

THE RESURRECTION ACCOUNTS

Adult Bible Study
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- I. Introduction - When we look at the resurrection accounts in the four Gospels there is an overall agreement as to the central fact: Jesus Christ rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples. Nevertheless, the accounts are neither systematic nor are they complete. The accounts make no such claims for themselves. They are resurrection stories which tell us the truth about what happened but did not tell every single thing that happened and did not always preserve a definite order. Likewise, certain accounts emphasized details that other accounts either glossed over or omitted entirely. Thus as we sit down to compare the accounts certain questions emerge. Before looking at the individual resurrection accounts we might do well to make an overview of all the accounts and deal with some of the questions and problems that emerge. The following apparent differences¹ emerge:
 - A. How many women went out to the tomb that morning,
 1. **one** - *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.* (Jn 20:1)
 2. **two** - *Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre.* (Matt 28:1), or
 3. **three** - *16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen².* (Mk 16:1)?
 4. **More than three** - *It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments...and returning from the tomb they told all this to the*

¹They are called apparent due to the fact that upon further consideration many of these differences are contradictory but complimentary. This shall become clearer as we examine each one.

²Notice the difference too in the time of day - had the sun risen or was it before dawn as John says or was it toward the dawn as Mark says? It can be seen that there is not a contradiction per se here since the dawn likely happened on the way to the tomb and each evangelist emphasizes a different point regarding the specific time based on either the start of the journey or the destination.

eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. (Lk 23:54-56; 24:9-10)

5. Solutions:

- a. One solution here is to recall that neither John's Gospel nor Matthew's absolutely deny that three women went to the tomb that day. They simply do not mention three whereas Mark does. John especially wishes to focus on Mary Magdalene and may have found it unnecessary to mention the others.
- b. Note especially in John's account that although he explicitly mentions only Mary Magdalene, he indirectly refers to the other when he quotes Mary as saying: *They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.* (Jn 20:2) Thus Mary refers to the others when she says "We."
- c. That Matthew only mentions two many simply mean that he only knew of two or that he only saw fit to mention the two by name. Perhaps his readers would not have known Solome whereas they did know the other two. This of course is only a conjecture. Luke implies that there were other women also involved at least with the informing of the Apostles
- d. The likely fact then is that three went to the tomb. Then, discovering the tomb was opened, Mary Magdalene (and perhaps the others) informed Peter and John of this fact. Peter and John visited the tomb due to this information and found it empty. They then left the scene and gathered with the other apostles. Meanwhile, first Mary Magdalene, and then the other women (exactly how many is unclear) saw Jesus resurrected. They then ran to the Eleven and told them this.

B. How many angels did they see there that morning,

1. **one -**

- a. *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.*(Matt 28:2)
- b. *And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed.*(Mk 16:5)

2. **or two**

- a. *While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?* (Lk 24:4);
- b. *But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at*

the feet. (Jn 20:12)

3. Solutions
 - a. Matthew and Mark's mention of one angel need not be seen as an absolute denial that there were two as described in Luke and John.
 - b. Another solution is simply to acknowledge the discrepancies in the accounts but underscore the fact that the number of women and the number of angels is *not* the central point. The point is that the tomb was discovered empty by the women and they interacted at some point with one or more angels and were instructed to tell the apostles that Jesus had arisen.
 - c. Mary Magdalene saw two angels within the tomb whereas the women saw only one. This could be due to two reasons
 - (1) The time frame is different. Remember, Mary had gone to Peter and John and returned.
 - (2) The Women went into the tomb whereas Mary peered into the tomb. This could have affected their angle of view etc.
 - d. Luke's description quoted here seems to imply that the angels were outside the tomb but verse three actually indicates that the women were within the tomb when the angles stood by them.
 - e. But were the angels sitting where the body had been or did they stand alongside the women? Again, both could be true. First they were sitting and at once came and stood by the women.
 - f. The likely scenario is that several angels were encountered: One rolled back the stone, two sat at the head and the feet and then perhaps moved to stand alongside the women.

C. Did the women

1. **run to the other disciples and tell what they had seen**
 - a. *Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. (Mt 28:8)*
 - b. *and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. (Lk 24:9)*
2. **Or did they say nothing out of fear**
 - a. *And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid. (Mk 16:8)*
3. There really isn't a conflict here if we read on. In the verses that follow ³ Mark describes how Mary Magdalene does in fact tell the apostles. Rather than conflicting with the other texts, Mark may merely supply additional detail about the startled nature of the women which led them to a momentary

³Mk 16:10 *She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

delay in the fulfillment of the mandate to go to the Apostles.

4. The likely scenario is this. The women who went out to the tomb first discovered it empty. Mary and perhaps others informed Peter and John of the opened tomb. Peter & John investigated and then went to the other Apostles. Shortly afterward the women were startled by angels who instructed them to inform the apostles of the resurrection but instead they fled in fear. Mary Magdalene however saw Jesus alive and then went to the apostles for the second time. Very close to the same time the other women, according to Matthew's gospel also encountered the risen Lord⁴ who reassured them. Thus they stopped their flight and went also to the apostles as the angel and now Jesus had instructed them.

D. Did the Apostles react

1. **With urgent response to the women** - *So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran (Jn 20:2-4)*
2. **Or did they dismiss the women's words** - *and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. (Lk 24:9-11)*
3. There really is not a conflict here if we hold as we have that there are two visits that took place that morning. The first to Peter and John. The second visit to the eleven altogether.
4. The likely scenario was that the second visit wherein the women described their encounter with the risen Lord was greeted with incredulity by some of the apostles. Luke doesn't say all eleven disbelieved but merely says them. It is unlikely that John disbelieved since he is recorded as already believing in the resurrection out at the tomb.⁵

E. Were the disciples from Emmaus greeted with

1. **Belief** - *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said,*

⁴*So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (Matt 28:8-10)*

⁵*John 20:8 - Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.*

"The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Lk 24:33-35)

2. **Or disbelief** - *After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. (Mk 16:12-14)*
3. The time frame is probably important here as well as the fact that the evangelist selected their material. Thus Mark probably records the first reaction of the group and Luke records their later reaction.
4. The likely scenario is this: The two disciples returned to Jerusalem and went to the Eleven. At first the eleven disbelieved them just as they had the women. However, sometime later in the same day the Lord appeared to Peter who informed the other ten who then believed⁶. Thus the disciples from Emmaus were now told (perhaps by way of apology) that it was in indeed true that Jesus had risen.

F. Did Jesus see them first

1. **in Galilee**
 - a. *But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." (Mk 16:7)*
 - b. *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (Mt 28:9)*
2. **Or in Jerusalem** - *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. (Lk 24:33-36)*
3. In addressing this difference we must recall that the gospels are not written as chronological or complete histories. The evangelists selected events from among the many things Jesus said and did and may also have altered the order. John (20:30 & 21:25) explicitly states that his account is selective. Hence we ought not conclude that any one gospel completely details all the resurrection appearances. It is true Mark and Matthew speak only of appearances in Galilee. Thus these accounts might only include the angelic instructions to go to Galilee since that they did not intend to describe appearances elsewhere. Note also that Matthew and Luke are not clear as to the time frame of the appearances they describe. Luke and John however, set

⁶Note that it is the appearance to Peter that is an important source for faith in the others.

- the first appearance in Jerusalem and *are* rather clear that the day is the same day as the resurrection.
4. Hence we might reasonably conclude that the first appearance took place in Jerusalem and later appearances took place in Galilee.
 5. Yet we must admit, such a conclusion demands a precision of the accounts which we must admit they do not have.
 6. It does, however, help us to see that the accounts do not absolutely contradict each other either.
- G. Among the Apostles, did he appear
1. **to Peter first** - *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"* (Lk 24:34),
 2. **all eleven at once** - *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."...16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted.* (Mt. 28:10, 16)
 3. **the eleven minus Thomas** - *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."...24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.* (Jn 20:19, 24)
 4. There seems to be a good case for the fact that the Lord appeared first to Peter even though we do not have a direct account of this appearance in the scriptures. Nevertheless the Gospel of Luke makes mention of it,⁷ Paul also records it⁸. So it seems a pretty good case can be made that Peter did see the risen Lord before the other apostles.
 5. These references also help us recall that the gospel accounts are selective in terms of which resurrection appearances they report. Thus, as we read the various accounts, we get from each of them only a part of the full picture (see John 20:30). According to Paul there were appearances to Peter, to five hundred disciples, and to James. These appearances are not mentioned in the gospels at all and the details of these appearances are left to our imagination.
 6. It also follows that we do not need to see the accounts cited above as conflicting. They may well be describing different appearances. The likely

⁷*And they [the disciples traveling to Emmaus] rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"*(24:33-34).

⁸*[The Lord] was raised the third day in accordance with the scriptures...he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time...Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles* (1 Cor 15:3ff).

scenario was that Peter encountered him first among the 12 (though probably after the women and the disciples from Emmaeus). Later that day the other nine saw him. But Thomas would have to wait a full week before he saw Jesus. The account from Matthew above is of a later appearance to the eleven up in Galilee.

