

Lesson 60

Time –Next 40 days after 4/7/30 AD, 18 Nisan

In the last lesson we saw the arrival of the three different parties at the Tomb on Mt. Zion on Resurrection Sunday. The first to arrive was Jesus' mother Mary, her sister Salome, and Mary Magdalene. As soon as she saw that the Tomb had been opened, Mary Magdalene took off running to get John and Peter. As Mary Magdalene was headed back down to the Lower City, where John and Peter had taken refuge, she left the other two women behind. They (Mary and Salome) then saw two different angels who each gave them a message to give to Jesus' disciples. They were to tell them that He had risen and that He would go before them into Galilee. When they had received those messages they left, and the second group of women arrived. They were also given the same message by two angels who were seen together. Then they left. Presumably, this message was passed to all the disciples, not just to those of the Twelve. A little after that, Peter and John came running, having been informed in Jerusalem of the empty Tomb by Mary Magdalene. They confirmed for themselves that the Tomb was empty but left without seeing any angels. After they had left, Mary Magdalene arrived. She had lagged behind while coming back to the Tomb after going to Peter and John. First, she entered the Tomb and saw two angels sitting in the Tomb on the bench where Jesus' body had lain. Then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to her standing just outside the Tomb with the rising sun at His back. When she recognized Jesus, she embraced Him, He gave her roughly the same message for the rest of the disciples that the angels had given the other women. After Jesus left her, He appeared to the other women who clasped His feet and worshipped Him. Then all the women went their various ways to tell all the disciples ¹ they could find that Jesus was resurrected and that He would meet them in Galilee. Most of them refused to believe the report until Jesus had appeared to a number of others.

The Four Gospels were very different in their coverage of the events that followed.

The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew covered the rest of Jesus' time from His resurrection to His ascension in five short verses. Just the first verse in Matthew skipped forward to the time when all the disciples had left Jerusalem and had gone to Galilee.

¹ *It should be noted that when the term "disciples" was used in describing the gathering here, they could have included both male and female followers of Jesus. This is demonstrated by the following passage: Matthew 12:47-50 "Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' He replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'"*

Matthew 28:16 **Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.**

Jesus had told them of a certain mountain in Galilee to which they were to go. The mountain wasn't named. I expect that the Holy Spirit did this for a purpose. If it had been named, subsequent generations of Christians would have made that mountain a "Holy Place." I suspect that mountain was the same unnamed place that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians. That was the place where he said more than five hundred saw Jesus at once. We will study that passage in 1 Corinthians later.

Matthew 28:17 **When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some ~~doubted~~ vacillated.**

Although all of those there saw Him, and couldn't help but worship Him, the NIV says that some doubted. This was after at least two personal appearances to most of the eleven specially selected disciples who were to become Apostles sent out into the world. He had appeared to them once in Jerusalem on the first night (Mark 16:14, John 20:19, Luke 24:36), and once eight days later, either in Galilee or on the way (Luke 24:36). The word the NIV translated "doubted" is the Greek $\delta\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ {dē-stā'-zō} which literally means to waver or vacillate between two opinions. The question we should ask is: What did they vacillate about? I suspect they didn't doubt His resurrection or His Messiahship. I believe what they doubted was His command, recorded in verses 19 and 20, to go to the Gentiles and make disciples of them. This was against what most of them had been taught in Judaism. Their deep-rooted attitude was later demonstrated in Acts which recorded the distaste of many of the Jewish Christians against even associating with Gentiles even up to thirty years later. Remember the attitude of the Prophet Jonah toward the Gentile Ninevites when the LORD told him to go preach to them. He tried to flee to Spain, as far away from Nineveh as he could go.

Matthew 28:18 **~~Then~~ *And*² Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

Against their vacillation, Jesus asserted His supreme authority to overrule their false traditions which weren't based on the Old Testament. The Old Testament had prophesied very many times that the Messiah would come for "all peoples."

Matthew 28:19a **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,**

He affirmed by His command that the Gospel and the Word were meant for everyone ("all nations") equally. They were to go to all of them. Of the Eleven, all died in Gentile countries except for John's brother James who was martyred in Jerusalem fourteen years later.

