

The "Harmony" of the Events Between Jesus' Resurrection and His Ascension

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ABOUT THIS OUTLINE

This outline was prepared using the NIV translation. Then it was changed to the ASV of 1901 (which is now in the public domain), because of copyright restrictions. If one prefers the KJV, he will find that, though there are a few textual differences, only one has any impact on the chronological arrangement given in this outline - and that difference is only slight. For that part of the outline (which deals with Matthew 28:9), an alternate sequence of events is presented.

Though the original writings are inspired, this outline definitely isn't! It is not the "final answer" to the question of how the different accounts go together. There are many details not included in the accounts, including the time frame of many of the events. (An attempt has been made to point out areas of uncertainty.) Also, within a single appearance, there may be some question as to the exact chronological timing of some of the minor details. (Example: Do the women remember Jesus' words (Luke 24:8) before or after the angel tells them to look at the place where Jesus had been laid (Matthew 28:6 and Mark 16:6)?)

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. It is a common feature for one account to mention the total number of individuals involved in some specific event, and another to mention only the predominant or main characters. Example: Some accounts will mention the presence of two angels at the resurrection, whereas others will mention only one angel - the one who speaks to the people. [This feature is common throughout the gospels.] See the additional comments in a section below.
2. When people are quoted, the quotations will be an accurate representation of what the individual said, but not necessarily the exact words. (This is due, in part, to the fact that the words were *spoken* in Aramaic - the language predominantly spoken by the Jews - but were *written* in Greek - the "official" language of the entire Roman Empire.) As a result, different accounts will often say the same thing, but in different ways. Furthermore, the written accounts will not necessarily include everything that was mentioned by the speaker. As a result, different accounts will often include different sections of the total speech. [These features were accepted literary practices at the time these accounts were written, and occur frequently throughout the gospels.]
3. There are different stages in the people's acceptance (belief) of what happened at the resurrection. For example, a person may reach the point of believing that Jesus rose from the dead, yet still not understand that his resurrection included his physical body. A person may conclude that Jesus has risen from the dead, but think (incorrectly) that he is a spirit.

4. John tends to use the Roman concept of "day" - which is similar to what most people use today; the other gospels tend to use the Jewish concept of "day" - which begins at 6 p.m. during what we would call the previous evening (6 hours earlier).
5. The authors of these various accounts of the resurrection were interested primarily in communicating the message of Jesus - who he was (and is), and what he did, etc. It was *not* their primary purpose to arrange everything in chronological order. Some things are in chronological order, but the authors considered themselves free to place things in other arrangements (such as topical), if doing so would accomplish their purposes better than chronological order. [This might not necessarily be an issue in the accounts of the post-resurrection events, but it does occur frequently in the gospel accounts.]
6. The phrases "the eleven" and "the twelve" are both used (in different accounts), to refer to the entire group of apostles (with Judas no longer present). In some instances, these terms were used as titles - names that designated the entire group, even if not all were present. (Matthew, Mark and Luke use the word "eleven"; whereas John and 1 Corinthians use the word "twelve.")
7. Depending on the context, the term "disciple" sometimes refers only to the 11 remaining apostles; and sometimes to any (or all) of the followers of Jesus. Within the scope of the verses in this outline, the term "apostle" is used only in reference to the 11 remaining apostles, and the term "brother" is used as a synonym to the term "disciple."
8. At times, an author will compile a selection of Jesus' teachings, which were spoken on different occasions, and present them together at one time. In such cases, the author may choose to omit details that he would consider unimportant and trivial, such as the chronological order of the various teachings.
9. Jesus most likely said the same things on several occasions, using repetition to help his disciples to remember them better. (Others did this, for example, Peter - 2 Peter 1:12-15.) As a result, two accounts may present similar teachings at different chronological times in their accounts.

SOME OF THE PREDOMINANT THEMES FOUND IN THE RESURRECTION-TO-ASCENSION ACCOUNTS

These themes would influence what information the accounts would include.