7. That Matthew and Mark don't mention the Jerusalem appearances at all need not surprise us. None of the gospels alone mentions all the appearances. This might also explain why Matthew and Mark emphasize the angelic instruction to go to Galilee. They merely cut to those scenes and pass over the Jerusalem appearances.
- H. Did Jesus appear to them first
 1. **in a room in Jerusalem** - *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."* (Jn 20:19)
 2. **On a mountaintop in Galilee** - *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."...16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted.* (Mt. 28:10, 16)
 3. Solution: Again, we need not place these texts at odds with one another. Most likely they are describing different appearances. He first appeared to them in Jerusalem and later in Galilee. Matthew does not mention the Jerusalem appearances but that does not mean he denies them either.
- I. Lastly, did Jesus ascend
 1. **on Easter Sunday**
 - a. *But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb...That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem...And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"...As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them....Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.* (Lk 24:selected verses)
 - b. *And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen...And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them...Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him*

after he had risen....19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mk 16:selected verses)

2. **forty days later -** *To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me...And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (Acts 1:3,9)*
3. Solution: At first glance the texts from Luke and Mark do seem to imply that the ascension was the same day as the resurrection. However, a closer look will show that they are rather vague as to the time frame. Mark begins the passage leading up to the ascension with the word "afterward." How long after the previous appearance is uncertain. Luke's passage is also vague regarding the time simply referring to the time frame as "then." However Acts (1:3,9) is quite specific that the time of the ascension was forty days later. Thus, Acts need not be seen to conflict with the gospel accounts; it merely supplies the details that are lacking in them. This case is made stronger when we note that Luke is generally accepted to be the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

II. General Thoughts and conclusions

- A. A danger in dealing with questions such as these is to get so focused on details, that we miss the most important message: Jesus is truly risen. Whatever differences occur in the individual gospel accounts, there is absolute agreement on the essential: the tomb was found empty and the risen Jesus actually appeared to numerous disciples.
- B. The catechism sets forth the clear base line. *The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary "witnesses to his Resurrection", but they are not the only ones - Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles (1 Cor 15:5). Given all these testimonies, Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 642-643).*
- C. We should not be surprised that there are some differences in the accounts. Even today, eyewitnesses of an event (especially an extraordinary one) often emphasize certain details and have slightly different recollections as to the particulars. This does not mean that the event did not happen. Likewise, given the various number of times Jesus appeared and the numerous people who saw him, we should not be surprised to find certain differences in the accounts. In this light the differences actually lend a credibility to the gospel accounts which do not try to paper them over but realistically report them.

III. Prelude in absurdity - What spectacle could be more ridiculous than armed soldiers keeping their eyes on a corpse?

- A. Mat 27:62 *Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'⁹*⁶⁴ Therefore order the sepulchre to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the sepulchre secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.
- B.
- C. Note:
1. The chief priests and the pharisees broke the sabbath and presented themselves before Pilate on Saturday morning:
 2. The enemies of Christ remembered his promise to rise though his disciples do not.
 3. The guard proved inadequate - Mat 28:2 *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.*
 4. They then conspire - Mat 28:11 *While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers¹³ and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed; and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.*

⁹e.g. John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he spoke of the temple of his body.... And Matt 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

IV. Eleven recorded appearances:

A. APPEARANCE ONE - The appearance to Mary Magdalen

1. John 20:10 *Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." 18 Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.*

2. Mary makes a journey from fear to faith. Here is a very general outline of the passage:

- a. Fearful Fretting - vv. 10-13
 - (1) Rea
- b. Faulty Finding - vv. 14-15
 - (1) Eyes - downcast and tearful - v. 14
 - (2) Ears - distorted and tense - v. 15
- c. Flamboyant Felicity - vv. 16-17
 - (1) Status quo ante - v. 16
 - (2) Summons - v. 17
- d. Fullness of Faith - v. 18

3. *Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father* - Mary's gesture of embracing the Lord and his reaction to it suggests that something has changed which Mary has not yet fully understood. She clings to him as he was. As if to say, Jesus it is you - let's take up where we were before the crucifixion. She sees Jesus of Nazareth alive again but she must now also see the Lord of glory. His crucifixion has led now to his glory. That is why Jesus speaks of his ascension.

- a. 2 Cor 5:16 *From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold,*

the new has come.¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

- b. He had to give the same lesson to his disciples who were too preoccupied with his human form by telling them it was expedient for him to leave.
 - (1) John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*
- 4. **go to my brethren** - This was the first time that he ever called the apostles brethren. It seems it took the passion, death and resurrection to accomplish this in fact:
 - a. Psalm 22:Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet--17 I can count all my bones -- they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots. 19 But thou, O LORD, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion, my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen! 22 I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! all you sons of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!
 - b. Rom 8:28 *We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; 34 who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?*
 - c. Heb 2:10 *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is*

not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

5. ***and say to them, I am ascending to my Father*** - He did not tell Mary to inform them that he had risen but that he was ascending. His purpose was not to stress that he had died and was now alive but that he was glorified and that this was the beginning of a whole new spiritual kingdom where he was to reign with the Father.
6. ***My Father and your Father*** - Jesus never said "our Father" as if the relation that He had to the Father was on the same basis as ours. Jesus sonship was by nature, ours is by adoption and membership in the body of Christ.
7. ***My God and your God*** - In terms of his human nature Christ can say, "My God." In terms of his divine nature such a phrase of course makes little sense. But scripture often speaks of Jesus in view of one nature or the other and the result is that the language is effected. Note for example that the scriptures attest that Jesus was raised and that he raised himself. This is not a contradiction since the first text refers to his human nature which had to receive resurrection and the second text refers to his divine nature which caused the resurrection -
 - a. *Acts 2:24 But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*
 - b. *Jn 10:18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.*"
8. ***I have seen the Lord*** - Mary's declaration shows that she has already made progress in understanding the new relationship she has with the risen Jesus. She does not say "I have seen Jesus" she calls him Lord. This is resurrection faith. To see the glory of Jesus and understand that he is the Lord of glory and the Word who is God.
 - a. *Phil 2: 5 b Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
9. The reaction of the others -
 - a. *Mk 16:11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.*
 - b. *Lk 24:11 but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*

- B. APPEARANCE TWO - the appearance to the women - Mat 28:8 *So they [the women] departed¹⁰ quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."*
1. *departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy* - If we harmonize this account with Mark the more exact fact is that the women first departed with fear and that joy came in a few moments after they saw the Lord.
 - a. Mk 16:8 - *And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.*
 2. *And behold, Jesus met them...Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren* - The appearance of Jesus and his instruction seem almost a repeat. The angel had just told them he was alive and that they should inform the brethren. But, knowing Mark's description of their initial fear helps explain that this appearance is meant to reassure the women as well as to grant them a vision of the risen Lord. With their fear addressed the women now joyfully embark on the mission the angel had originally sent them.
 3. *tell my brethren to go to Galilee and there they will see me.* - We spoke previously in these notes of the fact that the Apostles saw Jesus first in Jerusalem according to Luke and John. Thus these instructions from Jesus and the angel are presumably truncated by Matthew then. Since Matthew and Mark did not intend to cover the Jerusalem appearances, they presumably did not include fuller instructions from Jesus and the angel which would also lead them to Jerusalem appearances. See previous notes.
 4. The reaction of the disciples to the women's report:
 - a. *Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; 11 but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.* Lk 24:10-11
 - b. *She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.* Mk 16:10-11

¹⁰It seems likely that Mary Magdalene had stayed behind at the tomb where the Lord appeared to her first and shortly thereafter to the other women.

- C. Appearance Three - On the Emmaus Road Luke 24:13
That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.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 this happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning²³ and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even 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 him they did not see."²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further,²⁹ but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent."³⁰ So he went in to stay with them.³¹ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.³² And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.³³ They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"³⁴ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them,³⁵ who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"³⁶ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.



1. Here is an outline of the passage:
 - a. Entrance Rites - (the gathering) - vv. 13-17
 - b. Experience (telling the story) - vv. 18-24
 - c. Explanation (breaking open God's word and interpreting the story) - vv. 25-27
 - d. Eucharist (recognizing him in the breaking of the bread) - vv. 28-32
 - e. Excitement (going forth with joy to declare what has been heard and seen) - vv. 33-35
2. ***That very day*** - That is, the same day as the resurrection, Sunday.
3. ***going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem*** - Why are they leaving Jerusalem? Is this not a negative development? Notice that it is not merely that they are innocently leaving, completely unaware at what was about to take place. Their journey away from Jerusalem is another sign of a lack of faith in the resurrection. This is so for several reasons.
 - a. Jesus had promised he would rise again.¹¹ Though the enemies of Jesus remembered this¹², his own disciples did not. While we may understand the confusion and despair of the disciples it cannot be totally excused especially given Jesus' clear instructions and his credibility as one who worked wonders and even raised the dead to life.
 - b. Notice how these disciples already have indications of the resurrection. This is indicated in the text before us: 22 ***some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning 23 and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even 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 him they did not see.***
 - c. Despite this information, they are leaving Jerusalem. Why? Evidently it is part of their lack of faith.
4. ***While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them*** - This may be understood in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in Mat 18:20 ***For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*** Likewise, some of the following truths come

¹¹e.g. Mat 16:21 *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.* Mat 17:22 *As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day."* And numerous other similar passages (Mat 20:19; Lk 9:22; Lk 18:33).