² *The Greek here is $\kappa\alpha\iota$ {kī'}. It is translated "and" in the NAS, ASV, NRSV, and KJV. I think that is a better translation here.*

Matthew 28:19b **baptizing them in the name³ of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

To be baptized means “to be identified with.” This wasn’t referring to ritual baptizing with water, but with the real baptism of being identified with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and their righteousness and holiness. We are adopted as sons. This was what Paul later described in Ephesians:

Ephesians 1:4 “For he chose us in him⁴ before the creation of the world⁵ to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

Matthew 28:20a **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.**

They were to teach the truths of the Living Word, not the false teachings and practices of the Jewish legalists.

Matthew 28:20b **And surely, I am with you always, to the ~~very end of the age~~ *end of ever. Amen***”

Although, after His bodily ascension to the Father, most of them would never see Him again in the way they saw Him at that moment, He would always be present. This is also a promise to each of us.

The phrase that the NIV translated “to the end of the age” is more literally translated “the end of ever.” That properly removes the possible question “Which age?”

The Textus Receptus⁶ ended with the Grecianized spelling (ἀμήν {ä-mā'n}) of the Hebrew word אָמֵן {ä·mān'} which means “verily” or “and so it is.” I have added it to the NIV. This “Amen” should be understood as the comment of the human author Matthew. He was reflecting years later, when he wrote his Gospel, that he had lived to see that this promise was true. Jesus had never left him. This ended the Gospel of Matthew.

The Gospels of Mark and Luke ***The Appearance of Jesus to the Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus***

³ The word translated “name” is the Greek ὄνομα (onoma). Notice that it is in the singular. The Son, the Father and the Spirit have one “name.”

⁴ That is to say that in choosing and electing Christ, God the Father chose us, because we are “in Him.”

⁵ Jesus Christ was “predestined” to be the Savior from before the beginning of the universe.

⁶ The “amen” isn’t in the Codex Sinaiticus. I have commented many times about why the Codex Sinaiticus is unreliable. Yet, sadly, most of the post 1900 English translations have relied on it.

Mark 16:12-13 **Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.**

Mark only has an abbreviated record of this event. Mark only said that two disciples were “walking in the country” and that Jesus appeared to them in a “different form.” This was to say that He wasn’t recognizable at first. Mark didn’t identify them or even tell us what day it was that they were walking in the county. It only says that it was “afterward” or after the time that Mary Magdalene reported to the disciples that she had seen Jesus.

Luke gave a much fuller account of this episode.

Luke 24:13 **Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles ⁷ from Jerusalem.**

Luke tells us that this happened the same day that Jesus was resurrected. Luke also said that it involved two of the disciples, but he also tells us that they were walking to the village of Emmaus. We know from a later verse that these weren’t any of the Eleven. Emmaus was about 7 miles WNW of Jerusalem.

One must ask the question: “Why were these disciples on the road that day?” I can’t help thinking that these were two of the seventy special male disciples that Jesus had sent two by two into the cities of Judah ahead of Him in Luke 10:1. They had been part of His permanent entourage for at least half a year since He had come out of Galilee. We know that two days was the minimum amount of time that a Jew was supposed to stay in Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁸ They couldn’t have left the next day as that was a Sabbath when travel was forbidden. So, this Sunday was the first day they could have travelled. We aren’t told why they were on the road that day, but it certainly looks like they had already given up being obedient to the Word. We know that they had already been told by the women of Jesus’ instructions to his disciples to go to Galilee (verses 22-23). Emmaus wasn’t on the road to Galilee.

Luke 24:14 **They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.**

They wouldn’t have been talking just about the crucifixion, but also about everything that had followed. They had been told about the empty tomb and supposed resurrection which had been reported by the women to the other disciples before they left.

Luke 24:15-16 **As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.**

⁷ *In the original Greek it is “sixty stadion,” or about 6.82 miles.*

⁸ *Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book 1, Chapter 10: “Only on the two first days of the Feast of Passover was personal attendance in the Temple necessary.”*

Jesus walked up alongside them and joined their conversation. It was no problem for the God who created the universe to keep them from recognizing Him.⁹

Luke 24:17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast.

When they were asked to share their experiences with this stranger, they immediately became downcast. If they had believed the report of the women, they should have been joyful. Instead, they were depressed and confused.

Luke 24:18a One of them, named Cleopas, asked him,

This gives us the name of one of the two disciples. It was Cleopas. The name Cleopas is a variant of the name Clopas. That name Clopas is mentioned in John 19:25 in connection to “Mary of Clopas,” who stood at the foot of the cross with Mary, Salome, and Mary Magdalene. As the term was understood by the Jews of that time, the term “Mary of Clopas” could have referred to the mother, wife, or daughter of Clopas. However, given that many people had names in common, we can’t definitely conclude that the Clopas mentioned in John 19:25 as the son, husband, or father of the third Mary at the cross was the same person as the Cleopas here in Luke 12:18.