- **THEMES COMMON TO MANY (OR ALL) ACCOUNTS** - The empty tomb; seeing the resurrected Jesus (incl. the fact that he has a physical body); the good news (to be communicated to others); the ascension.
- **MATTHEW** - Going to Galilee to see Jesus; the truth vs. the lie.
- **MARK** - The unbelief of the disciples.
- **LUKE** - The fact that both Old Testament prophecy and Jesus' own predictions were fulfilled.
- **JOHN** - A few selected events described in greater detail.
- **ACTS** - Being called to be witnesses around the world.
- **1 CORINTHIANS** - Many appearances of Jesus.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT REFERENCES TO DIFFERENT NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUALS, IN PARALLEL ACCOUNTS

Opponents of the Bible will be quick to point out that parallel accounts of an event often mention different numbers of people (or angels, etc.) as being present. At the first visit to the tomb, Matthew mentions two women, whereas Luke mentions three, and says that others were also present - a total of at least five people. Whether through ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation, these opponents are quick to point out that this happens many times in the New Testament, but they fail to mention that this was an accepted practice at the time these documents were written. Instead, they superimpose their own criteria onto the Word, claiming that each account **MUST** always mention the same number of people, or else the Bible is in "error." They should, instead, take heed to the words of James, who reminds us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19) ... and not be so eager to jump to false conclusions.

Rarely, if ever, will a single account include every possible detail surrounding an event. Each account will include what the author considers important for the message he is communicating. One author may mention the total number of people present, and another may focus only on the main characters who were involved. But this doesn't mean that the one author forgot that other people were present. Take, for example, the apostle John, who only mentions Mary Magdalene, when he mentions the first visit to the tomb. (This is the same incident in which Matthew mentions 2 women, Mark mentions 3, and Luke mentions at least 5.) John knows others were present, as testified by his quote of what Mary said to the disciples: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2). The word "we" indicates that more than one person was present when Mary visited the tomb! But since John's intent was to write about the woman who *first* saw Jesus, she is the only one he directly mentions.

Events up Through the Resurrection; The Resurrection of Others near Jerusalem

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John | 1 Corinthians |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Jesus' death; Earthquake; tombs break open; Jesus' burial | [27:51] ... and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; [52a] and the tombs were opened; | | | | [15:3] For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4a] and that he was buried; |
| Just after the Sabbath had ended (=Saturday evening). Spices purchased. | | [16:1] And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. | [Reference to the spices in 24:1] | | |
| Sunday, early morning. Mary Magdalene starts her journey before sunrise; but as a group, they reach the tomb after sunrise. Luke mentions all the women; the other accounts mention only selected individuals. See Note 1. | [28:1] Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. | [2] And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. | [24:1] But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. [See v. 10 for the number of women.] | [20:1a] Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, | |

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | 1 Corinthians |
|--|--|---|---|
| Before the women arrive: The resurrection; the earthquake; the guards see an angel. See Notes 2 and 3. | [2] And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. [3] His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: [4] and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. | [v. 9a] Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, ... | [4b] and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; |
| Holy people (whose tombs broke open during the previous earthquake) come back to life and appear to some people. See Notes 4, 5 and 6. | [27:52b] and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; [53] and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many. | | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) Altogether, a minimum of 5 women made this first visit to the tomb: Mary Magdalene (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10; and John 20:1), Mary the mother of James and Joses (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; and Luke 24:10), Joanna (Luke 24:10) and at least two more women ("others" in Luke 24:10). One of these "others" was probably Salome, who was with the women the previous evening, when they bought the spices (Mark 16:1).
- 2) In the Bible, angels are described as looking like men, not like women (or children) with wings.
- 3) The guards probably left the scene before the women arrived. There is no further mention of them at the tomb.
- 4) The appearance of the resurrected holy people to various individuals probably occurred throughout the day and (maybe) in the days that followed.
- 5) Most likely, this event would have created no more of a sensation than when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. A person can become so hard-hearted that nothing impresses him. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, the religious leaders weren't impressed - instead, they didn't like it and wanted to kill him! (John 12:10)
- 6) No further details are given about these people. If they came back to life with "mortal" bodies (like they had before they died), they would have lived and eventually died, the way people normally live and die. If they came back with immortal "resurrection bodies," there is no reason they would have stayed (or even *wanted* to stay) on earth longer than they had to - just enough time to accomplish their mission. (Compare with Paul's attitude, in Philippians 1:21-23.) If this second scenario were the case, they might have remained on earth for just a short time, or until the time of Jesus' ascension. In either case, the fact that their *bodies* were raised to life could be considered a sign that Jesus' resurrection also included his body.