¹²Mat 27:63.

to mind:

- a. Despite our unbelief and forgetfulness of Jesus' presence, Jesus still draws near.
- b. There is a consistent presence of Jesus in the life of all.
 - (1) Mat 28:20 *and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.*
 - (2) Jn 14:18 *I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*

- 5. ***But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*** - this is a frequent feature of the resurrection appearances. Merely casting one's eyes upon the risen Lord is not enough. Faith is an essential ingredient of seeing the risen Lord. It need not be the case that God has prevented them from recognizing Jesus, as though had cast some spell over them. There are many things that can keep us from recognizing the presence of Jesus in our life: sin, preoccupations, or just that our minds are very weak and scattered. If it is true that we can see others in a new way especially after they have been through momentous events, then it is even more the case with the Lord after his passion and death that something about his appearance might seem different. For this and other reasons Jesus' appearance is somewhat altered. There are several things indicated by this:

- a. The actual appearance of the Lord was somewhat altered. We must be careful here. It is not that he looked totally different. He could be recognized but something was changed. Thus there is continuity but there is also transformation. The resurrection is not merely the resuscitation of Jesus' body to its former state. It is about the total transformation of His human nature. St. Paul also teaches how our own resurrected bodies will be transformed:
 - (1) 1 Cor 15:36 *You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is*

sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

- b. The appearances of the risen Lord also indicate some aspect of the quality of his risen body. Though the doors are lock he is able to enter into a room¹³. He is able to appear and to disappear at will¹⁴. Hence his body is not bound by the physical laws of nature per se. But it is his body. He has flesh and bones¹⁵, he can be touched etc.¹⁶
6. ***And [Jesus] said to them*** - Prayer is a dialogue that is always initiated by God. Thus Jesus begins a conversation with them. This is how it always is with prayer.
 7. ***Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that***

¹³Jn 20:26.

¹⁴Lk 24:31; Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19

¹⁵Lk 24:37.

¹⁶Jn 21:27

have happened there in these days? - There is something ironic about this line. Who else would know better than Jesus what has just happened. In the lines to follow this fact will be made clear. They do not understand or know and Jesus does.

8. ***And he said to them, Of foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*** - These words might sound harsh. Yet the word here is more descriptive than condemning. The Greek word used is **anohtoi** (anoetoi) which means to be lacking in understanding. It is like we use the word ignorant in English. It can be used as an ugly phrase ("You're ignorant!") or it can be an honest description of a person's state (He was ignorant of the facts in this case).
9. ***Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*** - This is not just 'necessary' in the sense that scripture had to be fulfilled but also that, since the fall, the path to glory is via suffering and the cross. Jesus stated the basic truth in his public ministry: Jn 12:23 *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.* Thus suffering is a necessary part of life since the fall of Adam and Eve.
10. ***And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*** - The phrase "Moses and all the Prophets" is another way of describing what we call the Old Testament. What passages from the Old Testament might he have covered? Certainly there were many but here are some likely ones:
 - a. The Abraham/ Isaac story is filled with rich typological symbolism
 - (1) Isaac is an only Son
 - (2) Abraham is instructed to offer him in sacrifice
 - (3) Isaac carries wood upon his shoulders up the hillside of Mt. Moriah¹⁷
 - (4) After three days Abraham receives his son back.¹⁸
 - b. The Joseph saga. Joseph's brothers did a terrible thing by selling him into slavery. Though God detested their act he used that very act to be their salvation for Joseph went ahead to Egypt to prepare a place for

¹⁷Moriah is the same site where Jerusalem and Golgotha would later be located.

¹⁸That is to say, Abraham and Isaac made a three day journey to Moriah. All that time Isaac had a death sentence upon him. At the end of the three days the death sentence is lifted by God through the angel.

them.

- c. The blood of the Lamb that saved Israel from the angel of death.
- d. If Jesus took upon himself the sins of us all then the passage from Hosea 6 is fulfilled in him Hos 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. 3 Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth."
- e. Surely Jesus spent substantial time on the suffering servant song of Isaiah:
 - (1) Isaiah 49:1 *Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 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 right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God."*
 - (2) *Is 52:13 Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 As many were astonished at him -- his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men-- 15 so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand. 53:1 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 comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened*

not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand; 11 he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- f. Psalm 22 is an important description of the crucifixion. It is dialog between temptation to despair and the call to faith in the soul of the believer. Ultimately however it is a psalm of confidence and vindication and thus describes well the passion death and resurrection of Jesus: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; and by night, but find no rest. 3 Yet thou art holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. 4 In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. 5 To thee they cried, and were saved; in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; 8 "He committed his cause to the LORD; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" 9 Yet thou art he who took me from the womb; thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breasts. 10 Upon thee was I cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. 12 Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; thou dost lay me in the dust of death. 16 Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet-- 17 I can count all my bones -- they stare and gloat over me; 18*

they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots. 19 But thou, O LORD, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion, my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen! 22 I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! all you sons of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. 25 From thee comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live for ever! 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. 28 For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. 29 Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and he who cannot keep himself alive. 30 Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, 31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it.

11. ***When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.*** - Clearly described here is the Eucharist. The same language and mannerisms of the Last Supper¹⁹ (First Eucharist) are invoked. Later the disciples described this as the “breaking of the bread” which is the Biblical phrase used for the celebration of the Eucharist. In effect, this whole passage is a description of the Mass that we celebrate. It shows that our celebration of the Mass is based on a Biblical model. Notice the similarities:
- a. The disciples gather and process -
(1) we gather and process at the beginning of every Mass.
 - b. Jesus joins them and walks with them
(1) We say “The Lord be with you” and sing two hymns to celebrate the Lord’s presence: the Kyrie and the Gloria
 - c. Jesus breaks open the Word for them
(1) We celebrate the Liturgy of the Word - including the homily
 - d. He breaks the bread for them at table
(1) We celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the altar
 - e. They recognize him in the breaking of the bread
(1) The priest says, “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the

¹⁹e.g. Mat 26:26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

- sins of the world.
- (2) At communion the declaration is made “The body²⁰ of Christ” and the response is made: Amen.
- f. In joy they return to others to tell them about Jesus
- (1) The Mass is ended, go in peace - that is, “Tell the world about Jesus.”
12. ***And their eyes were opened and they recognized him*** - Notice it took the Eucharist to accomplish this. The word alone did not bring recognition. *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord* (Ps 34:8). In our Catholic tradition we do not fold our bibles and go home after the sermon. We celebrate the Eucharist in obedience to the word of God and it is this full obedience that brings recognition. There are other passages that instruct us to celebrate the Eucharist
- a. *Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*
- b. *Luke 22:19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*
13. ***And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem*** - It was night by now and no one traveled at night. But joy and courage have now taken hold of them. Note too how they reverse course. Now they're going back to Jerusalem where they should have remained. God not only allows U-turns, he facilitates them.
14. ***they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, 34 who said*** - Luke has omitted a little detail here that Mark includes: Mk 16:12 *After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.* Thus there were some initial steps that Luke glosses over here. It appears that what fully happened was this. The eleven were gathered when the two disciples ran in with the news. They were not believed. Peter must have excused himself (perhaps he went out for a walk) Thomas too must have left separately. While Peter was away from the others he had an encounter with the risen Lord. Then he rejoined the other Apostles (minus Thomas) and told them he had seen the Lord. The disciples who had returned from Emmaus were then told this.
15. ***The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!*** - Note the link of the solemn declaration of the resurrection to Simon Peter. Although the women had already seen him, the Church did not make the solemn

²⁰“Body” here means more in the Hebrew sense “the whole person.”

declaration until Peter saw and affirmed the truth of the matter. Here too is a root for our Catholic understanding of the office of Peter, the papacy.

