

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – Luke 24

(Lesson 24A – Jesus' Resurrection and Appearances)

Introduction

This final chapter in Luke records the experiences of a number of people who had firsthand experiences with the resurrected Lord. In each case, the individual or individuals encountered by Jesus seemed to be hopeless. But after seeing the resurrected Jesus, they had hope and joy and praised God.

He is Risen (24:1-12)

The first day of the week was Sunday. Some manuscripts do not contain the phrase "and certain other women with them." However, the chronology of events surrounding Jesus' resurrection seem to indicate that there were more than two women at the tomb. Mark names the women in 16:1 as Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James, and Salome. Later in verse 10, Luke mentions that the women present were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women. Before we move further along in our study of Luke 24, let's review a chronology of events during the 40 day period from Jesus' resurrection to His Ascension.

The 40 Day Period from Resurrection to Ascension¹

Sunday Morning

1. An angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb before sunrise (Matt 28:2-4)
2. Women who followed Jesus visited Jesus' tomb and discovered Him missing (Matt 28:1; Mk 16:1-4; **Lk 24:1-3**; Jn 20:1)
3. Mary Magdalene left to tell Peter and John (Jn 20:1-2)
4. The other women, remaining at the tomb, saw two angels who told them about the Resurrection (Matt 28:5-7; Mk 16:5-7; **Lk 24:4-8**).
5. Peter and John visited Jesus' tomb (**Lk 24:12**; Jn 20:3-10)
6. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and Jesus appeared to her alone in the garden (Mk 16:9-11; Jn 20:11-18): His first appearance.
7. Jesus appeared to the other women (Mary, mother of James, Salome, and Joanna) (Matt 28:8-10): His second appearance.
8. Those who guarded Jesus' tomb reported to the religious rulers how the angel rolled away the stone. They were then bribed (Matt 28:11-15).
9. Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Co 15:5): His third appearance.

Sunday Afternoon

10. 10. Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus (Mk 16:12-13; **Lk 24:13-32**): His fourth appearance.

Sunday Evening

11. 11. The two disciples from Emmaus told others they saw Jesus (**Lk 24:33-35**).
12. 12. Jesus appeared to 10 apostles, with Thomas absent, in the Upper Room (**Lk 24:36-43**; Jn 20:19-25): His fifth appearance.

The Following Sunday

13. 13. Jesus appeared to the 11 Apostles, including Thomas, and Thomas believed (Jn 20:26-28): His sixth appearance.

The Following 32 Days

14. 14. Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and performed a miracle of fish (Jn 21:1-14): His seventh appearance.
15. 15. Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15-18; 1 Co 15:6): His eighth appearance.

¹ This chronology was taken from John F. Walvoord & Roy Zuck, General Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 91.

16. 16. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James (1 Co 15:7): *His ninth appearance.*
17. 17. At Jerusalem, Jesus appeared again to His disciples² (Lu 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8): *His 10th appearance.*
18. On the Mount of Olives Jesus ascended into heaven while the disciples watched (Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12).

The spices were used to anoint a body in order to delay decay and lessen the odor of the body. This indicates that the women did not anticipate the resurrection. Mark's Gospel indicates that the women were concerned about who would roll the stone away for them (16:3). Additional support for this conclusion is found in the phrase in verse 4 that "they were greatly perplexed about this" [the body missing and the stone rolled away]. Mark records that they entered the tomb and saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side which caused them to be alarmed (Mk 16:5). Evidently, he was one of the two men clothed in light that Luke mentions (24:4). These two men were angels based upon the way in which their clothing is described. In addition, the description of the clothing of the two is identical to the description of the angel of the Lord who rolled back the stone in Matthew 28:2. The reaction of the guards who saw the angel roll back the stone (Matt 28:2-4) and the reaction of the women to the angelic appearances was essentially the same. They trembled with amazement, fear and awe (Matt 28:2-4 cf. Mk 16:8; Lk 24:5).

The angels then asked the women a question to cause them to think. Any time a person is in a heightened state of emotionalism, the best antidote is to think. So, the angels asked them a question to cause them to reflect upon the truth they had been taught by Jesus – "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, He has risen!" Evidently, the women disciples, like the men disciples, had not fully grasped the significance of Jesus' teaching (see Lk 9:44; 11:29, 30; 18:31-33 especially 18:33). Jesus had taught them that He would be betrayed, crucified, and resurrected after three days. Finally, one of the angels commanded them to go and announce to the disciples and to Peter that Christ had been resurrected and would meet them in Galilee (Mk 16:7).

The women went to the apostles and Mary of Magdala acted as the spokesman for the group. John 20:2 records Mary's announcement to the apostles.