The Women Visit the Tomb, See the Angels, and Go to the Disciples

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | Luke | John |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Question asked just before the women arrive at the tomb. | | [3] And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? | | |
| The women arrive [The angel is not on the stone] | | [16:4] and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. | [24:2] And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. | [20:1b] and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. |
| They enter the tomb and do not find Jesus. | | [5a] And entering into the tomb, | [3] And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. | |
| Angels now inside the tomb; at least one (apparently the main speaker) sits down. | [Compare to the angel's appearance in 28:3.] | [5b]they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; | [4] And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: | [Compare to the angel's appearance in 20:12.] |
| The women's reaction | | [5c] and they were amazed. | [5a] and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, | |
| The angel speaking: 1) Don't be afraid. 2) You're looking for Jesus... 3) Don't look for the living among the dead. 4) He has risen. | [5] And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. [6a] He is not here; for he is risen, ... | [6a] And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: | [5b] they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? [6a] He is not here, but is risen: | |

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | Luke |
|--|---|---|---|
| 5) He told you this would happen. | [6b] ... even as he said. | | [6b] remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, [7] saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. |
| 6) See where he had been laid. | [6c] Come, see the place where the Lord lay. | [6b] behold, the place where they laid him! | |
| The women remember Jesus' words. | | | [8] And they remembered his words, |
| The angel continues to speak: 7) Tell his disciples he is alive. 8) Go to Galilee, where you'll see him. (See Note 1.) 9) I have told you this (which is the same thing he told you). | [7] And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. | [7] But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. | |
| The women are bewildered, and quickly leave the tomb, speaking to no one, as they go to the disciples | [8a] And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, | [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. | |

| Comments | Matthew | Luke | John |
|--|---|---|---|
| The women report all this to the disciples (and the others), but it makes no sense to them. (Also, a list given of the women present at this point in time.) See Note 2. | [8b] and ran to bring his disciples word. | [9] and returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. [10] Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James: and the other women with them told these things unto the apostles. [11] And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them. | [2] She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) The disciples did not go to Galilee until after they had seen Jesus, two (or more) times, in Jerusalem. (At this point in the outline, they still didn't believe what had happened.)

2) The women still do not understand that the resurrection included the physical body; the others haven't yet come to the point of believing (or understanding) *any* of Jesus' words about the resurrection.

Peter and John Visit the Tomb

| Comments | Luke | John |
|---|--|--|
| Peter and John run to the tomb. See Note 1. | [24:12a] But Peter arose, and ran unto the tomb; | [20:3] Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. |
| John looks into the tomb. See Note 2. | | [4] And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; [5] and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. |
| Peter enters and inspects the tomb. | [12b] and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; | [6] Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, [7] and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. |
| John enters the tomb. He now believes that the body is gone, but still doesn't understand the resurrection. | | [8] Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. |
| They return home, uncertain as to the full meaning of what has happened. See Note 3. | [12c] and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass. | [9] For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. [10] So the disciples went away again unto their own home. |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) The women (at least some of them) also return to the tomb - see John 20:11. (But they probably didn't try to keep-up with the apostles, who were running!)
- 2) The angels do not show themselves to Peter and John.
- 3) The two apostles now believe that something happened, but do not yet understand it.

Summary Statement in Acts: Covers Nearly All That Happened Between the Resurrection and the Ascension

| Comments | Acts |
|--|---|
| SUMMARY STATEMENT IN ACTS (covers most of the events that transpired between the resurrection and the ascension). His appearance occurred over a space of 40 days. | [1:3] To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: |

Jesus Appears First to Mary, Then to the Other Women

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | John |
|--|---|--|---|
| Mary again looks into the tomb and sees the angels. [At this point, both angels are seated.] | | | [20:11] But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; [12] and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. [13] And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. |
| Tearful Mary talks to a man, but does not look directly at him. See Note 1. | [28:9a] And behold, Jesus met them, | [16:9b] he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. | [14] When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. [15] Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. |
| Mary recognizes it is Jesus and looks directly at him. See Note 2. | | | [16] Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher. |
| [The other women hear this, and come.] All are greeted. | [9b] saying, All hail. | | |
| In their joy, they all hold on to Jesus. | [9c] And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. | | |