D. Appearance Four: The appearance to Peter -

1. Of this appearance we have no scriptural account other than a reference to the fact that it happened. St. Paul writes in 1 Cor 15: 3 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas²¹, then to the twelve.*
2. Thus the appearance to Peter took place before his appearance to the other ten apostles. While this does not give a precise fix on the time it nevertheless helps us to get a pretty good idea of the time if we accept some premises.
 - a. Luke indicates that the disciples from Emmaus returned to Jerusalem in the evening of resurrection day to report that they had seen the Lord. Mark indicates in 16:13²² that they were initially disbelieved.
 - b. Yet Luke 24:34 indicates that they (eventually) received the affirmation, "*The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!*"
 - c. Therefore the Lord must have appeared to Peter sometime between the initial return of the disciples from Emmaus in the evening and the second description of the apostles' joy. We have speculated already in these notes that perhaps Peter went for a brief walk wherein the Lord appeared to him.
 - d. What this appearance was like and where exactly it occurred is simply not given to us in the Scriptural data. Thus we have no basis even to speculate. Here is a reminder to us that none of the Gospel accounts are complete narratives of all the resurrection experiences. They do not claim to be so we need not be alarmed. Nevertheless, it is a curious omission that the appearance to Peter would not be described for us. We are only left to wonder as to the reason.²³

²¹Cephas is the Aramaic/Hebrew rendering of "Peter"

²²Mk16:12 *After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country.13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. 14 Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves...*

²³Perhaps it is due to the fact that Peter did not write a gospel. Yet Mark's gospel is largely presumed to be Peter's gospel since Mark was the secretary to Peter according to tradition. So still we are left to wonder!

E. Appearance Five - Resurrection Evening in Jerusalem - Luke 24:33-50 *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, 34 who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. 36 As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. 37 But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high."*

1. Here is an outline of this passage:
 - a. Announcement of the good news - vv. 33-35
 - b. Appearance of the risen Lord - v. 36.
 - c. Astonishment of the disciples - v. 37.
 - d. Assistance from Jesus - vv. 38-43.
 - e. Advisement from Jesus - vv. 44-46.
 - f. Appointment of the disciples - vv. 47-49²⁴
2. *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem* - These are the disciples who met the Lord on the road to Emmaus who we discussed in the last passage. It is probably late in the afternoon when they returned to Jerusalem. The time frame presents us with some problems here. They seem to be able to make the seven mile journey in rapid order. Recall that back in Luke 24:29 They said to the Lord, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." Thus when they departed Jerusalem it was likely early evening. They must have run all the way. If we follow the sequence set

²⁴Note there is something of the structure of a mass here but the order is somewhat altered: There is a gathering, an announcement of the good news, the presence of Jesus, a meal, a homily and a commissioning. The meal (Eucharist) is somewhat out of the usual order however as is the sermon. Yet the presence of the all the elements is still not insignificant.

forth earlier in these notes, there must still be time for two resurrection appearances to follow this same evening. Thus the pace of these events is quite accelerated! Notice too that in returning to Jerusalem these two disciples are coming to their senses. It was not really very sensible for them to have left Jerusalem in the first place given our Lord's promise to rise and the news they had heard that he was in fact seen alive. Now they return to the place of resurrection.

3. ***they found the eleven gathered together who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!*** - Luke has glossed over some details here that Mark supplies. It was not quite as simple that they found the eleven together who were all acknowledging the resurrection. Mark states the following fact regarding the return of these two: *[Jesus] appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.* Mk 16:12-13 Although we have to do some speculation here it is possible to envision the following scenario regarding the actual sequence of the events.
 - a. The two disciples from Emmaus return and find the Eleven gathered together
 - b. They tell the story of their encounter with Jesus but are disbelieved.
 - c. Peter leaves the gathering (perhaps to go for a walk or run an errand of some sort)
 - d. Thomas too departs and will not return that evening
 - e. While Peter is away from the others the Risen Lord appears to him.
 - f. Peter rushes back to the others and tells them that he has seen the Lord.
 - g. The other nine now believe that Jesus has risen
 - h. They²⁵ then inform the two disciples from Emmaus that the Lord has

²⁵"They" would thus be ten not eleven. And here lies the potential problem of this passage. Luke does seem to indicate that the eleven declared his resurrection. Is Luke's text in contradiction to John's account? Not necessarily. Luke's text is cursory enough to allow for some of the additions suggested here. It is quite possible that Thomas was in fact present when the disciples returned from Emmaus but then departed before Jesus actually appeared. Luke however, did not include this detail in his account whereas John does give us this data. (Remember, none of these accounts claim to be a full or seamless account of the appearances). Thomas, according to John clearly did not come to resurrection faith or see the risen Lord until one week later. Luke's text is clearly not a complete description of every stage of the events that took place that night; we also saw that with the return of the disciples from Emmaus where he glossed over the detail of initial disbelief that Mark includes. All these texts are not competing but complimentary. Perhaps Luke presumes we already know the fuller data or perhaps he is just cutting through the detail to get to the point. Whatever the case, we have pieced together above a likely scenario based on other accounts as well as the account of Luke before us. Luke's text is not specific or complete enough to be contradicted by our suggested solution to the data

risen indeed and that he had appeared to Peter.

4. ***Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread*** - This may be a reiteration of what the disciples had said before the initial disbelief of the apostles or they may have taken up the story again here. At any rate note how they relate their recognition to the Eucharist. The phrase “breaking of the bread” is a scriptural description of the Eucharist
5. ***As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them*** - Jesus appears suddenly as if out of nowhere. John gives a similar detail of an appearance: *the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them* John 20:19. He is able to do this not because he is incorporeal (i.e. a ghost). But because he has a glorified body. It is perhaps of benefit to selectively quote the Old Catechism (The Catechism of the Council of Trent) which in chapter 11 speaks of the qualities of a glorified body: *It now remains to explain to the faithful in an intelligible manner how the body, when raised from the dead, although substantially the same shall be different in many respects...This admirable restoration of nature is the result of the glorious victory of Christ over death...The bodies of the saints, when resurrected shall be distinguished by certain transcendent endowments which will ennable them, far beyond their former condition. Among these endowments four are especially to be mentioned:*
 - a. *The is impassibility which shall place them beyond the reach of pain or inconvenient of any sort. (E.g. Rev 21:4)...*
 - b. *The next quality is brightness by which the bodies of the saints shall shine like the sun according to the words of our Lord recorded in the Gospel of Matthew “The just shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. (Matt 13:45) To remove the possibility of doubt on the subject he left us a splendid exemplification of this glorious quality in this transfiguration (Matt 17:2). This quality the Apostle (Paul) sometimes calls glory, sometimes brightness; “He will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory” Philippians 3:21) ...Of this glory the Israelites beheld some image in the desert when the face of Moses after he had been in the presence of God shone with such a resplendent luster that they could not look upon it (Ex 34:29)...All the bodies of the saints shall, it is true, be equally impassible but the brightness of all shall not be the same for according to the Apostle [Paul]: I Cor 15: 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So is it with the*

considered as a whole. Thus there is no direct contradiction between Luke, Mark and John.

- resurrection of the dead.*
- c. *To this quality is added that of agility by which the body shall be freed of the burden that now presses it down and shall acquire a capability of moving with utmost facility and swiftness whereverver the soul pleases.²⁶*
 - d. *Another quality is that of subtilty, a quality which subjects the body to the absolute dominion of the soul and to an entire obedience to her control as we infer from these words of the Apostle “It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body.” (1 Cor 15:44)*

6. ***they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit...41 And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered*** - The reflection we just made on the qualities of a resurrection body might help us to explain some of the startled and frightened quality of the disciples. Likewise there is also the obvious shock of looking upon the face of one you knew to be dead. How would you react if you saw someone you knew tortured to death and then buried in a cemetery and now they stood before you. Nevertheless, there is something of an indictment here in the word “disbelieved.” Remember that they are not without excuse. Jesus had promised to rise from the dead.²⁷ Others had already declared to them that he had risen. Their reaction is thus born on some stubbornness and lack of trust or openness to believe.
7. ***"Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts?*** - The reflection in number 5 just above helps us to understand the impact of Jesus’ words. These words are a call to faith and trust. Why should they question his resurrection when he had worked so many miracles and even raised the dead had promised he would rise? Finally, we need not seem these words merely as a rebuke but also as a reassurance . Merely to hear his voice would reassure.
8. ***See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have...Have you anything***

²⁶This along with the quality of subtilty in the next point address most specifically Jesus’ ability to appear and suddenly disappear. His presence is a bodily one but the abilities and the qualities of his resurrection body show these enhancements.

²⁷e.g. Mat 16:21 *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.* Mat 17:22 *As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day."* And numerous other similar passages (Mat 20:19; Lk 9:22; Lk 18:33).

here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them" - There are some very important taught here.