Luke 24:18b “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

This question certainly implies that only a stranger passing through from outside of the country would not have been aware of the dramatic events that had surrounded the last week in Jerusalem. First, there had been the unparalleled dramatic entrance of Jesus on Sunday when He was followed by an enthusiastic crowd of hundreds of thousands. Then there had been the unprecedented three-hour darkness followed by the violent earthquake. Everyone who had been in Jerusalem, Christian or not, would have been discussing what had happened and wondering why it had happened. All of them, even the High Priests, must have considered the possibility that the portents were related to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Luke 24:19a “What things?” he asked.

To get them to talk, the still unrecognized Jesus pretended ignorance.

Luke 24:19b-20 “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The *High Priests* and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

⁹ *We saw in the last lesson that angels could appear in different guises to different people.*

The two disciples described what had happened. As we often see in the New and Old Testament, what we have here is a summary of what had to be a longer exposition. Notice however, that they had already downgraded Him to “a prophet.” Also, it is worth noting that they didn’t blame Pilate or the Romans.

Luke 24:21a **but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.**

Here is the explanation of why they were “downcast.” Their faith had been badly shattered. Instead of saying “He was” the redeemer, they said that they “had hoped He was” the redeemer.

Luke 24:21b **And what is more, it is *three days* since all this took place.**

However, at the end, they still had a glimmer of hope. Even though three days had passed since the crucifixion, they had heard an unbelievable report that Jesus was still alive from some of the women.

Luke 24:22-23 **In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.**

You will notice that they could only bring themselves to say that “the women told us” they had seen a vision of angels. They couldn’t bring themselves to say that the women had actually talked to and touched the risen Jesus.

Luke 24:24 **Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”**

They also reported the trip of Peter and John who had verified the empty tomb. They then added that John and Peter didn’t see Jesus. This implied the previously unacknowledged fact that the women had reported actually seeing Jesus. This implied that these men wouldn’t believe the report of women, but only of men.

This gives us a better timeline for the journey of these two men. They evidently left after Mary Magdalene or the other women had returned with the story of seeing Jesus. Since they finished their two to three-hour trip to Emmaus about dusk (6:30 PM), it meant they must have left about 3:30 PM. The women had been to the Tomb a little after dawn (6:00 AM). They must have spread the news about seeing Jesus no later than 8 or 9 AM. These men must have had about six hours to think about the report before they had headed out of town the wrong way.

Luke 24:25-26 **He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”**

Having heard all of their doubts, Jesus broke in on them. He had taught from the Old Testament prophets many times exactly how He was going to die and be raised again. Like most of us, they evidently hadn't been listening.

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

He patiently retaught all the Old Testament prophecies which began with books of Moses and ran through all of the Psalms and Prophets which had told exactly what would happen and had happened.

Luke 24:28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.

Emmaus was the village to which the two disciples were going. Here Jesus, still unrecognized, made as if He was going further.

Luke 24:29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

As Jesus had taught them on the road, their hearts burned within them (verse 32). They were hungry for more. He agreed to stay.

Luke 24:30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

Although neither of these two disciples were one of the Eleven, this was something that they had seen Him do. Some have suggested the possibility that the two recognized Jesus when they saw the nail prints in His wrists as He broke the bread. His wrists would have been obscured on the road while the palms of His hand would not. Sharing the bread was a picture of sharing the "bread of life."

Luke 24:31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

It seems as if at this point the confusion of their mind was lifted and they recognized the face and voice of Jesus. Then He disappeared. Among other things, He had showed that they needed to return to Jerusalem. They were still disciples and were supposed to be messengers. A little after this, on the same evening, Jesus visited Peter. I don't doubt that there were other visits that He made that weren't recorded.

Luke 24:32 They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

I suspect every believer has experienced the same kind of burning heart when the Holy Spirit begins to make the Truth clear.

Luke 24:33-34 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”¹⁰

They got up and returned to Jerusalem in the middle of the night. They must have arrived about 11 PM. When they got back to Jerusalem they went where the eleven, which would have included Thomas, were staying and found them and some of the others. They were excited because in the interim, the Lord had appeared to Simon (Peter). Paul, who like Luke, knew Peter well, recorded this appearance in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:3b-4 “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, he was raised *since* the third day according to the Scriptures, and he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.”

