

EASTER SUNDAY INTERLUDE
Thriving In God's Plan For Our Troubled Era
(Luke 24:13-49 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We celebrate Christ's resurrection today, but the current troubled era can make it seem hard for us to rejoice:

(1) We face trouble at the international level: "(M)ost people . . . trust institutions – particularly media and academia – that are increasingly staffed by people whose ideology compels them believe the weaker party is necessarily oppressed, and the oppressed side is necessarily righteous" even if it is "Hamas" whose "leaders pledge to continue committing similar attacks" like Oct. 7 "whenever they have the opportunity . . . (On the other hand,) Israel isn't about to strike a deal that leaves open the possibility of another 40 years of attacks from neighbors whose goal is the destruction of the Jewish state." ("Making coexistence possible," Republican-American, March 19, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) We face trouble at the national level: Progressive activists want to get "White churches" to pay Black Americans slavery reparations. Warner Todd Huston's story, "Religious Leaders Officially Demand Reparations from 'White Churches': 'Time for You to Wash Our Feet'" (msn.com, citing The Western Journal, March 26, 2024) reported it, and activist Danielle Williams, director of Prophetic Resistance Boston, asserted, "'Black people, the descendants of slavery, have been washing the feet of our oppressors for well over 400 years . . . Now it's time for you to wash our feet . . . (W)e want our reparations. We want it now.'" (Melissa Fine, "'We want it now': Boston religious activists demand 'White churches' pay \$15 B reparations to Blacks," March 25, 2024; bizpacreview.com)

(3) We face trouble at the state level: "With Connecticut full of repeat criminal offenders on the loose" who've "realized that government won't punish them, almost anyone might have a clue about where social disintegration is coming from. But" legislators are afraid to address this crime problem because "misconduct among young people is, along with poverty, racially disproportionate. So instead of considering why poverty policy long has failed," lawmakers "have decided that Connecticut should just prevent the public from learning about misconduct, as if what people don't know can't hurt them. That premise is straight out of the platform of the totalitarian regime in George Orwell's '1984': 'Ignorance is strength.' But the public's ignorance is strength only for the regime." (Chris Powell, "Crime without consequence hastens decline; and critical questions lacking," *Ibid.*, March 19, 2024, p. 6A)

(4) We face trouble at the local level: "Much of the insurance industry left Hartford years ago, and the city is now in a state of crime-ridden destitution . . . (A)verage rent is now \$1,501, for an apartment that's just 776 square feet on average. If one wants to leave the city," . . . (t)he average home in Connecticut is now \$378, 114, 10% higher than last year . . . Connecticut has some of the highest utility rates in the nation," but "Eversource and United Illuminating control more than 80% of the market," and "(b)oth companies filed to raise prices on customers this February, despite making increased profits from last year . . . People are leaving – lots of people. Retirees . . . for warmer waters . . . young people (. . . needed in any economy) leave for better markets. An opioid crisis is sweeping the state . . ." (Matthew Biadun, "Connecticut's political monopoly must end," *Ibid.*, March 13, 2024, p. 8A)

Need: *So we ask, "How can we joyfully celebrate Christ's resurrection in our current troubled era?"*

- I. The day that Jesus victoriously rose from the dead, His disciples were conversely burdened with gloom:**
 - A. Later on the day that Jesus rose from the dead, two of His disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, conversing with one another over the recent trauma of Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, burial and a puzzling report by the women who had visited Jesus' tomb that He had allegedly risen from the dead, Luke 24:1-12, 14.
 - B. As they "conversed" (*homileo*, Abbott-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 316) and "examined, disputed" (*sunzeteo*, *Ibid.*, p. 429) about these matters in deep discussion about them, Jesus Himself drew near to them walking along the same road, but His two disciples were kept from recognizing Him, Luke 24:15-16.
 - C. Jesus then asked the two men what they were "exchanging" (*antiballo*, *Ibid.*, p. 41) in avid conversation with each other, a question that led the disciples to "be made to stand still" (*estathesan*, aorist **passive** indicative of *histemi*, "stand (still)," Wm. D. Mounce, The Analyt. Lex. to the Grk. N. T., 1993, p. 218, 254) with "gloomy faces" (*skuthropos*, *Ibid.*, Abbott-Smith, p. 411), Luke 24:17 NIV. Jesus' question caused these men to stop walking and to feel gloomy as they faced the full, shocking impact of Christ's recent sufferings and death.
- II. In reply, the two disciples explained that their hope that Jesus might have been the Messiah had been crushed by His recent traumatic crucifixion, death, and burial followed by His empty tomb, v. 18-24.**
- III. Jesus then overcame the disciples' gloom by explaining God's edifying plan that was fulfilled in these shocking events that had been predicted in Old Testament Scripture prophecies, Luke 24:25-27:**