- a. It is not merely a reassuring that Jesus is doing. He is setting forth continuity. The Jesus who stands before them is the same Jesus who suffered died and was buried. It is a true fact that he has been transformed by the resurrection and now has a glorified humanity. Nevertheless, it is the same Jesus. He did not discard or replace his human nature. He raised it up and glorified it.
 - b. This passage also makes it clear that the resurrection is a bodily fact. He is not a spirit only, he has flesh and blood. Job 19:25 *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; 26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!*
 - c. In calling attention to his hands and feet he calls attention to his wounds. We may wonder as to why his glorified body would display wounds. Yet there is an important truth here. In our own resurrection glory our sorrows and sufferings of the past will not be hidden but displayed. No longer will they be a source of pain for us but then a sign of our glory. In effect our wounds, physical and spiritual, will enable us to show the glory of our faith: *We're gonna tell the story of how we've overcome and we'll understand it better by and by. Our sufferings therefore are not futile periods through which we must pass but fertile fields in which our faith is tested and refined. As we pass the tests of life our glory increases by God's grace: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* 1 Peter 1: 3-7
 - d. The eating of the fish is something of an endearing scene. A young child once remarked of this scene that if Jesus had been a ghost, that fish would have fallen right out on the floor. Thus Jesus passes a very practical test here.
9. *Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the*

dead 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. - We discussed some of the likely passages that Jesus may have discussed when he talked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus must have done something similar here as well. Jesus mention that penance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached beginning from Jerusalem echoes a passage from Isaiah 2:3 *For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.* The book of Acts shows how this prophecy from Isaiah and the instructions of Jesus were in fact fulfilled. The Gospel began to be preached in Jerusalem and then it spread forth unto the nations.

10. *You are witnesses of these things.* - The apostles and certain disciples were to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection. Our faith in the truth of the resurrection is based on the testimony of the Apostles. Yet we too, though not eyewitnesses are called to be witnesses. We are witnesses to the resurrection when we are able to declare, "He lives" not merely because we have been told so but because we know it's true. We experience his power at work within us and can described how the Lord who lives has and is transforming us. *You should be a witness! Stand up and be a witness for the Lord*
11. *And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high* - The promise of the Father is Luke's way of describing the Holy Spirit. For example here are some quotes from Acts
 - a. *Acts 1:4 And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, 5 for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*
 - b. *Acts 2:33 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 which you see and hear.*
12. The instruction of Jesus to remain in Jerusalem seems at odds with other instructions that they go to Galilee.²⁸ Again, the best way to understand such an omission is to speculate that since Luke did not intend to treat of the Galilee appearances he merely cut to the quick and gave the instruction of Jesus in a truncated form. Again we must recall that none of the Gospels claims to contain a total description of the resurrection accounts with no gaps

²⁸Mat 28:7; Mk 16:7.

in the information. Thus the actual instructions of Jesus probably amounted to an instruction to return to Jerusalem after going to Galilee.

- F. Appearance Six - The appearance to the Ten on the Evening of the Resurrection (John 20:19ff) *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."*

1. We have already discussed that it is a question as to whether this is a separate appearance from the one described in Luke 24 or if it is the same appearance just with different data reported. In terms of these notes we will treat it as a separate appearance only for the sake of analysis. It is quite possible to conclude otherwise, namely that this is additional data about the same appearance. In terms of tidiness, one resurrection appearance that night seems more plausible. Otherwise the night becomes quite busy! (We would also be left to wonder why did Jesus leave and then reappear?) One potential problem in saying it is the same appearance that night is that Luke records the reaction of the disciples as one of fear whereas John records their joy. However, the human person is quite a complicated reality and we are capable of more than one feeling at a time. It is quite possible that they had both feelings at once. Luke in 24:41 also mentions their joy thus there is no absolute contradiction in the accounts just a slightly different emphasis. But the bottom line is that it is impossible to say with certitude whether the Lucan account and the Johannine account describe the same or separate appearances. In all probability it is the same appearance.
2. An outline:
 - a. Fearful Fellowship of disciples - v. 19a
 - b. Fabulous Fact of the Resurrection - v. 19b
 - c. Forgiving fidelity of Jesus - vv. 19c-21a
 - d. Faculty to Forgive - vv. 21b-23.
 - e. Failing Fellowship of Thomas - v. 24
 - f. Faltering Faith of Thomas - v. 25
3. *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week* - If this is a separate appearance it was likely rather late in the evening on Sunday of the

resurrection; perhaps it is even ten or eleven o'clock. Late evening gatherings were not uncommon in Mediterranean climates. Even in modern times, the afternoon, due to its heat etc. is a time of siesta. Thus people rise rather early in the day, go to work, take a long middle of the afternoon break including lunch and a nap, then return to work and often do not take dinner until 9:00 PM or later. Thus a late evening gathering might not be out of the question here.

4. ***the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews*** - The doors are shut and locked due to fear of Jews. "The Jews" for John has a very specific meaning. It means those who have not believed in Jesus as Messiah and Lord and those who show open hostility to Jesus and his followers. Obviously John does not use the expression here as a mere ethnic description since all the Apostles were Jews, ethnically speaking. There was in fact a great deal to fear. The hostile Jews had just killed Christ and seemed to be looking for a chance to condemn his followers (*cf* Matt 26:69ff). Thus fear was the predominate experience at this stage. Note however that such fear is ultimately unacceptable in terms of resurrection faith and it must be overcome. Such in fact happens after the Pentecost event. In Acts 2:14, Peter now transformed and encouraged by the Pentecost event boldly proclaimed Jesus and all the apostles made bold proclamations as the Spirit prompted.
5. ***Jesus came and stood among them*** - Despite the locked doors Jesus stands in their midst. We discussed last week in the Lucan appearance that this shows Jesus using the qualities of his glorified body. In particular the qualities of agility and subtlety are evident here. Note too the initiative is Jesus' own. He stands among them despite their "protective" measures of locked doors.
6. ***He said to them, "Peace be with you."*** - This is a standard Jewish greeting and must have had a particularly power effect on the Apostles as a display of the good will of Jesus and of his love for them despite their shameful abandonment of him in his passion. The word peace here is used in the Jewish sense of the word "Shalom" Shalom can be translated as peace but there is more at work here than an absence of conflict. Shalom describes a state of blessedness in the heart and mind of a person who experiences all that is just, merciful and right in all their relationships. All is truly well and as it should be. Note then how only at this point can Jesus truly indicate this to the Apostles. Prior to the passion death and resurrection, something was not right in Man's relationship to God. Sin had gravely wounded our relationship with God so that there was no real peace possible. Now, due to the passion death and resurrection, sin is forgiven and the blood of the Lamb brings true peace. Now Jesus can truly say, "There is peace unto you." And in saying this he causes it to be so. The same God who said, "Let there be Light" and there was light now says, "Peace" and so there is Peace.

7. ***When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side*** - We have talked before about the importance of “continuity.” The Jesus who stands before them is the same Jesus who suffered and died. He has the same body though it is now glorified. The wounds no longer cause him pain but now manifest the glory of his love. His identity can no longer be questioned. This is truly the same Jesus.
8. ***As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.*** - The Father sent Jesus to reconcile the world again to the Father by the forgiveness of sins. Now the apostles will be called to this same ministry. Note too however, they are sent. This is at the root meaning of the word “Apostle” which means “one who is sent. The apostles do not take this mission or any honor upon themselves. They are appointed and sent. And who is Jesus sending? It is an astonishing fact that he will send these weak men unto so important a task as the reconciling of sinners. They were of limited understanding and surely weak willed and fearful. Yet it is they whom Jesus will send. Some thoughts are in order here:
- a. It is not the men *per se* who are the source of the work. It is the Holy Spirit who will minister through them.
 - b. Perhaps their weakness will be a great strength for them. Since they are called to minister to sinners it is good that they know in all humility how they have struggled to follow God’s call. In their humility they can be more understanding and patient.
9. ***he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*** - Now that Jesus is risen and glorified he is able to confer the Holy Spirit. This is a different out-pouring of the Spirit than the one at the Pentecost event. Here the Spirit is poured out on a specific group of men for a specific purpose: the apostles are empowered to forgive sins. This is made clear by the words that follow. This power will not be shared with every disciple. The Pentecost event however is to empower and encourage every disciple for the mission of witness and for the specific mission that they will receive as Christians. The apostles took care to share the Holy Spirit and “replicate” the Pentecost event for each believer (*cf* Acts 8:14ff)
10. ***If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*** - Here then is the grace of the passion death and resurrection: the forgiveness of sin. The scribes and pharisees were scandalized that Jesus forgave sins (Mk 2:7). Now he gives this authority to mere men! See how generous God will be with his mercy. Notice too that the Apostles are given the authority not only to forgive sins but also to retain them. The power given then is not only a forgiveness function but a juridical function. The Apostles and their legitimate successors are empowered to judge the fact of contrition and a firm purpose of amendment on the part of

a penitent. On the basis of their determination of proper contrition and firm purpose of amendment they then confer or withhold forgiveness.

11. ***Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord.*** - Thomas had absented himself from the community and so missed the risen Lord. This was his first mistake. It is a mistake for any Christian to think he will encounter the Lord apart from communion with the Church. Surely private prayer is important but it is not sufficient. The presence of the Lord can and should be sought in private moments but it is wrong to exclude his presence where “two or three are gathered.” Likewise it is presumptuous that we will experience his presence privately if we habitually absent ourselves from the fellowship of believers. Heb 10: 23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* The second thing Thomas does wrong is that he will not accept the testimony of the Apostles. In other words, he will not accept the authority of the early Church teaching and revealing. Jesus will have to rebuke him for his lack of faith and in so doing indicates that the Church is an object of faith. We say in the Nicene Creed that “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” Thus again the Church is an object of faith and we are obliged to accept all solemn Teachings of the faith given us by the Church. Thomas could have been the first disciple to have believed without seeing but he blew it.

