed a centripetal model, with the world being drawn toward a central point, Jerusalem. After Jesus, the model reverses. The church begins its work in Jerusalem, but Jesus pushes it outward toward the nations of the world rather than pulling it inward, as before. Note the sequence: Jerusalem is the center. Judea is the province in which Jerusalem is located. Samaria is the adjoining province. And, finally, all the world will learn of Jesus and the salvation he came to offer.

The initial proclamation will take place on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem with Peter’s sermon (Acts 2), which will emphasize the three great themes of verses 46-47.

**YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS –** μάρτυρες, a witness, one who bears testimony, a person who sees something and can testify to the facts of the incident. This word came to mean martyr—those who were killed because of their Christian witness.

**WHAT MY FATHER PROMISED –** Jesus doesn’t reveal what the Father has promised here but in Acts 1:5 Jesus repeats the promise and reveals that the gift is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And a little later during Peter’s Pentecost sermon, he quotes the prophet Joel, “It will be in the last days, says God, that I will poiur out my Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28). Peter assures his listeners that they have seen this prophecy fulfilled in the sound of a violent wind, tongues of fire, and the glossolalia that they observed (Acts 2:1-13, 16)—all manifestations of the Spirit.

**CLOTHED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH –** δύναμιν meaning “power” from which we get the word “dynamite.” The power from on high is clearly a reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 9, Jesus sent out the disciples with “power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases” and told them to “preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.” Now they are to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. Only after they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit will they be able to do that effectively. Even after receiving the gift, they struggle with the “to all nations” part of their commission. Not until Peter’s rooftop vision and his encounter with Cornelius (Acts 10) and his report of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11) will the church really open its arms to Gentiles.

**HE LED THEM OUT AS FAR AS BETHANY** **–** Bethany is about two miles east of Jerusalem and is the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It’s interesting that a particular location is mentioned. Where is Jesus? On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

**HE BLESSED THEM –** εὐλόγησενfrom which we get the word “eulogy;” literally, “good words.” The prefix “εὐ” meaning “good” and the verb λέγω meaning “to say.” In reference to God, it means “to worship, to praise.” In reference to others, it refers to the bestowal of benefits from God; the opposite of “to curse.” Throughout the Bible, the content of what constitutes “blessing” varies, but includes such good things as vitality, health, longevity, fertility, land, prosperity, honor, and numerous progeny.

**CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN –** Notice the footnote here. Other ancient authorities lack “and was carried up into heaven.” If he was “carried up into heaven,” what is this in reference to? We call it the Ascension and this is Ascension Sunday. Luke, or an editor, is calling to mind two Old Testament passages: one from Genesis and one from 2 Kings.

In Genesis, we get a list of Adam’s descendants to Noah. And we hear about each person and how long they lived and who they had as children. And one after another, we hear “and he died.” But when it comes to Enoch, the pattern is broken. We learn “he was not more, because God took him.”

**Genesis 5:21–24 (NRSV)**

*21 When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. 23 Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.*

In 2 Kings 2, we have the story of Elijah, passing on the mantle of leadership to Elisha. Notice the location in this story.

**2 Kings 2:1–25 (NRSV)**

*1 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.” 4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. 5 The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.” 6 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. 7 Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. 8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” 10 He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” 11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. 12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. 13 He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. 15 When the company of prophets who were at Jericho saw him at a distance, they declared, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” They came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 16 They said to him, “See now, we have fifty strong men among your servants; please let them go and seek your master; it may be that the spirit of the Lord has caught him up and thrown him down on some mountain or into some valley.” He responded, “No, do not send them.” 17 But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, “Send them.” So they sent fifty men who searched for three days but did not find him. 18 When they came back to him (he had remained at Jericho), he said to them, “Did I not say to you, Do not go?” 19 Now the people of the city said to Elisha, “The location of this city is good, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful.” 20 He said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him. 21 Then he went to the spring of water and threw the salt into it, and said, “Thus says the Lord, I have made this water wholesome; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it.” 22 So the water has been wholesome to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke. 23 He went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, “Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!” 24 When he turned around and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. 25 From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and then returned to Samaria.*