Luke 24:35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

The two disciples undoubtedly shared most of the lesson Jesus had taught them from the Old Testament. Evidently after the two disciples came in, Thomas left. As a result, Thomas did not see Jesus when He appeared to those assembled disciples.

The Gospel of Mark Jesus’ Meetings with the Disciples

This is the short account by Mark of Jesus’ appearance to the eleven disciples. In the language of his account, he actually combined the two times Jesus met with them while indoors eating. Mark’s account doesn’t make it clear that the first meeting was without Thomas, and the second was with him. It would seem that Mark was not personally present on either occasion.

Mark 16:14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁰ Simon was the name by which Peter was called by his close friends, including the Lord.

Jesus' rebuking for unbelief only occurred during the second meeting which included Thomas who was the object of the rebuke. That demonstrates that both meetings were included in this record by Mark.

The Gospels of John and Luke The Meeting in Jerusalem on Sunday Night

Below are the accounts of John and Luke of the appearance of Jesus to the disciples in Jerusalem on that Sunday night. They would have included Peter and John. It must have occurred just after the men of Emmaus had finished their story, and after Thomas had left.

John 20:19 **On the evening¹¹ of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"**

Luke 24:36 **While they were still talking about this,¹² Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."**

It says that the disciples were afraid of the Jews. They had good reason to be afraid. Jesus had persuaded the High Priests to leave His disciples alone on the night He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. However, after all of the events surrounding the crucifixion the High Priests were still afraid of what Jesus' disciples might do. Josephus' history of the Jews in that time showed that the Jews were easily aroused to riot. The High Priests' efforts to get the Roman guards to lie about what they saw at the tomb showed that they were still concerned about the sway the disciples might have on the hundreds of thousands of people who had followed Jesus into Jerusalem the previous Sunday.

Here John recorded what happened after the two disciples had come back from Emmaus and had given their report. We know that by this time Thomas had also left the assembly of the disciples. After the assembly had listened to the account of what Jesus had taught the two on the road to Emmaus, suddenly Jesus Himself stood among them.¹³ He said, "Peace be with you." This was no mere standard greeting. It was a statement of what Jesus had won for them and us

¹¹ John, writing in Greek to Gentiles over sixty years after these events was clearly using Roman time, as it must have been after sundown, which according to Jewish time would have started the next day. We know this was after sundown because Jesus had been seven miles away with the two disciples in Emmaus at sundown.

¹² The account of the encounter on the way to Emmaus.

¹³ John had recorded that the doors had been locked. Jesus' resurrection body admitted no material barriers. The tomb's stone had not been rolled away to let Jesus out, but to let others in. Besides that, He had been raised after three days which ended at twilight on Saturday evening which was three days and three nights after His burial.

with His work on the Cross. It was a fulfillment of the promise the angels had proclaimed over the Shepherds' Field 33 years before at Jesus' birth:

Luke 2:13-14 "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests (*those who have believed*).'"

Luke 24:37-40 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands ¹⁴ and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

John 20:20a After he said this, he showed them his hands and side.

At first, they were frightened by Jesus' sudden miraculous appearance behind locked doors and they weren't prepared to believe it was really Jesus. They thought it was a ghost. Jesus showed them the terrible wounds of His crucifixion which had been left on His resurrection body ¹⁵ to demonstrate it was really Him. No imposter with an ordinary body could have been walking around with those wounds.¹⁶ Although He offered to let them touch Him, it doesn't say they ever did. Would you have touched them?

John 20:20b The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

¹⁴ *The Greek word here is χεῖρ {khā'r}. The Greek meaning of the word encompassed more than just the palms and fingers, which is all that the English definition includes. In Greek, it also includes the wrist. In the NIV of Acts 12:7, the same word is translated "wrists." It is most likely that the nails of crucifixion were driven through the space between the large arm bones (radius and ulna) just below the wrists. That would be secure whereas a spike driven between the fragile bones of the hand would not be secure and would break bones ("not a bone of Him broken").*

¹⁵ *The question arises in my mind as to how these wounds looked. Would they have looked raw, as if they were still fresh? Would they have scabbed over as the blood congealed? Or would they have been covered with scar tissue? I prefer to think, the last was true.*

¹⁶ *If Jesus had only swooned and regained consciousness in the tomb as some opponents of the Faith have claimed, He couldn't have been walking around three days later, particularly with the spike wounds behind the Achilles tendons in His feet. The experience of being nailed to a cross was usually fatal, even if you were somehow taken down before you died. In his autobiography Flavius Josephus recorded the following: "I (Josephus) saw many captives crucified and remembered three of them as my former acquaintances. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered."*

Luke 24:41 **While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering,¹⁷ he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” NRSV**

While they were overjoyed to see the Lord, they still couldn't believe that what they saw of Him before them was real solid flesh.