- G. Appearance Seven - The appearance to the Eleven one week later - John 20:26 *Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you."* 27 *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing."* 28 *Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"* 29 *Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."* 30 *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.*
1. There are many familiar features to this account which we have already discussed and encountered in other accounts of the resurrection. There is the sudden standing of Jesus among them despite locked doors, there is the salutation, “Peace be with you,” and there is the showing of the wounds. Thus we shall look at the unique features only and leave previous reflections to cover the familiar features.
 2. Here is an outline to this brief passage:
 - a. Recommital - v. 26a
 - b. Revelation - v. 26b
 - c. Resummoning - v. 27
 - d. Repentance - v. 28
 - e. Reproof - v. 29a
 - f. Recognition - v. 29b
 - g. Reason - vv. 30-31
 3. *Eight days later* - in other words it is Sunday one week later from the previous appearance. It is noteworthy that another Sunday is chosen and this was probably formative in the experience of the early Church’s eventual move of the Sabbath observances to Sunday.
 4. *his disciples were again in the house* - The text is not clear as to the exact location of the “house” but tradition has assigned this dignity to the “Upper Room” or “Cenacle” wherein the Lord had celebrated the Last Supper, appeared to them a week earlier and would send the Holy Spirit in days to come. Notice too, they are gathered together on Sunday and it is once again in this context of a gathering on Sunday that they will experience the risen Lord. Here too is the root of the pattern of our worship. We are called to gather on Sunday and celebrate and experience the risen Lord.
 5. *and Thomas was with them* - It is nice to know that Thomas has come to his

senses. He may not have believed the other ten but at least he remained in their company. Because he has gathered with them on this Sunday he will see the risen Lord. Here too is an important lesson for us if we struggle with certain teachings of the faith. It is good for us to remain in the company of the Church and strive to clarify our doubts rather than to walk away. It is common for difficulties to resolve in the context of fellowship and understanding.

6. ***Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.*** - Thomas is rebuked for his lack of faith. In what did he fail to believe? The testimony of the Apostles. Our faith is an apostolic faith. We know that Jesus is risen because the apostles have told us so. Thus our faith depends on their witness and testimony. This is why we say in the Creed that *I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church*. In this sense the Church is an object of faith. We believe in God but we come to this faith through the testimony of the Church. Thus we are bound to accept the solemn teachings that the Church proposes to us as revealed by God. When a convert enters the Church they recite the following formula, *I believe and profess all that the Holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and professes to be revealed by God*. Some would like to have their faith apart from the Church but it remains true that they would have nothing in which to believe had not the Church, by the power of God, revealed it.²⁹ Note then that Tomas received rebuke from Jesus for failing to accept the solemn testimony of the early Church through the apostles. If Thomas received such rebuke, can others who reject the solemn teachings of the Church escape rebuke? Note too that the Lord does not merely rebuke Thomas. He is merciful and shows him his hands and side. So it is with all who struggle with faith. If they keep fellowship the Lord will surely give them whatever helps they need to come to full faith.
7. ***My Lord and my God!*** - Thomas' initial unbelief is quickly transformed to one of the highest testimonies in the New Testament. Jesus is Lord and God. Recall when we discussed Mary Magdalene's maturing faith. It is evident that when she was able to say "I have seen the Lord" she had an experience of

²⁹Rom 10:13 *For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? 15 And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" 17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. 18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."*

more than seeing Jesus of Nazareth. Now she saw his full identity as the Lord of Glory. So too here with Thomas.

8. ***Have you believed because you have seen me?*** This text is a bit puzzling in one sense. This is because faith pertains to things which are not seen as the Scriptures states elsewhere: Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old received divine approval. 3 By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.* Why then does Jesus say to Thomas that he believes because he has seen? St. Gregory the Great resolved this difficulty by declaring that Thomas saw one thing but believed another. In other words he saw the risen Jesus but confessed him to be Lord and God. This goes beyond what mere vision supplies and thus Thomas comes to resurrection faith. It is clear that mortal man cannot see divinity. Therefore Thomas saw the man and confessed him to be God. This requires the gift of faith.
9. ***Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe*** - That's us. It is surely a challenge for us to believe, it is truly a noble human act and meritorious as well. By faith we are saved and blessed.
10. ***but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.*** - Here is the purpose of the Scriptures. They are written that we may come to faith and in coming to faith we might have life. We can never underestimate the glory and the gift of the Scriptures. Through them our minds are touched and our hearts are reached so that we, by the grace of God might come to saving faith.

H. Appearance Eight - In Galilee at the lakeside. *After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way.* 2 *Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.* 3 *Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."* They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. 4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. 9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. 15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." 19 (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me." 20 Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" 23 The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" 24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25 But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would

be written.

1. Up till now all the appearances we have discussed have taken place in Jerusalem. But the disciples had also received instructions to go to Galilee where they would see him. Evidently they remained in Jerusalem at least one week before they went north.
 - a. Mat 28:7 *[The Angel said] Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you.*
 - b. Mk 16: 7 *But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.*
2. Here is an outline of the passage:
 - a. Regrettable reversal - vv. 1-3
 - b. Redeeming reminder vv. 4-6
 - c. Rapid return - vv. 7-8
 - d. Reorienting repast - vv. 9-14
 - (1) Fire - v. 9
 - (2) Fish - vv. 10-11
 - (3) Fortification vv. 12-14
 - e. Revealing rapport - vv. 15-17
 - (1) Dialogue - between Peter and Jesus
 - (2) Deficit - Agapas vs phileo
 - (3) Deference - phileis
 - f. Required Remedy - vv. 18-20
 - (1) Prediction - vv. 18-19a
 - (2) Prescription - 19b
 - (3) Problem - vv. 20-22
3. ***After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias*** - The “Sea of Tiberias” is another name for the Sea of Galilee. The exact location is not mentioned in this text but tradition assigns the location to a small area near Capernaum called Tabgha³⁰. A small church is erected there to commemorate the miraculous draught of fish and the commission to Peter to “Feed my Lambs.”
4. ***Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together*** - not all the apostles were here for this appearance. Present were: Peter, James, John, Thomas, Nathaniel, and two others, unnamed. Why the others are absent is not explained and there is really no basis for speculation. Could the fishing context have something to do with it?

³⁰Tradition also assigns this as the site where Jesus performed the miracle of the feeding of 5000 with the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

5. ***Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you."*** - There is something of a set back here. Jesus had called them away from fishing.³¹ This is not likely pleasure fishing since they have their commercial nets at hand. They still seem to be struggling with what to do. Jesus has risen but what are the practical consequences of this? Should they go back to work. After all they no longer walk about with Jesus as he preaches and teaches. What to do? While we might understand their predicament, the return to what they had been called away from is not without an edge. It is not a very appropriate response given that Jesus had called them away from fishing. Jesus is about to work a miracle that will remind especially Peter of his true calling by reminding him of how he was first called. Some preachers and teachers take a different approach to this by declaring it is only natural that the apostles would have gone back to fishing while awaiting further instructions from the Lord. Perhaps but what follows is a gentle yet formal call away from fishing once again.
6. ***They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.*** - No surprise here. Should we expect to be fruitful in endeavors to which God has not called us?
- a. *Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*
 - b. *Lam 3:37 Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the Lord has ordained it?*
7. ***Just as day was breaking*** - Night fishing was most common to the commercial fishermen on the Sea of Galilee
8. ***Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.*** Verse eight informs us that they are about 100 yards off shore in the boat. This can give practical explanation as to why they did not know it was Jesus. But it is not that simple. This has been a common feature of many of the resurrection appearances. Recall that Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus at first. Neither did the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. When he made his first appearance to the Apostles, they were startled and thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus had to show them his wounds to reassure them. Thus we seem to have more of the same at work here. Is this not our problem.

³¹Mat 4:19 *And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

We frequently do not recognize the presence of the Lord. How different our life would be if we experienced the risen Lord at all times and knew his voice.

9. **Children**, - The use of the word children here is endearing but also quite strong. The Greek word, *paidon* is a diminutive. It is somewhat interesting to wonder what the apostles may have thought as a grown man from shore called them “little children.” Was this not a clue to them that it was the Lord? Yet they still have not recognized him. The use of the diminutive need not be seen as a demeaning thing³². Clearly it is an affectionate term used by Jesus who, as their teacher and Lord was in a position to use such a term. But it is more than merely affectionate. It also indicates identity. They are God’s children in a special way now by the power of grace given through the cross and resurrection. It might be good to see how John uses the word children in other passages.
 - a. John 1:12 *But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...*
 - b. John 8:39 *They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did, 40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did.*
 - c. John 11:49 *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; 50 you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death.*
 - d. John 13:30 *So, after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night. 31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; 32 if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'*
10. **have you any fish?** - This is an interrogative which expects a “no” for an answer. Maybe it would be better translated, “Haven’t you caught any fish?”