- A. Christ reproved the men for not believing Scripture prophecies on Messiah's death and glorification, v. 25-26.
 - B. Then, beginning with the books of Moses and continuing through all the prophets and the rest of the Old Testament, He "explained, expounded" (*dierneneuo*, Ibid., 115) unto them these things about Himself, v. 27.
 - C. As the travelers drew near to Emmaus, the two disciples urged Jesus to stay with them since it was late in the day, so He entered the house as if He would plan to stay the night with them, Luke 24:28-29.
 - D. However, when they sat down to eat, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the others, what He had often done in His earthly ministry, and they recognized Him. Jesus then vanished from view, v. 30-31.
 - E. At that point, the two disciples realized that they had been greatly moved in heart by Jesus' exposition of the Scriptures, so they realized that He was risen and rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples, v. 32-35.
- IV. This same emphasis on God's Word occurs in the rest of this Luke 24 chapter on Christ's resurrection:**
- A. In Luke 24:1-9 when the women had gone to the tomb, and the angels appeared to them, in fear they looked down to the ground, but the angels encouraged them to believe He had risen in accord with His prophecies.
 - B. In Luke 24:36-48 after the disciples of Emmaus had returned to Jerusalem and told the other disciples that Jesus had revealed Himself to them, He reappeared in their midst, giving physical proof of His resurrection, but then telling of His death, burial, resurrection and the proclamation of His Gospel from Scripture prophecy.

Lesson: *Jesus led His disciples to overcome the gloom they faced in witnessing His suffering, death, burial, and empty tomb with the edifying truths of Scripture prophecies that had foretold these events in God's edifying plan.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we similarly handle our troubled era by adjusting to the edifying Bible prophecies of God's plan for our era that we might joyfully celebrate Christ's resurrection today.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) To know how to apply this sermon, we note from Bible prophecy God's edifying **general plan** for today: (a) We know from past studies that Revelation 3:14-22 predicted our era of Church History that runs from about 1950 to the rapture of the Church. (b) We have also learned that Revelation 3:21 has God's promise that He will give an overcomer(s?) edifying influence "in" His throne, a unique phrase pointing to Revelation 7:17 where Jesus "in" His Father's throne will nurture believers who come out of the future Great Tribulation that occurs after the rapture, and He will give them spiritual balm by Bible exposition like He did for the disciples en route to Emmaus. (c) Revelation 7:17 in turn alludes to Revelation 21:4-6 that predicts blessings of the future universe in eternity. All these passages together then imply that we believers today will face a "mini-Great Tribulation," explaining our troubled era, but that God will use an overcomer(s?) akin to Christ's ministry to Great Tribulation saints to expound Scripture to afflicted people in our era, and God will bless those who heed His Word with a degree of blessing regardless of the era's trials.

(2) So, to apply this "overcomer" ministry, we turn to Scripture to address the **issues of concern** noted in our introduction: (a) On the Israel-Gaza War, Daniel 9:26 predicted that after Messiah would be executed, after Christ's death, Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, what was fulfilled in A. D. 70, and until the "end," what occurs at Christ's Second Coming after the future Great Tribulation, Israel would face "war" and "desolations," Daniel 9:26. Today's Israel-Gaza war is part of that "war" and "desolations" time, explaining why Israel faces relentless conflicts. (b) On talk by activists that "White churches" pay reparations to Black Americans for past slavery, (i) Ezekiel 18:1-24 declares that sons are not responsible for the sins of their fathers, and since no one today is guilty of our nation's past slavery, reparations today are not just. (ii) However, we can address poverty Biblically: (+) Proverbs 16:16a NIV states: "How much better to get wisdom than gold . . .," and financial guru Dave Ramsey reports the vast majority of American millionaires did not inherit their wealth but earned it. Thus, the poor need wisdom, so I recommend Dave Ramsay's books, "Financial Peace University" and "Baby Steps Millionaires" to the Boston activists. (+) The way to apply Mr. Ramsay's instructions takes self-discipline, what is available by salvation through faith in Christ coupled with a following life of dependence on the Holy Spirit (John 3:16; Galatians 5:16-23) (c) On the social disintegration that state officials avoid announcing and the economic decline of major cities, rising housing and utility costs, people leaving the state over high living costs, limited markets and the opioid crisis, Scripture directs that homes should consist of a male father and a female mother who are married and live together in a home, rearing their children for God, Genesis 2:20-24 with Ephesians 5:22-6:4. The head of household is to lead the home and work to earn a living for the family (1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12), what solves all sorts of social and economic problems!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we heed God's prophecy for our era to enjoy His blessing and rejoice in Jesus' resurrection.