Luke 24:42-44 **They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”**

Finally, Jesus offered to prove His was a physical body and not a vision. He did this by eating some broiled fish. Evidently, seeing the process of the material fish disappearing into Jesus' stomach did the trick. Also, He again testified that Law of Moses (*the Pentateuch*), the Prophets (*Isaiah through Malachi*) and the Psalms had all written about Him. They alone were proofs of who He was, even without the all the other miracles.

John 20:21 **Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”**

Jesus repeated His blessing on them and told them that as He had fulfilled His mission to the world, now they now had a mission to the world to fulfill.

John 20:22 **And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.**

This wasn't the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which would be given at the upcoming Pentecost in just under fifty days. This was empowerment to have the Holy Spirit work through them. It is clear from many scriptures that during the Age of Israel, before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit enabled understanding and empowered admonishment among other things. Below are a few examples citing such a ministry of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost:

Nehemiah 9:19-20a “Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them.”

Nehemiah 9:30 “For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples.”

Job 32:8 “But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.” (*Elihu speaking*)

¹⁷ I prefer the NRSV translation of this phrase: “While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering.” It also closely follows the New Living Translation: “Still they stood there doubting, though filled with joy and wonder.”

Psalms 143:10 “Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.”

I believe that here Jesus gave a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit to carry them through the next fifty difficult days and to allow them to begin to understand more fully the things they had been taught by Jesus but hadn't understood. This is substantiated by what Luke records of the same meeting. Luke said:

Luke 24:45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

This described what Jesus, and the Holy Spirit did over the next 40 days when they were in Galilee and on the way back to Judea (Act 1:3). Going in with Luke.

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead *since*¹⁸ the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

This was an expanded explanation of what Jesus had taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He showed how all of what was written in the Old Testament had pointed to what had happened to Him. It had also pointed to what was coming next, the preaching of the Gospel to all the world. As we saw earlier in Matthew 28:11, this was the point on which I believe that the disciples “vacillated.” Going back to John's Gospel:

John 20:23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

This is the excellent comment of the Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary on John 20:23:

“The commission to forgive sins is phrased in an unusual construction. Literally, it is: ‘Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven.’ God does not forgive people's sins because we decide to do so, nor does he withhold forgiveness because we will not grant it. We announce it; we do not create it. This is the essence of salvation. And all who proclaim the Gospel are, in effect, forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearer accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus as the Sin-Bearer.”

Mark's account of the last comments at this meeting bears out this interpretation. In Mark Jesus' last comments are:

¹⁸ See my notes on “The Day of the Crucifixion and the Time in the Grave” in Lesson 58 of this study.

Mark 16:15-16 **He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized ¹⁹ will be saved, but whoever does not believe ²⁰ will be condemned.**

Faith results in salvation (reconciliation with God). Refusal to have faith results in condemnation (irreconciliation with God).

Luke 24:48-49 **You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”**

Here at this meeting on Easter Sunday in Jerusalem, Jesus included instructions for what the disciples were to do forty days later after He had left them again. That was the day they returned to Jerusalem (“the city”) from Galilee with Jesus and witnessed His Ascension to Heaven from the Mount of Olives. When Luke later recorded that event in Acts, he recalled this command:

Acts 1:4 “On one occasion (*the occasion of the first meeting*), while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.”

Timetable of Events on Resurrection Sunday (my best estimate)

1. Jesus was raised from the dead sometime after twilight of Saturday night which was the end of the third day. Any time after that was after the third full day and third full night.
2. About 6 AM, an earthquake occurred, and an angel came down and rolled away the stone from the tomb entrance, breaking the seal. The soldiers were terrified and may or may not have fled at that time.
3. Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Salome arrived. Mary Magdalene took off running to get Peter and John. It would have been about 6:30 AM if they had originally left their rooms just before first light.
4. Mary and Salome saw the first angel and went into the tomb. (About 6:35 AM).
5. Mary and Salome came out of the tomb, and left (About 6:35 AM).
6. The second group of women, which included Joanna, arrived and went into the tomb. The first angel had disappeared at this point (About 6:45 AM).
7. Two angels appeared to the second group of the women, who were wondering what to do (About 7:00 AM).