³²We must also not forget the admonition of the Lord, Matt 18:"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

11. *He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.* - This miracle is almost identical to the miracle worked by Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry. Here the miracle serves two purposes.
- a. It serves to give them evidence as to the identity of Jesus. Since this is the miracle he worked to call Peter originally, it should serve as a powerful reminder and open their eyes as to the identity of Jesus.
 - b. The miracle also serves as a gentle reminder that Jesus had called them away from fishing³³. In the first working of the miracle Peter and Andrew left their boats and nets and followed Jesus who would make them fishers of men. As was said above, the decision to "go fishing" was not a neutral decision. It was packed with meaning and was something of a negative development. Jesus seems to say here: don't you remember that I called you away from fishing?
12. *That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"* - It is notable that John recognizes Jesus first. The miracle seemed aimed at Peter. Yet the text gives us a clue as to why John recognizes him first. The text says that it was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Love comes to quicker recognition than study and analysis ever will. It is clear from the text that will follow that Peter is still struggling with love. Three times Jesus must inquire as to the nature of Peter's love. John on the other hand seemed to know he was loved by Jesus and this experience of love led him to fast recognition of the one who loved. We may wonder if Jesus "played favorites." It seems that he loved John more. But we must remember the phrase "The disciple whom Jesus loved" occurs only in John's Gospel. With this in mind we can understand the phrase not as Jesus playing favorites but rather as John declaring his own experience that Jesus loved him. This experience of love

³³ Luke 5:3 *Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."* 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, 7 they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

leads John to recognize Jesus first. There is also a parallel here to the opening resurrection account. Peter and John had both gone to the tomb. Peter saw the empty tomb. But John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) saw and believed. Again his love sped his recognition.

13. ***When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea.*** This text does not mean that Peter was completely naked. It means that he had removed his outer tunic as he worked. Now before he went to shore he replaced his tunic. The text also reminds us of Peter's zeal and impulsiveness. It also reminds us a bit of the miracle of walking on the water. Peter is less concerned about the sea now, he merely wants to be with Jesus. Notice too how quickly he accepts John's conclusion. He seems to have come to trust John's judgement.
14. ***But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. 9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread.*** - We are left to wonder as to the initial dialogue between Peter and Jesus. The action turns immediately to what the others do. They bring the boat and net ashore. There are two important reminders at work in this scene:
 - a. The charcoal fire must remind Peter of another fire beside which he denied the Lord. That this is no mere coincidence is verified a few verses hence when Jesus questions Peter three times as to his love.
 - b. The fish and bread remind the others of the miracle of the loaves and fishes worked twice by Jesus.
 - c. These two reminders coupled with the overall reminder of the miraculous catch of fish all say: this is Jesus.
15. ***Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish,*** - This text does not likely mean that Peter went and hauled the net ashore by himself. That would have been difficult, if not impossible. It probably means that he went and joined the others to haul the net ashore.
16. ***a hundred and fifty-three of them;*** The meaning of the number 153 is one of the great questions of Bible study. The one exact meaning is not clear. There are many different theories some more plausible than others. Here are some
 - a. Cyril of Alexandria held that the number was a compound of three meaningful numbers:
 - (1) 100 - represents the fulness of the Gentiles. The Shepherd's flock is 100 (Mt. 18:12); the seed's fertility is 100-fold. So 100 stands for the fulness of the Gentiles who will come into the Church.

- (2) +50 - which represents the remnant of Israel.
- (3) + 3 - Which represents the Trinity who is the source and perfection of all things.
- b. Augustine had an ingenious explanation -
 - (1) 10 is the number of the Law for there are ten commandments.
 - (2) 7 is the number of grace for there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1ff)
 - (3) Now 7+10 makes 17
 - (4) And 153 is the sum of all the figures: (1+2+3+...up to 17)
 - (5) Thus 153 stands for all those who enter either by Law (Jews) or Grace (Gentiles)
- c. Jerome held that 153 was the number of known species of fish as the time and that the catch thus represents every kind of fish. Thus all the nations are called.
- d. Another explanation holds that there were 153 known nations at the time and thus a similar explanation derives: all the nations are called.

17. ***and although there were so many, the net was not torn.*** - The net represents the Church, or the Kingdom of God. We might here recall the parable of the Net to show that this is so.³⁴ Thus, the message is, the Church is able to contain all true believers of any race or nation. The universality of the Church is not a strain on the Church, it is a strength and a wondrous catch indeed. Some in the early Church may have feared that ethnic or racial diversity would harm the Church and tear it's unity. Not so says this text. Since the net is the Church we can then appreciate the importance of Peter's involvement in hauling the net ashore.
18. ***Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."*** - It is astonishing to see that the Eternal Son of the Father cooks breakfast for his disciples. But is it any more astonishing than that he should die on the cross for them, wash their feet, and feed them on his own body and blood?
19. ***Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.***- Again there is an indication of the glorified humanity of Jesus here. There seems to be something altered about his appearance. Since they don't dare ask who he is there seems to be the implication that they did have some questions. They knew it was the Lord not so much by what their sense

³⁴Mat 13:47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. 49 So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

of sight offered them but based on what he had just done and was doing. This is a consistent pattern in the appearances. Recall for example how the disciples recognized him when he broke the bread.

20. ***Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.*** - There are Eucharistic overtones here though the fish are not part of the Eucharistic elements. Nevertheless, the fish too, because of passages like this, also became a symbol of the Eucharist.
21. ***This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.*** - This is a problematic phrase since we are calling this appearance eight. But the phrase here seems to suggest a definite context of the apostles as a group. Thus the appearance to Mary Magdalene, the other women, the disciples from Emmaus, and Peter alone are not considered in the count since none of the individuals or groups just mentioned fit the description of the Apostles *per se*. Thus, if the word “disciples” here means “apostles” then it is true, this is the third time.
22. ***When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter,*** - The text does not say that the Jesus and Peter were alone but the impression is that Jesus took Peter off to the side to pose these questions. This presupposition is based merely on the fact that the discussion seems quite private. Likewise, later in the dialogue Peter speaks of John in the third person as if he is off in the distance a bit.
23. ***"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."*** - This dialogue loses a lot in translation. This is because in English we have only one word for love. Yet there are several words in Greek for love and two are operative here. Jesus asks Peter about his love using one word but Peter responds with a different word that is far less than what Jesus is asking. Let us look at the dialogue more closely.
 - a. ***do you love me more than these?*** - The Lord says here in the Greek, ***agapaj me pleon toutwn***³⁵? The word for love used by Jesus is *Agapas* from the word *Agape* meaning total, committed unconditional love. The highest love there is. Jesus in effect asks Peter if he loves him above all things totally.
 - b. ***Yes, Lord; you know that I love you*** - But Peter answers in the Greek text: ***vai Kyrie su oidaj oti filw se***³⁶. Peter uses the word *Philo* to respond to Jesus. *Philo* means a brotherly love. It surely involves a

³⁵ *Agapas me pleon touton*

³⁶ *Vai Kyrie su oidas oti philo se.*

- warmth and a love but it is far from what Jesus is asking. Peter says, “I love you with a brotherly love.” It is a bit like a young lady who says to her boyfriend, “Do you love me?” and he responds by saying, “I like you.”
- c. Peter is finally being honest. He cannot honestly say that he loves the Lord above all things. He’s been through so much. He promised never to leave the Lord and to defend him to the death³⁷ but ended up denying Jesus. Thus Peter’s response is touching and somewhat sad. No more big promises from Peter. He speaks the truth.
24. ***He said to him, "Feed my lambs.*** - Jesus does not reject Peter on account of this fact. He still commissions him to Shepherd the sheep. God does not wait until we’re perfect to use us. He can make use of us even in our weakness. *If you can use anything Lord you can use me.*
25. ***A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."*** - The dialogue here is practically identical. Jesus again asks “Agapas me?” and Peter responds “Philo se” Thus the response is far short of what is asked. The Lord will ask Peter a third time. The traditional reason given is that since Peter denies him three times he is given three opportunities to undo the denial. This may be so but given the inadequacy of the response this explanation is a bit less satisfactory though it could still be true.
26. ***He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"*** - This third time the Lord lowers his expectation. He asks Peter in Greek, **fileis me (phileis me?)** In effect Jesus adapts his expectation to what Peter is able to offer. Here is the beauty of God’s mercy and patience at work.
27. ***Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."*** - Despite the Lord’s patience and mercy Peter is sad. Perhaps he feels the Lord is badgering him. In effect he is saying, “Lord why do you taunt me? You know all things and you know that I only love you with a brotherly love. Why do you keep rubbing in the point?” As we shall see in the lines that follow Peter is in a bit of a bad mood and is surely struggling with the hurt of the realization of what he has done in denying the Lord.