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | John |
|---|---|--|---|
| Jesus cannot stay at this time; the women must take a message to the apostles. | | | [17] Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. |
| Jesus' message for the disciples (continued). See Notes 3 and 4. | [10] Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me. | | |
| Mary and the others go to tell the disciples. | [11a] Now while they were going, | [10a] She went ... | [18a] Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, |
| The guards report to the chief priests; the chief priests devise a cover-up. See Note 5. | [11b] behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. [12] And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, [13] saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. [14] And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. [15] So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day. | | |
| The disciples are told the good news. See Note 6. | | [10b] ...and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. | [18b] I have seen the Lord; and that he had said these things unto her. |
| Their initial response to the fact that Jesus was physically alive: unbelief. See Note 7. | | [11] And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved. | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) "Jesus met them" - first Mary, then a moment later, the rest of the women. At the time Mary first sees Jesus, the other women were elsewhere, perhaps scattered about in the garden (see John 19:41, compare with 20:15). Once they heard the talking (perhaps when Mary cried out "Rabboni!"), they would have quickly returned to the scene.
- 2) In many cultures, it is a common practice for people to not look directly into the face of strangers (especially a woman to a man). At this point, Mary still thought Jesus was someone else, and would not have looked directly at him. (In addition, she also could have been looking down toward the ground, or had blurred vision from her tears.)
- 3) Jesus tells them to not be afraid. When they went to the disciples the previous time (after the angel gave them instructions - Matthew 28:8), they were quite fearful.
- 4) This will be the second time the disciples are told to go to Galilee. Here, it is Jesus (rather than the angel) who gives them the message.
- 5) The guards probably left the tomb before the women arrived. This event (reporting to the chief priests) would have occurred about the same time as the above events. [This statement is like a parentheses in the account, contrasting the truth with the lie.]
- 6) It was customary to weep for many days after a person's death. In this case, however, their sorrow may have been intensified, since they had been previously told that Jesus' body was missing (and they did not yet understand why).
- 7) There seems to be different stages in their belief (acceptance) of what happened. These may be some of the stages: a) acceptance that Jesus' body was gone; b) acceptance that something (perhaps miraculous) has happened; c) acceptance that Jesus was alive - but thinking that he was a spirit; and d) acceptance that Jesus' resurrection included the resurrection of his physical body.

[Alternate Interpretation, Based on the KJV Translation]

The KJV adds the phrase, "as they went to tell his disciples," at the beginning of verse 9. This is a textual variation that many of the later manuscripts contain, but which is not present in many of the more ancient ones. If one would accept this phrase as part of the account, it would require a slight variation in the above section of the outline: It would indicate that Jesus first appeared to Mary (same as above), but that the other women did not see Jesus until he re-appeared, while they were on their way to the disciples. A possible sequence of events is given below, with only the differences given in detail. (This arrangement with the KJV variant requires a few additional details to be assumed, which are not directly stated. These are given either in brackets, or labeled as "implied.")

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | John |
|---|--|--------------------|---|
| Mary sees the angels; talks to a man; recognizes him as Jesus, etc. | [see the above outline] | | |
| Mary holds on to Jesus (implied) and is told to not do so; she is given a message for the apostles. | | | [17] Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. |
| [Jesus is no longer there (implied). Either Mary gets the other women, or the other women return to Mary (implied).] They start to go to the disciples. See Note 1. | [28:9a] And [KJV: as they went to tell his disciples,] | | |
| Jesus appears to them all and greets them. | [9b] And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. | | |
| In their joy, they hold on to Jesus. See Note 2. | [9c] And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him | | |
| An additional message for the disciples. | [10] Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me. | | |
| They continue on their way, to tell the disciples. | [11a] Now while they were going, ... | [10a] She went ... | [18a] Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, |
| The chief priest's cover-up, the disciples hear and don't believe the good news, etc. | [see the above outline] | | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) In this scenario, the women would not have joined Mary as quickly as in the other scenario. (They could have been further away and not heard the conversation, or Jesus' appearance may have been too brief.)

