

– Additional Notes –
Luke 24:21 – The Walk to Emmaus

February 10, 2005

Hi Bob,

Fortunately, I've already done the research on this. Here is my analysis from about a year ago. Some parts are fairly complicated and you might need to read it slowly or more than once. Enjoy! I have two versions of the Greek-English Interlinear in book form: The Interlinear KJV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English based on the Textus Receptus with Lexicon and Synonyms by George Ricker Berry and the Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English Interlinear Translation by Alfred Marshall. I rely a lot on e-sword to identify Strong's numbers for both the Greek and Hebrew words. These are lots of other resources one can use to analyze scripture. I have only a few of them.

This post is another little piece in my continuing study dealing with the issues of Passion Week. One of the issues between the traditional understanding of a Friday crucifixion with Jesus in the tomb 1.5 days and the Wednesday crucifixion with Jesus in the tomb for 3 full days is the various references to the "three days" or the "third day" in various places in the Gospels. Luke 24:21 is central to this issue in that the standard translations (KJV & NIV in particular) seem to state that the walk to Emmaus was on the third day from when the death of Jesus was accomplished. But if Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and in the tomb for the next three days and nights, then the walk to Emmaus must have been after the three days had passed. That is the focus of this missive.

The time element of "three days" is a key part in understanding how long Jesus was in the tomb. One of those texts is Luke 24:21 where Jesus meets the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and opens to them the prophecies concerning Himself in all the scriptures. Here is a quick look at the Greek in Luke 24:21. I present first the Nestle's Greek, which is the Greek the New International Version (NIV) is based on and is considered one of the most reliable available today, followed by the English Interlinear for the NIV, followed by the NIV itself.

24:21 ημεις δε ηλπιζομεν οτι αυτος εστιν ο μελλων λυτρουσθαι τον ισραηλ αλλα γε και συν πασιν τουτοις τριτην ταυτην ημεραν αγει αφ ου ταυτα εγενετο

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24:21 But we were hoping that he it is(was) the one being about to redeem Israel; but also with all these things third this day(this is the third day) it leads since these things happened.

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24:21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

Because the King James Version (KJV) was translated so many years before our modern translations way back in 1611, that translation probably had at least a subconscious influence on the understanding and bias of many of those who have translated our modern versions. Here is the same verse from the Greek Textus Receptus which is the Greek version relied on by the committee that translated the KJV, followed by the Interlinear for the KJV, then the KJV itself.

24:1 ημεις δε ηλπιζομεν οτι αυτος εστιν ο μελλων λυτρουσθαι τον ισραηλ αλλα γε συν πασιν τουτοις τριτην ταυτην ημεραν αγει σημερον αφ ου ταυτα εγενετο

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24:21 But we were hoping he it is who is about to redeem Israel. But then with all these things third this day brings to-day since these things came to pass.

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24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

There are two differences in this verse between Nestle's Greek and the Textus Receptus versions. First, Nestle's Greek includes the word και (and) at the beginning of the second sentence of the verse which the Textus Receptus lacks. Second, the

Textus Receptus includes the word **σημερον** (this (very) day) which Nestle's Greek lacks. Thayer's Greek-English lexicon identifies the meanings of **σημερον** as (1) this (very) day, and (2) what has happened today. Additionally, Strong's Concordance identifies that **σημερον** is presumed to be the compound of the article **η / με / ρα** (the) (**ημερα**) which means this day or night current or just past. The primary meaning is related to "the day, used of the natural day, or the interval between sunrise and sunset, as distinguished from and contrasted with the night." The meaning of "the third day" in Luke 24:21 seems to refer to three full days as Jesus suggested in Matthew 12:38-40 rather than one full day and parts of two days on either side of that day as explained by the concept of inclusive reckoning where any part of a day counts as a full day. Interestingly, neither of these variations seem to make any difference in the final wording of either the N.V. or KJV translations.

