

Luke 24 – Our Tame God

Hook (1005-1007) – Do you hope for a better future? Does your family? Does our society? If so, what do we place our hope in? Science and Technology? Government? The continual improvement of human nature? How do you define a better future? Do you think that God will play a role?

The Resurrection shows God at His wildest, destroying the last great enemy of man and shattering the paradigm of what can and cannot be done.

Merriam-Webster.com defines tame as “reduced from a state of native wildness especially so as to be tractable and useful to humans”. Do we want God to be tame?

We try to make Him fit our expectations We fail to obey	Do we follow a tame God?	We refuse to see and believe His words and deeds
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Book (1007-1010) – Luke 24:13-31

Look (1010-1040)

We try to make Him fit our expectations

VV 13-14 – These two disciples were not members of the eleven but of the 120 other followers of Jesus. After celebrating the Passover Sabbath they were traveling back to their village, Emmaus, about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. In church tradition it has been associated with the village of Kubeibeh. They were discussing the remarkable things they had seen and heard during this remarkable Passover.

The two were probably friends and were traveling together because it was safer and more enjoyable than traveling alone. Because they were two, however, they could also legally prove a fact in Jewish law, which required the testimony of two or three witnesses in court. Jesus had previously appeared only to women, and their testimony may not have been considered reliable, but now He appeared to two men; legal proof of His resurrection noted in Scripture. Two witnesses, Simeon and Anna, had attested to His birth and two now attested to His resurrection.

VV 15-16 – The resurrected Jesus approached and walked along beside them. They had probably known Jesus for most of His ministry and therefore would have recognized Him instantly had they not been prevented (*κρατέω krateō* – *to hold or restrain*) from doing so.

VV 17-18 – Jesus asked them what they were talking about. On hearing this question, they stopped walking and stood still in sadness, thinking about the death of their Master. Cleopas next asked Jesus, whom he still did not recognize, how he could be coming from Jerusalem and did not about the famous events which had just happened there. Tradition suggests that Cleopas is Jesus’ uncle and Simeon’s father, and that he became a leader in the Jerusalem church. We cannot be sure if he is the same man as Clopas in John 19:25.

VV 19-24 – Jesus asked Cleopas what things he was referring to, and Cleopas told the story.

1. He referred to Jesus as a mighty prophet. Calling Jesus a prophet was not incorrect as much as it was incomplete. Jesus prophesied mighty truths of the Father, but He was and is also the Lord of Lords.
2. He blamed the Jewish leaders for His death. Many people believed that the Romans, not the Sanhedrin, were to blame for Jesus’ execution, but the followers of Christ had no such illusions.
3. He shared his disappointment, that Jesus did not restore Israel as was predicted of the coming Messiah.

4. He told of the surprise report of the women who reported that the grave was empty and Jesus was alive.
5. Others saw the tomb and saw that it was empty but did not see Jesus.

The travelers wanted God to fit their expectations of restoring an earthly kingdom; freeing Israel from Roman domination and making it the leading nation as prophesied in the Old Testament. They saw the human hand, but not the divine one, in His death.

Illustration

Stephen is my political advisor and he reads voraciously about the art and science of contemporary politics. We were talking yesterday with Tony Reynoso about the GOP's chances in the 2016 election. Tony seemed melancholy about the chances of a Republican victory and Stephen suggested that if we have a revival in America, conservatives would have a better chance of winning. He may be right, but we want a revival in our land not for political victory, but for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

The goal of the Quran and many other religions, the goal of political parties, and the goal of many individuals is a just society on earth. The goal of much fiction, such as the Lord of the Rings, is a just society on earth. God's goal is the final destruction of sin in the universe, resulting in all creation being restored to perfect communion with Him. A just society on earth is merely a side effect.

Discussion Questions/Application

What are your expectations of God? What is your goal for yourself? For society? What do you do when God does not fulfill your expectations?

We refuse to see and believe His words and deeds

VV 25-26 – Jesus gave them a firm rebuke for refusing to understand the words of the prophets and the mission of the Messiah.

V27 – The men still did not recognize Jesus, but in His kindness and patience He explained to them all of the things that He had explained to them so many times before.

Why did Matthew apply Isaiah 7:14 to Jesus? Why did he apply Jeremiah 31:15 to Herod's slaughter of the innocents? Why did he apply Hosea 11:1 to the Holy Family's flight to Egypt? None of these unequivocally applied to the birth of Christ, but the Apostle used them anyway.

If these and other prophecies applied clearly to Jesus, why did He not use them to explain to the Jewish leaders who He was? Instead Jesus told them that His witness was true because two people testified to their truth, himself and the Father (John 8:13-18). Since the Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't go to the Father and ask Him as easily as they could another man (or so they thought), Jesus answer was tantamount to saying "Believe my words because I said so!" Later He said "If you don't believe in me because of my words, at least believe because of my works (John 10:38)."

If these and other prophecies applied clearly to Jesus, why did Paul not see Jesus in them from the beginning? Why did it take a Road to Damascus experience to convince him of the truth of Jesus? When Paul was asked why he believed, he never answered "because the Tanakh led me to it." He always answered "because I met Jesus."

This is not to say that Matthew and the other New Testament writers were wrong in applying these Old Testament passages to the life of Christ. Rather it is to say that only after accepting Jesus can one look into the Tanakh (Law, Writings and Prophets) and see how they applied to Him. The disciples' problem on the road to Emmaus was not that they did not believe the Old Testament and its prophecies of Jesus but that they did not believe Him and therefore interpret the Old Testament in light of His life and teachings.

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions/Application

What is God doing in your life? What is He doing in our church? Do you know? Do you care? Are you too afraid to answer for fear of being wrong?

We fail to obey

VV 28-29 – Jesus was testing their character. Did they care about hospitality to strangers? If so, they would ask Him to stay with them since it was getting dark. He was also testing their faith. Were they thankful for the magnificent teaching they had just received? Did they understand it?

During His earthly ministry Jesus told the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which the sheep were commended and the goats condemned for how they treated others and how they treated Him (Matthew 25:31-46). These disciples were given the opportunity to demonstrate which group they were in. Even though they did not recognize Jesus, they were true to Him, and invited Him to stay.

V30 – Jesus came in to stay, blessed the food, and began serving it.

V31 – As a great reward for their faithfulness, Cleopas and his companion’s eyes were open and they recognized Jesus. Perhaps as He served the bread they finally saw His nail scarred hands and that was the clue to Jesus’ true identity. He then vanished before their eyes.

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions/Application

Do we know what God wants us to do? Do we read the news while intending to do something about it? Do we obey?

Took (1040-1045) – Ultimately we follow a tame God because we want to. Humans desperately want to be in charge of the universe, and the fact that we are not galls our prideful souls. However the real God is not tame. We lose much of life in a futile attempt to make Him less than He is, and make us more than we are.

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Verdict – What do you want them to DO as a result of the truths they have just received?

1. Think hard about our expectations for what the God and cannot, or will and will not, do.
2. Talk to your family and friends, learn what God is doing in their lives, and help them to accomplish His will.
3. Spend time discovering what God is doing in our church and our community, and join Him in His work.
4. Read the newspaper, TV or internet news, see what God is doing in the world, and do something about it.

Additional Reading – MDHarrisMD.com.

Closing prayer