2) Most likely, one of the following events occurred: 1) they are also told they cannot continue to hold on to him, as Mary originally was. Or, as an alternate possibility, 2) Jesus may have ascended to the Father, after seeing Mary, and then returned. (There is no indication as to why he needed to go to the Father. He was not necessarily referring to his final departure, recorded in other accounts.) At this point (if he ascended - temporarily - to the Father), it might not be necessary for him to tell the women to let go of him. At any rate, he *does* permit people to touch him, at later appearances (example: John 20:27).

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples and to Peter

| Comments | Mark | Luke |
|---|---|--|
| Probably in the afternoon. It was "nearly evening" when they arrived at the house (see 24:29). Jesus appears to the two (but initially he does not let them recognize him). See Note 1. | [16:12] And after these things he was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country. | [24:13] And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. [14] And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. [15] And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. [16] But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. |
| He asks them why they are so sad. | | [17] And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. [18] And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? [19a] And he said unto them, What things? |
| They report what has happened. See Note 2. | | [19b] And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: [20] and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. [21] But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. [22] Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; [23] and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. [24] And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. |
| Jesus rebukes them. | | [25] And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? [27] And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. |

| Comments | Mark | Luke | 1 Corinthians |
|--|---|--|---|
| Jesus makes himself known. It is "nearly evening" (or earlier). | | [28] And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. [29] And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. [30] And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. [31] And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. [32] And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? | |
| The two return to Jerusalem, to tell the others. | [13a] And they went away and told it unto the rest: | [33] And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, | |
| They are told about Jesus' appearance to Peter. See Notes 3 and 4. | | [34] saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. | [15:5a] and that he appeared to Cephas; |
| The two tell about Jesus' appearance to them. | | [35] And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread. | |
| The disciples still do not believe the physical aspect of Jesus' resurrection. | [13b] neither believed they them. | | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) It could have even been early- or mid-afternoon. The expression of hospitality was considered an important part of life. And it could be expressed for many hours - or even days.

2) They had heard about the women's first visit and about the visit by Peter and John. They had not yet heard about Jesus' appearance to the women.

2) Sequence of events: Jesus' appearance to Peter could have happened earlier in the day, before his appearance to the two on the road.

3) At this point, Peter (also called Cephas and Simon) probably thought that Jesus appeared to him as a spirit. (Compare to Luke 24:37 and following.)

Jesus Appears to All the Apostles (Except Thomas, Who Was Not Present)

| Comments | Mark | Luke | John |
|---|---|--|--|
| Sunday evening, while they were still discussing the events of the day. | | [24:36a] And as they spake these things, | [20:19a] When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, |
| Jesus appears to them. | [16:14a] And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; [See Note 1.] | [36b] he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. | [19b] Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. |
| They still don't understand the physical aspect of the resurrection. See Note 2. | | [37] But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. | |
| Jesus rebukes them. See Note 3. | [14b] and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen. | [38] And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? | |
| He shows them that he is not a ghost/spirit: he has a body. | | [39] See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. [40] And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. | [20a] And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. |
| They are filled with joy, but for a while, they thought it was "too good to be true." | | [41] And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? [42] And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. [43] And he took it, and ate before them. | [20b] The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. |