¹⁹ *We should remember that there are ten types of baptism in the New Testament. In my fourth lesson on Acts, I explored the subject of Baptism in much greater detail. The baptism referred to here is the Actual Baptism of the Believer into the Name and Body of Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 19:5, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 2:12, Ephesians 4:5). This occurs at the point of faith.*

²⁰ *Of course, anyone who does not believe is not baptized into the Body of Christ by the Spirit.*

8. Mary Magdalene found Peter and John, and they all headed back to the tomb with John running ahead and Mary lagging behind. (about 7:30 AM).
9. The other women left the tomb (About 7:40 AM).
10. John arrived at the tomb and looked in. (About 7:45 AM).
11. Peter arrived at the tomb and went in, shortly joined by John who also went in. (About 7:45 AM).
12. Mary Magdalene arrived back at the tomb. (About 7:50 AM).
13. Peter and John left the tomb. (About 7:50 AM)
14. Mary looked in the tomb and saw two angels. She then turned around and saw Jesus standing at the entrance to the tomb. She talked to Him (about 7:50 AM).
15. Jesus appeared to the women going back into town. (probably about 7:55 AM).
16. John and Peter arrived back where the disciples had been staying in Jerusalem. (About 8:30 AM)
17. The women and Mary Magdalene reached the place the disciples were staying. (About 8:40 AM)
18. The two disciples left and headed for Emmaus probably about 2 to 3 PM having heard the report of John and Peter. They also had heard the report of Mary Magdalene and the other women.
19. Jesus appeared to Peter. (Probably about 3:30 AM).
20. Jesus joined the two on the road to Emmaus and taught them on the seven-mile trip. He then broke bread with them a little after 6 PM and miraculously disappeared.
21. Those disciples travelled back to Jerusalem by moonlight (it was just three days past the full moon) and arrived to tell their news to the Eleven disciples. By that time Peter had told them of seeing Jesus himself. (About 9:00 pm)
22. Thomas left the gathering. (about 9:30 pm)
23. Jesus appeared to those gathered. (About 10:00 pm)

All Eleven Disciples Meet with Jesus Eight Days Later

John 20:24 **Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.**

“Didymus” means “twain or twofold.” Some have thought this to mean Thomas was a twin of the Apostle James, son of Alphaeus.²¹ If so, he was also the brother of Matthew (Levi) who was also the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18). According to the Easton Bible Encyclopedia entry on Thomas: “From the circumstance that in the lists of the apostles he is always mentioned along with Matthew, who was the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14), and that these two are always followed by James, who was also the son of Alphaeus, it has been supposed that these three, Matthew, Thomas (the twin), and James, were brothers.”

²¹ The title “James, son of Alphaeus” distinguished him from “James, the son of Zebedee.”

Tradition says that at the eventual dispersal of the Apostles after Pentecost this saint evangelized the Parthians, Medes, and Persians. He ultimately reached India, carrying the Faith to the Malabar coast, which still boasts a large native population calling themselves “Christians of St. Thomas.” He capped his life by shedding his blood for his Lord, speared to death at a place called Calamine. You may remember the statement by Thomas not long before, when Jesus had proposed going to Jerusalem where the leaders had just tried to murder Him. At that time Thomas had responded with a bravado just as sincere as Peter’s. He had said: “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16).

The term “the Twelve” was used collectively of the group of twelve that Jesus had chosen two years earlier on the mountain in Galilee. Here John, who was a member of the original six, referred to the members of the later larger group by the title, “the Twelve.”

John 20:25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands ²² and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

This verse referred to the first meeting that had happened in Jerusalem on the night after His resurrection. It is hard to understand Thomas’ refusal to believe the reports of over a dozen of his closest friends. It may reflect how much his faith had been shattered when, against his false expectations, he saw Jesus crucified. He evidently wasn’t going to be led into false hope again only to have it shattered. Nonetheless, he accompanied the others back to Galilee. However, before we get too critical of Thomas as having less faith than the others, we should also remember that until they had seen Jesus for themselves, those other disciples did not believe the reports of the women who had seen Jesus.