One other difference in the transliterated versions is how each renders the word **αγει**. It is translated to mean "it leads" in Nestle's Greek text and "brings" in the Textus Receptus. Notice the difference in the interlinear translations:

NIV: **τουτοις τριτην ταυτην ημεραν αγει αφ ου ταυτα εγενετο** third this day(this is the third day) it leads since these things happened.

KJV: **τριτην ταυτην ημεραν αγει σημερον αφ ου ταυτα εγενετο** third this day brings to-day since these things came to pass.

Both translations seem to incorporate the concept for **αγει** into the prior phrase **τριτην ταυτην ημεραν** (third this day is) and render this portion of the text as "this is the third day since these things were done." Thus, **αγει** seems to be the key action word in this sentence.

Relying on the KJV, Strong's Concordance identifies the word "is" in the phrase "to day is the third day" to have the root word **αγω** which is identified as follows: "A primary verb; properly to lead; by implication to bring, drive, (reflexively) go, pass (time), or (figuratively) induce:—be, bring (forth), carry (let) go, keep, lead away, be open." It should be noted from this that the meaning closest to a time value for the root word for **αγει** in this list of descriptive terms is to "pass". The "pass" here does not imply something in the past, but something that is passing or that has just passed.

Thayer's Greek-English lexicon identifies that **αγε** is an interjection and is in the imperative form, such as go to, come! or come now!

The meaning closest to the time frame aspect of the word **αγει**, then, would not be that this is the third day since these things happened, but that three days have passed since these things happened. This is significant in that it tells us when the counting of the three days should begin and end. If "this is the third day since these things were done" and this is the first day of the week as stated in Luke 24:1, then today (the first day of the week) is the third day, yesterday (the seventh day of the week, the weekly Sabbath) was the second day in the sequence, and Friday was the first day in the sequence. However, if "three days have passed since all these things were done" and this is the first day of the week as stated in Luke 24:1, then yesterday (the seventh day of the week, the weekly Sabbath) was the third day in the sequence, Friday was the second day in the sequence, and Thursday was the first day in the sequence. This latter understanding is supported by the definition of **σημερον** in Luke 24:21 to mean either current or just passed.

The meanings of Greek words are often determined by the context, so it is important to note the setting of this discussion. The events under discussion in Luke 24:21—the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus—were not completed on this day, but were completed in the just completed past. A careful reading of Luke 24 shows that the disciples on the road to Emmaus understood that three days had passed since the crucifixion took place. Luke 24:22-23 makes it clear that they know about the resurrection, but they place the resurrection after the reference to the "three days". Thus, the words **αγει σημερον** in the Textus Receptus taken together must mean that the time factor under discussion for the crucifixion of Jesus has definitely been just recently completed three days ago.

The Modern Language Bible/New Berkeley Version (MLB/NBV) seems to have captured the essence of the time element better than either the KJV or N.V. in this passage. Here is how that version reads:

"Moreover, three days have already passed since all those events occurred." Luke 24:21, MLB/NBV

Thus, the disciples on the road to Emmaus identify that three days have already passed since Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified, and they are now into the fourth day counting from the day Jesus died. This is in perfect agreement with what Jesus said in Matthew 12:38-40 that He would be in the heart of the Earth three days and three nights just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. Moreover, this is in perfect harmony with the Wednesday crucifixion and the

resurrection at the close of the weekly Sabbath rather than the traditional teaching of a Sunday morning resurrection.

That's how I see it. Hope this helps.

Cordially,
Jerry

----- Original Message -----

Luke 24:21

Hi Jerry,

Another innocent if not loaded question for you.

How do you deal with Luke 24:21? Could it be that the translators also changed the words a little when compared to the original Greek?

I wish I had some of your resource materials. I have e-Sword, but I can't seem to bring up the Interlinear text feature that I thought it had.

Anyway, hopefully you can give me your take on this.

Thanks
Bob