² The listing of the disciples varies. The following chart and notes might prove helpful:

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:13-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Cananaean	Simon the Cananaean	Judas, brother of James	Judas, brother of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	[vacant]

Some observations regarding this list would include the following points:

1. • Peter is always first and Judas Iscariot is always last.
2. • Matthew uses "first" in connection with Peter, but Matthew did not mean that Peter was the first convert. More than likely Andrew or John was the first convert. "First" as used by Matthew most likely means first or more prominent among equals.
3. • The first four members of each list are two pairs of brothers.
4. • In each list, there are three groups of four, each group headed by Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphaeus. But within each group the order varies.
5. • Mark in Mark 6:7 indicates that the men were sent out two by two. This perhaps accounts for the pairing in Matthew 10:2-4.
6. • Apparently, Simon the Canaanite is the same as Simon the Zealot.
7. • Thaddaeus is another name for Judas the brother of James who would later become the first apostolic martyr (Acts 12:2).

Simon the Zealot (or Simon the Cananaean) was most likely a nationalist, i.e. a strong upholder of Jewish traditions and religion. Some decades later they became a principal cause of the Jewish War in which Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The name probably reveals Simon's past political and religious associations.

Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "**They** have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where **they** have laid Him."

Mary had been the last one at the Cross and the first one at the tomb and was given the privilege of relaying the first resurrection message.

"In spite of the angelic announcement that Jesus Christ had risen and would meet with them in Galilee, Mary did not understand the significance of the Resurrection. She supposed that Christ's body had been transferred from the tomb to some unknown place."³ Even the apostles were not convinced for the words of the women "seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them" (Lk 24:11). So, Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves.

From Luke's account, one would conclude that only Peter arose and ran to the tomb (24:12); however, John makes it clear in his Gospel that both John and Peter ran to the tomb and that John arrived first (Jn 20:3-9). When they arrived, they observed the strips of clothing lying there and the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head was neatly folded by itself separate from the rest of the linen. (Lk 24:12; Jn 20:7). The condition of the cloths indicates that there had been no undue haste associated with the Resurrection.⁴

Some of Jesus' Appearances Not Recorded In Luke

Luke does not record some of the other appearances of Jesus, but only records the appearances to the two men on the road to Emmaus (24:13-27). Apparently, Jesus made other appearances to these women prior to appearing to the two men on the road to Emmaus. I find it also interesting that He appeared to these women and to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus even prior to His Own apostles.

The Appearance to Mary (Mk 16:9-11; Jn 20:11-18): His First Appearance

After Peter and John visited the tomb and departed, Mary returned and wept alone (Jn 20:11). When she looked into the tomb, she saw two angels in white seated at the head and the foot of where Jesus had lain (Jn 20:12). The angels asked Mary why she had been weeping and her answer indicates that she was still confused and did not comprehend the Resurrection in spite of what the angels had previously recalled to her mind (Lk 24:6). She was still overcome with grief and had obtained no comfort from the response of the apostles. Then, in one of the most compassionate and tender scenes of Jesus' ministry, John records Jesus' appearance to Mary (Jn 20:14-18). Mary's assumption that the gardener had spoken to her and had possibly taken Jesus away was only logical. Also, Mary knew that Jesus had been condemned as a criminal. The authorities believed that the body of a criminal would defile a tomb and prevent its further use. So, Mary probably supposed that they planned to dispose of the body of Jesus by the normal procedure used for the body of a criminal – to dispose of it by burning it in the Valley of Gehenna – a garbage dump.⁵

I believe that Jesus' appearance to Mary was a result of the fact that Mary had responded so appreciatively to the fact that Jesus had healed her.⁶ She was the last one at the Cross and the first one at the grave. This should be an encouragement to the new believer in Christ, for that is what Mary was. She had not had time to grow in spiritual knowledge and Phase 2 experiential faith. Yet, her love for the Lord, her appreciation for what he had done, was very evident in her actions. From her perspective, she had lost everything when Jesus died. Yet Jesus responded to such innocent faith by assuring her through His appearance that she had not lost anything. Rather, she had a basis for tremendous hope after this life. Mary had no hope for a life free from pain in this life for she had nothing. However, God can work most

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), 499.

⁴ Ibid., 500.

⁵ Ibid., 501.

⁶ Only Luke comments that 'seven demons had gone out' of her, but there is no evidence that Jesus had exorcized her and she was probably an epileptic, for epilepsy was commonly attributed to possession by evil spirits. See Luke 7:44-50 and Ronald Brownrigg, *Who's Who in the New Testament* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 299.

effectively in the lives of those who see the things of this world for what they really are – passing and transient. When the Lord gives the vision of what is to come in eternity to a believer with this mindset, that believer can have joy amidst the suffering knowing that he has an eternal home awaiting him that will be free from the suffering and hardship of this life.