34 Peter declared to him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." (Matt 26:33-34)

28. *Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.* *19 (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.)* - Jesus says in effect here, “Peter one day you will come to love me with an agape love and you will be able to show. You will give your whole life for me in a glorious martyrdom. Then at last you can say, ‘I love you Jesus with an absolute and unconditional love.’” And so it can be for each of us. We may not be able to give God all today, but there will come a day when we can truly say, “I surrender all”
29. *And after this he said to him, "Follow me."* - For now the instruction for Peter, and for each of us is clear, “Follow me.” Jesus will lead us into total love and perfect witness. How and by what path? We’ll understand it better by and by.
30. *Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"* - Here we see another aspect of Peter’s struggle. He experiences some jealousy of John. John had the place of honor at the Last supper. John had made it to the cross. John had great love for Jesus and the insight that came with that love. Now Peter says to Jesus, “You say I will suffer. Well what about him?! I’ll just bet you won’t make him suffer. Why does he get all the privileges?” Here again is an honest discussion between Jesus and Peter. We must not hesitate to do the same in our prayer. It is the best policy for us to tell the Lord of our hurts and resentments because they’re there even if we try to deny them. True prayer and spirituality regard the truth of our hearts.
31. *Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"* - Jesus basically refuses to answer Peter’s inquiry though he strongly implies that John will not have to suffer martyrdom. But Jesus rebukes Peter’s attitude and says in effect Peter, “You have only one thing to do and that is to follow me. You are not to worry about my plans for anyone else or how I will call them to glory. Just follow me and mind your own business.” We too need this admonition. Often we compare ourselves to others and wonder why some have apparently easier (or sometimes more difficult) paths than we. We must not do this. We must follow the path set out for us.
32. *The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"* - Tradition holds that

John died an old man and was not martyred. He was however detained on the Isle of Patmos in punishment for preaching the word of God. Thus he had some of his own suffering to endure.

33. *But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* - Here is the second conclusion to John's gospel . The first one was at the end of Chapter 20. We are thus reminded as we stressed at the beginning of these notes that none of the Gospels claims to be an exhaustive history. Each of them is a selective account of the important sayings, doings and teachings of Jesus which were deemed important and necessary for our salvation by coming to faith in the risen Lord Jesus.

- I. Appearance 9 - **The Appearance to the 500.**
1. We do not know exactly when or where this appearance took place. The fact of it is merely mentioned in scripture:
 - a. 1Corinthians 15:6 *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*
 2. Of all the appearances you might think that this one would have been recorded in some detail since it was the most widely experienced appearance. Many accounts it seems would have existed and at least one would have made its way into the scriptures. Yet there is no account of it other than it did in fact happen.
 3. Where did this take place. What was it like. What was the reaction? We simply do not know. Proof once again that the Bible is not a history book in the conventional sense. Rather it is a highly selective telling of what took place, not a complete account.
 4. The Bible makes no pretenses to be something it is not. It is quite clear that it is a selective book: John 20:30 *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name....21:25 But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*
- J. Appearance 10 - **The Appearance to James**
1. Here again we do not have a description of this appearance only a remark by Paul that it did in fact happen:
 - a. 1Cor 15:7 *Then³⁸ he appeared to James*
 2. The time frame is not clear. Only that it happened after the appearance to the five hundred and before the final appearance to the apostles.
 3. James had already seen the Lord with the others in other appearances. This appearance seems to have been a personal one granted to him alone if we take the description of Paul at face value.
 4. Which James is meant?
 - a. James, the “brother” of the Lord?
 - b. James the son of Zebedee and one of the Twelve?
 - c. James the son of Alphaeus and also one of the Twelve
 5. Most scholars presume that it was James the brother of the Lord since he was kin to Jesus and also an influential leader of the early Church. Truth is though we cannot be certain!
- K. Appearance 11 - The appearance on a mountainside in Galilee - Mat 28:16 *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to*

³⁸That is, after the appearance to the 500.

me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

1. The Outline -
 - a. Summons - v. 16.
 - b. Struggle - v. 17
 - c. Sending - vv. 18-20
2. *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.* - Where exactly this appearance took place in Galilee is uncertain. Was it the Mount of the Beatitudes? Was it Mount Tabor? It is not clear.
3. *And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted.* - What is most significant is that the development in resurrection faith that is described.
 - a. The text says that some of the eleven worshiped him. Recall that worship of Jesus as Lord is the essence of Resurrection faith. It is not the mere acknowledgment of a resuscitated corpse that adds up to resurrection faith. It is the acknowledgment that Jesus that Lord and that as Lord he is God and thus the object of worship.
 - b. Some however doubted! We have seen that the apostles are all on a journey of faith. John had a journey from Fear to faith. Thomas too made the journey from doubt to faith. Peter saw the risen Lord but relapsed into commercial fishing, taking others with him. He too had to make a return. These are the ups and downs of resurrection faith. This text thus honestly depicts the difficulty that they had or were still having. The honesty of such texts also lends credibility to the accounts and a humanness with which we can identify.
4. *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* - Did Jesus not have this authority before? Yes as God he did. But since the crucifixion, death and resurrection Jesus also has a claim to this in terms of his humanity. For example, as we read in Phil 2: 5 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
5. *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to*

observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." - Here is the great commissioning, or sending. Notice that they are to go unto all the nations, not just to Israel.

- a. *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations* - This is in fulfillment of many Old Testament texts such as this one from Isaiah - 2: 2 *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* As we shall see when we study Acts, they were somewhat slow to do this and the Lord had to strongly prompt them and admonish them to overcome their prejudice against the Gentiles and reach out to them. It takes 10 Chapters in Acts!
- b. Note too they are to teach and to baptize. That is to say that they are to draw people to faith and, by the power of God, to cleanse them from their sins. Faith is never merely an intellectual endeavor, it is to touch the soul and bring about healing from sin and power over sin.
- c. Note too the Trinitarian formula: There is one God, therefore they are to baptize in the Name (not names) of the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit. Yet there are three persons for they are named.
- d. Finally note that Christ is present in his Church. He has not abandoned them, he is still with us.

L. Appearance 12- The Ascension

1. The Short version - Luke 24: 50 *Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God.*
 - a. Luke is the author of both accounts of the Ascension offered here.³⁹ His account in Acts is more thorough and thus we shall examine it in

³⁹Mark mentions the ascension but only that it occurred: Mk 16:19 *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.*

more detail. This account from the Gospel account adds the detail that it was near Bethany where the Lord ascended. The site on the Mount of Olives can be visited today where tradition has assigned the place.

2. The Longer version - Acts 1:3 *To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.* 4 *And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, 5 for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."* 6 *So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* 7 *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.* 8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."* 9 *And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.* 10 *And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,* 11 *and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was 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;*
 - a. *To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.* - Here is a summary of the many appearances we have already studied. Luke's summery is very cursory.
 - b. *And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, 5 for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."* - This instruction presupposes that they all returned to Jerusalem, probably for the Jewish feast of Pentecost⁴⁰, And Jesus instructs them now to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit is sent upon them. We know that this will happen ten days after his ascension, on the Feast of Pentecost.
 - c. *So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* 7 *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.* - They show some immaturity in this question for they still have a political notion of Jesus' messiahhood. Jesus had tried many times to lead them away from such notions,

⁴⁰Fifty Days after Passover.

unsuccessfully. Now they still persist. Jesus is gentle but says in effect, "It's none of your business." The fact is that within forty years Jerusalem, Israel will be totally destroyed! But they are not ready for such information now. Jesus also implies that the Holy Spirit will set them right.

- d. ***But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*** - Not political power will they receive but preaching power! Power that will stretch forth to the ends of the earth. Notice again, the gospel is not to be limited to Israel but now it is also to go unto the Gentiles. An examination of the Pentecost event in Acts 2 wherein the Holy Spirit came upon them shows this power at work: doors, formerly shut out of fear are thrown open the gospel is proclaimed and 3000 are added to their number that day! Power indeed.
- e. ***9 And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*** - The Ascension is described as a sudden event. It surprises them but also encourages them. The fact that he rides a cloud is a sign of divinity for the Scriptures declare that it is God who rides the clouds.
 - (1) Psalm 68:3 *But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy! 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds; his name is the LORD, exult before him!*
- f. ***And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.*** - Notice they are startled but the angel calls to get about the work of returning to Jerusalem and waiting as Jesus had instructed. The additional instruction of the angel is also in keeping with the fact that Jesus had declared he would come again in glory on the clouds of heaven:
 - (1) Mat 24:29 *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; 30 then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; 31 and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the*

other.

- (2) Mat 26:63 *But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."*
- (3) Rev 1:7 *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

- g. ***Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away;*** - Obedience is always the proper response to miracles. Be amazed is not enough. The reference to a Sabbath's day's journey is merely another way of saying, a short journey for travel on the Sabbath was restricted to short journeys.