| Comments | Mark | Luke | John |
|--|--|---|--|
| Jesus explains why things happened the way they did. | | <p>[44] And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.</p> <p>[45] Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; [46] and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; ...</p> | |
| Jesus' initial commission to them. See Notes 4, 5 and 6. | <p>[15] And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. [16] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. [17] And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.</p> | <p>[47] and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] Ye are witnesses of these things.</p> | <p>[21] Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. [22] And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: [23] whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.</p> |
| Thomas, who was not present, still has doubts about the physical aspect of the resurrection. See Note 7. | | | <p>[24] But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.</p> |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) Mark 16:14a could also apply to the next section (where Jesus appears to the group, and Thomas is present).
- 2) One possible reason for this: They did not expect a physical body to appear suddenly in front of them, or to disappear without warning (as in Luke 24:31).
- 3) Mark 16:14b could be a summary statement that included the rebuke he gave both here (with Thomas absent) and at his subsequent visit (with Thomas present). Or it could be a summary of what he said on several visits.
- 4) Luke 24:44+ (possibly up to v. 48) could be placed here, or could be a summary statement of various things he said at numerous times during the 40 days before his ascension. Though included here, it is treated as a summary statement at the end of the outline. Verse 49, however, had to occur at a later time, for they hadn't yet gone to Galilee (unless it was being implied that they should stay in Jerusalem *after they returned* from there).
- 5) Mark 16:15-18 could be a summary statement - a compilation of what Jesus said on several occasions. It is included here, as well as with the summary statements (at the end of this outline).
- 6) John 20:21-23 - There are some parallels between this statement about the Holy Spirit (where the apostles are told to receive the Holy Spirit) and the statements given later (in which a future reception of the Holy Spirit is being promised). Though they were being given the Holy Spirit at this time, the fullest expression of the Holy Spirit would not be given until later - Acts 2.
- 7) Thomas could have been present earlier, but left before Jesus' appearance.

Jesus Appears to All the Apostles; Thomas Is Present

| Comments | Mark | John | 1 Corinthians |
|--|---|--|--|
| A week later. The apostles - including Thomas - see Jesus and accept the fact that Jesus is <i>physically</i> alive. See Note 1. | [Note: The rebuke in 16:14b may also apply here.] | [20:26] And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. [27] Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. [28] Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. [29] Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. | [15:5b] then to the twelve; [See Notes 2 and 3.] |
| [Editorial comment by John - application to us: We should <i>also</i> accept this fact!] | | [30] Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: [31] but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) The text does not say whether or not Thomas actually touched Jesus. But other people had previously done so. (Example: Matthew 28:9.)
- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:5b could also be a summary statement, which would include both this and the previous visit (and perhaps other visits not mentioned). The term "the twelve" is being used as a title that signifies the group as a whole, whether or not all the individuals were present. It is also used this way in John 20:24.
- 3) The idea of using the term "twelve" to represent an entire group was not new. The nation Israel was also described as the "twelve tribes" (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; and elsewhere). But technically, because Joseph received a double-blessing (when Jacob counted Joseph's two sons as though they were his own - Genesis 48:5), there were thirteen tribes!

Jesus Appears to Some of the Apostles, on the Shore of Galilee; Peter Is "Re-commissioned"

| Comments | Matthew | John |
|--|--|---|
| The disciples go to Galilee. | [28:16a] But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, | |
| In Galilee. Seven disciples go fishing, catch nothing. | | [21:1]After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise. [2] There was together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. [3] Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing. |
| They see Jesus (at a distance); catch fish; recognize that the person is Jesus; etc. See Note 1. | | <p>[4] But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.</p> <p>[5] Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.</p> <p>[6] And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.</p> <p>[7] That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. [8] But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes. [9] So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.</p> <p>[10] Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.</p> |

| Comments | John |
|---|--|
| They had no reason to question Jesus' identity. See Notes 2. | [11] Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent. [12] Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. [13] Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise. [14] This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. |
| Peter is re-commissioned; told about how he would die. See Note 3. | <p>[15] So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.</p> <p>[16] He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.</p> <p>[17] He saith unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. [18] Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. [19] Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.</p> |
| Peter told to follow Jesus no matter what happens to the others. | <p>[20] Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? [21] Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?</p> <p>[22] Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.</p> |
| [Editorial comment by John: the misinterpretation that some had, concerning John's death; final comments in John's gospel.] | <p>[23] This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? [24] This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.</p> <p>[25] And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.</p> |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) He had taken off his long outer garment (probably a robe, which reached almost down to the floor), which would have been too cumbersome to wear while fishing, casting nets, etc. At the time this account was written, the concept of being "naked" included not only a total lack of clothes, but also circumstances in which a person was wearing less clothes than appropriate. Though appropriate for fishing, the lack of the outer garment would have been considered inappropriate for greeting a person of high honor (such as Jesus).

2) Jesus' third appearance to the disciples (apostles), as a group, does not include his appearance to Peter alone, nor to the two disciples (who were *not* apostles) along the road to Emmaus. This event had to occur *before* the pre-arranged visit on the mountain in Galilee (which would probably have been his fourth appearance).