John 20:26a ~~A week later~~ And after eight days his disciples were ~~in the house~~ *inside* again, and Thomas was with them.

Where the NIV says “a week later,” the Greek literally says, “after eight days.” The KJV, NAS, ASV, Amplified, and NLS all have “after eight days.” Where the NIV says the “disciples were in the house again,” the Greek actually says that “his disciples were inside again.” Since we know they had been told to go to Galilee, this could not have been “the house” where they had previously seen Jesus. It says they were “inside again” because, as they had traveled to Galilee they would have camped outside on the way. This was evidently the next time they were able to meet together inside the privacy of a large house. Since most of Jesus’ disciples came from Capernaum or nearby Bethsaida, it isn’t unlikely that the house they were in was Peter’s house in Capernaum.

²² *The Greek word here is also χεῖρ {khā'r} which includes the wrist.*

It was eight days later, and if the disciples had left for Galilee when Jesus had told them, they would have easily arrived back in Capernaum, in Galilee by then. Capernaum was about 90 miles away by road from Jerusalem. Six days was about the time it probably took make it back to Capernaum traveling slowly. You will notice that Thomas was still with the disciples. If he was the brother of Matthew, as we speculated earlier, his home was probably also in Capernaum.

John 20:26b **Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”**

This repeated the visit in Jerusalem exactly. Again, the doors were locked, and Jesus suddenly appeared among them. Again, He began by saying “Peace be with you!”

John 20:27 **Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into ²³ my side. Stop doubting and believe.”**

Jesus took up Thomas’ challenge and offered to let him put his fingers in the spear wound in Jesus’ side.

John 20:28 **Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”**

Thomas evidently didn’t take up Jesus’ offer either. Seeing Him was enough.

John 20:29 **Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

A faith that relies on miracles is a weak faith. The Israelites of the Exodus generation saw more miracles than any generation in the history of the world and yet had a weak faith. It should be said that from what we know of the extrabiblical history of the ministry of the Eleven, the ministry of Thomas was probably the most impressive of all. He, and the disciples that he made, spread the Gospel as far afield as India, Mongolia, and China.

The Question about the Proper End of the Gospel of Mark

This is probably a good time to address the question: What is the proper ending of Mark? We already studied the two verses covered in Mark 16:9-11 in the previous lesson. However, it is useful just to remember the words that were there:

²³ *The Greek word here is εἰς {ās}, which can also be translated “unto” “on” or “against.” From an aesthetic point of view, I seem to prefer to visualize that that the wounds had closed and left scars, although nothing can be proved one way or the other by Scripture.*

Mark 16:9-11 “When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.”

For most of the last two centuries there have been some who contended that the ending of Mark should be at Mark 16:8. That seems unlikely just because it doesn't read like the end of even a thought, much less a book. Mark 16:8 was: “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.” Some people would have you believe that Mark ended his Gospel without any mention of the resurrection of Christ or of His ascension.

The reason they think the Gospel of Mark should end there is because Mark 16:9-20 isn't included in two of the oldest manuscripts extant, the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus.

The Codex Sinaiticus is thought to have been written about 330 to 360 AD. The Codex Vaticanus is another old manuscript which is thought to have been written about 300 to 325 AD. Neither of them included Mark 16:9-20. However, thousands of other very old manuscripts which were copies of even older manuscripts do contain it. We do have references by several very well-known individuals from the very early church, who quoted those verses as being from Mark. They were quoting from centuries earlier manuscripts than the Codex Sinaiticus or the Codex Vaticanus. One good example is from Irenaeus of Lyons, who personally knew the Apostle John. Around 100 AD he wrote quoting Mark 16:19, “But Mark in the end of his gospel says, ‘And the Lord Jesus, after that He had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God.’” That should be ample proof that Mark 16:9-20 was part of the original autograph. Another indication that Mark 16:9-20 feels like the true ending of the book is that it describes Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension to the Father.

However, it is easy to see why some early copyists might have wanted to omit the part about tongues, poison, snakes, and healing. These are miraculous gifts that have often been abused. However, those miracles were all things which undeniably happened in the early Church and are recorded in the other scriptures. In my mind, there is no doubt that Mark 16:9-20 was part of the original autograph written by Mark.

Since the events described in those verses occur later than Jesus' meeting with Thomas and the others, we will cover Mark 16:9-20 in the next lesson. It will be our last.