The Appearance to the Women (Matthew 28:9-10): His Second Appearance

Some of the other women who had previously been at the tomb were returning to the tomb. On their way, Jesus met them and greeted them. Unlike Mary Magdalene, they immediately recognized Jesus, but like Mary they clasped His feet and held on to him. Jesus instructed them also to tell His disciples that they should go to Galilee where He would meet them. In referring to His disciples, Jesus referred to them as His brothers which indicated the spiritual fellowship and the affection He had for these men.

Seen By Peter (1 Co 15:5): His Third Appearance

At the time that Paul wrote, there were a number of witnesses to the resurrection that Paul mentions in his teaching on the subject in 1 Corinthians 15. At the time of Paul's writing, as well as today, the fact of the resurrection was an important part of the Gospel message. A Messiah Who suffered and died and Who was also resurrected gave these early believers (and us) hope (confident assurance) of the fact that one day He will return to establish the long awaited Messianic Kingdom here on this earth. He was not just a suffering Messiah, but a risen Lord. Paul mentions Jesus' appearance to Peter exclusively.

Seen By the Other Apostles (1Co 15:5 cf. Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25-28): His Fifth and Sixth Appearances

While Luke mentions the fifth appearance, he does not mention the sixth appearance of Jesus. While it is important that Jesus appeared to His Own disciples to affirm His choice of them and His continuing purpose for them, the validity of the resurrection to an outsider needed to be established by His appearances to others. Therefore, He appeared to 500 believers at once.

Appeared to 500 (Matt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15-18; 1 Co 15:6): His Eighth Appearance

At the time that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, a person could have verified the truthfulness of the resurrection since the majority of the 500 were still living.

Appeared to His Own Half-Brother James (1 Co 15:7): His Ninth Appearance.

Paul mentions this appearance exclusively also. In addition, Paul mentions Jesus' appearance to him which of course occurred after the 50 day period between the Resurrection and Pentecost. Paul mentions that appearance last and refers to himself as "one born out of due time." This is probably a reference to the unique way in which Paul became an apostle – he did not have the benefit of an initial training period with Christ. Thus, Paul became an apostle abruptly, with no opportunity for earthly contact with Christ or His teaching. Yet, it was to Paul, the least of the least, that God gave the mystery doctrines of the Church Age.

The Report of the Guard (Matthew 28:11-15): An Appearance of Angels, Not Jesus

Some guards had been appointed to insure that the tomb remained secure. However, they had been overwhelmed by the angel that came to roll back the stone (Mt 28:2-4). They went to the chief priests who had appointed them in order to report what had taken place. The chief priests did not question the veracity of the report; rather they summoned the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin then bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money to lie and say that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole His body while they slept. Evidently, they didn't keep the secret too well since we know the facts through Matthew's Gospel account. In addition, everyone questioned the veracity of this story since it would have been impossible to know the identity of those who stole the body if they had been asleep. They trusted their fate to the Sanhedrin because they could have been executed by the Roman authorities for dereliction of duty.

"It is interesting that while the disciples disbelieved the report of the Resurrection and sought confirmation of it, the Sanhedrin believed the report and sought an explanation to deny it."⁷

The Appearance to the Two on the Road to Emmaus (24:13-35): His Fourth Appearance

⁷ Ibid., 502.

We know very little about these men except that they were disciples and one of them had a Greek name, Cleopas (v. 18). It is possible that he may have been a foreigner who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and was staying with an unnamed friend in Emmaus. There is no certainty regarding the location of Emmaus except Luke indicates that it was about 7 miles from Jerusalem – about a 2 or 2.5 hour walk at a slow pace.

It would have been common for people headed in the same direction to join together as they walked in order to pass the time talking. They did not immediately recognize Him for “their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him” (Lk 24:16). Perhaps Jesus restrained their vision in order to have time to determine their true spiritual condition as either a believer or an unbeliever. Their reply to Jesus as He questioned them indicated that Jesus’ ministry and death were known to everyone in the city and to most in the nation. Therefore, the entire nation was responsible for their decision in regard to what they believed about Jesus.

There were several things that they did believe as indicated by their reply to Jesus: 1) Jesus was a prophet; 2) His validity had been authenticated by His words and works; 3) the priests and rulers of the nation had crucified Jesus; 4) Jesus was the one who was going to redeem Israel, thereby bring redemption from sin and deliverance from bondage to the Gentiles in fulfillment of the covenants that God had made with Abraham and their other ancestors. Even the prophets of Israel had a hard time correlating suffering with glory (1 Pe 1:10-12), much less these disciples. However, Jesus harmonized the conflict in Scripture as they walked along. The urgency of the invitation by these disciples to have Him stay with them reflected the positive volition that Jesus desired to find.