3) Peter would remain loyal to Jesus - even to the point of dying on a cross, as Jesus did. Peter's previous betrayal of Jesus could have been motivated by fear of such a death. If so, this comment by Jesus would be a reassurance to Peter that he would truly remain faithful, and would not deny Jesus again.

Additional Appearances by Jesus

| Comments | Matthew | 1 Corinthians |
|--|---|--|
| [Pre-arranged visit.] They see Jesus at a distance. See Notes 1 and 2. | [28:16b] ... unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. | [15:6] then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; |
| Worship and doubt. See Note 3. | [17] And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. | |
| Jesus comes closer. | [18a] And Jesus came to them... | |
| Jesus speaks to them. See Note 4. | [28:18b] and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. [19] Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: [20] teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. | |
| Unspecified time. See Note 5. | | [7a] then he appeared to James; |
| Unspecified time. See Note 6. | | [7b] then to all the apostles; |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) The appearance to the 500 most likely occurred at this point, after Jesus' third visit to the apostles. Most of Jesus' disciples lived in that area (Galilee). Although it could have been a separate appearance, it most likely would have occurred at the same time Jesus appeared to the eleven on the mountain. Being a pre-arranged meeting, word could have been quickly communicated to them by the apostles.

2) At the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (approximately 25 years later), the majority of these 500 eye-witnesses were still alive; only some had died.

3) Verse 18 tells us that Jesus approached them, indicating that he was further away when they first saw him. There is no mention of a miraculous appearance here, such as happened previously (when he suddenly appeared among the apostles, in the locked room). The doubt could have been the initial reaction of some, if there was, in fact, no miraculous appearance. (When he came closer to them and they saw him better, their doubts would have gone away.) Other possibilities include: 1) If the 500 were also present, it could indicate the initial reaction of some of them. Or: 2) It is grammatically possible (though not always obvious in translations) that this could be a parenthetical comment referring to the doubts that they previously had.

4) All of the content of Matthew 20:18b-20 could have been spoken at the time of this appearance. Or these verses could be a summary statement of what Jesus said at various times during the 40 days (including at this appearance). Though included here, these verses are also included as a summary statement, in a section below.

5) The appearance to James would have occurred at an unspecified time, sometime after the appearance to the 500.

6) This appearance to the apostles could refer to: 1) the appearance to the eleven in Galilee (only IF the appearance to the 500 occurred *before* the appearance to the eleven, on the mountain - not too likely), or b) the one just prior to the ascension (mentioned below), or c) an unspecified appearance between these two events.

Last Recorded Appearance Before the Ascension

| Comments | Luke | Acts |
|---|--|--|
| Jesus gives them some instructions. See Notes 1 and 2. | | [1:4] and, being assembled together with them, he charged them |
| The promise of the Holy Spirit's power. [Stay in Jerusalem until you receive it.] | [24:49] And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high. [See Note 3.] | not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: [5] For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence. |
| Question about Israel and the kingdom. | | [6] They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? [7] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. |
| Additional comments about the promised Holy Spirit. | | [8a] But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: |
| Commissioned to be witnesses. | | [8b] and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) The time of this appearance is most likely immediately before the walk to the Mount of Olives and Jesus' ascension. Grammatically, the phrase "after this" (in v. 9) could allow for an earlier appearance, but this is not too likely.
- 2) These instructions are also included with the summary statements, below.
- 3) Luke 24:49, along with some of the previous verses (possibly as far back as verse 44), are most likely part of a "summary statement," compiling various comments made by Jesus at various times. Verse 49 is included here because this is a potential time that the message found in the verse could have been stated. The entire passage (from verse 44) is included with the summary statements, below.

