

‘Inspired to Follow: Art and the Bible Story’

Session 16: The Resurrection

Luke 24: 25-35

²¹ ‘But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’

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.

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(Avoid responding to one another, but simply listen, as each person shares.)

2. After the round robin, anyone in the group can then respond to the question:

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Session 17: The Ascension

Acts 1: 1-12

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. **‘This’, he said, ‘is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’**

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, **‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’** ⁷ He replied, **‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’** ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, **‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’**

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away.

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Session 18: Pentecost

Acts 2:1-39 (extracts)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, **‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that ... in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’** ¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, **‘What does this mean?’** ¹³ But others sneered and said, **‘They are filled with new wine.’**

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: **‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ...”**

²² **‘You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power ... ²³ this man ... you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. ... ³⁶ Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’** ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said ..., **‘Brothers, what should we do?’** ³⁸ Peter said to them, **‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’**

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Session 19: Death of Stephen

Acts 6:8 – 7:60 (extracts)

⁸ Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen ... stood up and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they secretly instigated some men to say, **‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’** ¹² They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. ¹³ They set up false witnesses who said, **‘This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.’** ¹⁵ And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

⁷ Then the high priest asked him, **‘Are these things so?’** ² And Stephen replied: **‘Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, “Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.” ⁴ Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. ...**

⁵¹ ‘You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are for ever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. ⁵³ You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.’

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ **‘Look,’** he said, **‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’** ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, **‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’** ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, **‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’** When he had said this, he died.

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Session 20: Saint Peter

Acts 10:30-48

³⁰ Cornelius replied, **‘Four days ago at this very hour, at three o’clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. ³¹ He said, “Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³² Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.” ³³ Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say.’**

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: **‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’**

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ **‘Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’** ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

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Session 21: Saint Paul

Acts 9:1-19

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, **‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’** ⁵ He asked, **‘Who are you, Lord?’** The reply came, **‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’** ⁶ **But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’** ⁷ The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, **‘Ananias.’** He answered, **‘Here I am, Lord.’** ¹¹ The Lord said to him, **‘Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’**

¹³ But Ananias answered, **‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.’** ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’

¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

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Session 22: The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-5, 9-11, 22-27, & 22:1-5

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, **‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’** **10** And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. **11** It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. **23** And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. **24** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. **25** Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there. **26** People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. **27** But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. **3** Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; **4** they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5** And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

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