Jesus' Ascension into Heaven; Events Immediately Before and after this Event

| Comments | Mark | Luke | Acts |
|--|---|---|--|
| Some time after the comments Jesus made, in the previous verses. See Note 1. | [16:19a] So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, | | [1:9a] And when he had said these things, |
| Journey to Bethany: just prior to the ascension. See Notes 2 and 3. | | [24:50a] And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: | |
| Final blessing | | [50b] and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. [51a] And it came to pass, while he blessed them, | |
| Ascension | [19b] was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. | [51b] he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. | [9b] as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. |
| Their initial reactions and comments by the angels (appearing as men) | | [52a] And they worshipped him, | [10] And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [11] who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. |
| Return to Jerusalem | | [52b] and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: | [12] Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey off. |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1) The comments made by Jesus, in the preceding verses (at least the Mark and Luke passages) may be summaries of what he said on several occasions. If so, they would not necessarily be what he said *just prior to* his ascension.

2) This event occurred on a tract of land on the Mt. of Olives, that went by the name "Bethany."
(Compare with Mark 11:1 and Acts 1:12.) The ascension did NOT occur at the *city* named "Bethany."
This tract of land could have been comparable to our concept of "township": the city of "Bethany" would have been only a small part of the entire township that bore the same name.

3) Since only Luke mentions the walk to Bethany, some of the comments recorded before Mark 16:19 and Acts 1:9, or at the end of the Matthew account, could have been spoken on the way, or just prior to the ascension.

Events Occurring after the Ascension

| Comments | Mark | Luke | Acts | 1 Corinthians |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Various other events (up through Pentecost) | | | [1:13-2:41] A replacement chosen for Judas; reception of the H.S.; Peter's sermon; etc. | |
| Initially at the temple | | [24:53] and were continually in the temple, blessing God. | [2:42 +] At the temple | |
| Then beginning to spread out across the world. | [16:20] And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen. | | [8:1 +] Beginning to spread-out | |
| Jesus seen by Paul, at his conversion. | | | [9:3 +] | [15:8] and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also. |

Summary Statements - Some of the Things Jesus Taught His Disciples, Between His Resurrection and Ascension

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | Luke | Acts |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Helping them understand the Scriptures. See Note 1. | | | [24:44] And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. [45] Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; | |
| The gospel ("good news") - a summary of what the O.T. Scriptures say. | | | [46] and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; [47a] and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name... | |
| Jesus' Authority - the basis for what they were to do. | [28:18b] and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. [19a] Go ye therefore, ... | | | |
| As witnesses of this good news, they were to tell others about it (worldwide). | [19b] and make disciples of all the nations, | [16:15] And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. | [47b] ... unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] Ye are witnesses of these things. | [8b] and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. |

| Comments | Matthew | Mark | Luke | Acts |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| About those who would accept the good news. | [19c] baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: [20a] teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: | [16a] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; | | |
| About those who would <i>not</i> accept the good news. | | [16b] but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. | | |
| Signs accompanying those who would accept their message. See Note 2. | | [17] And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. | | |
| The promise of the Holy Spirit's power (so that they could accomplish their task). | | | [49] And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high. | [1:4b] he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: [5] For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence. ... [8a] But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: |

| Comments | Matthew | Acts |
|--|---|---|
| The disciple's question about Israel and the kingdom | | <p>[6] They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?</p> <p>[7] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.</p> |
| Jesus' continued presence (even though he would be physically ascended to heaven). | [20b] and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. | |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- 1) This theme was also present when Jesus talked to the two who were walking to Emmaus.
- 2) The signs mentioned here may have been applicable only to the initial generation of believers - those who heard the apostles.

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Supplementary Chart: The Women Mentioned in the Resurrection-to-Ascension Accounts

| Woman → Verse ↓ | Mary Magdalene | Mary wife of Cleopas | Mary mother of James and Joses | Mary, Jesus' mom | Mom of Zebedee | Jesus' mom's sister | Salome | Joanna | Susanna | Mary sister of Martha / Lazarus | Others |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Matthew 27:55 | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Matthew 27:56 | X | | X | | X | | | | | | |
| Matthew 27:61 | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Matthew 28:1 | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Mark 15:40 | X | | X | | | | X | | | | X |
| Mark 16:1 | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Mark 16:9 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Luke 8:2 | X | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| Luke 10:39/42 | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Luke 24:10 | X | | X | | | | | X | | | |
| John 11:1+ | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| John 10:25 | X | X | | X | | X | | | | | |
| John 20:1 | X | | | | | | | | | | [X] |