

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL - THE LIFE OF CHRIST

PART TEN: THE BURIAL, RESURRECTION, APPEARANCE, AND ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

163. His Burial (Lk. 23:50-56) [Mt. 27:57-61; Mk. 15:42-47; Jn. 19:38-42]

- (50,51) Joseph of Arimathea – a member of the Sanhedrin, who did not consent to the death of Jesus. He was a secret disciple and he was rich which was a fulfillment of Isa. 53:9.
- (52) Joseph requested the body of Jesus. According to Mark's account Pilate questions whether Jesus is dead or not. When the death is confirmed, Pilate releases the body to Joseph.
- (53) From John we see that Nicodemus assisted Joseph. The custom was to bind the body in a linen cloth using up to 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe. Joseph was in possession of a newly hewn tomb in the garden of Calvary.
- (54-56) The efforts were somewhat hurried because the Sabbath began at sundown. The burial was unfinished, but Jesus was entombed anyway. It seems that the women planned on finishing the embalming process on Sunday.

164. Guard at the Sepulchre (Mt. 27:62-66)

- (62) Most commentators agree that “on the morrow” refers to after sundown Friday night as the Jewish day extended from sundown to sundown.
- (63) See Jn. 2:19 and Mt. 12:39,40.
- (64) The Jews interpreted “after three days” as until the third day. We need this information to help us interpret “three days.” The rulers were concerned about the resurrection prophecies. They did not believe that there would be a resurrection, but were afraid that the disciples might make it appear as if a resurrection did occur. This type of thinking on the ruler's part indicates that they thought everyone was as dishonest as they were. Notice that it took the disciples 51 what the resurrection really meant. This shows that they would have not known what to do with a pretended resurrection if they had staged one!
- (65) Pilate is saying that they could have a guard, not that they already had one. If they already had one, why would they ask for one?
- (66) They usually sealed the tombs with wax or clay. If the seal was shown to be broken, then they would have reason to believe the tomb had been tampered with.

165. His Resurrection. Empty Tomb Discovered (Lk. 24:1-12) [Mt. 28:1-8; Mk. 16:1-8; Jn. 20:1-10]

- (1) Read Luke 23:56. Part of Friday, all day Saturday and part of Sunday would equal three days under their reckoning of time. That is, He will rise on the third day. How do we reconcile this with Mt. 12:40?
- (2,3) The stone was the door to the tomb. How would the stone be removed (Mt. 28:2)? The women were concerned that they could not move the stone (Mk. 16:3). They wanted in the tomb to complete the embalming procedures.
- (4,5) They did not expect an empty tomb. Two men stood by. Compare Mk. 16:5 and Mt. 28:5. The women were frightened and fell on their faces. What does “why seek the living with the dead” mean?
- (6,7) They additionally testify to His resurrection. Add to this the empty tomb, the earthquake, the soldiers in a trance; the stone rolled away, the folded napkin, and the testimony of the New Testament writers. See also Mt. 17:23; Lk. 18:33, and Jn. 11:25. Jesus of course had predicted His resurrection.

- (8,9) The women seem to understand. They returned to the city and reported to the disciples. From Jn. 20:12, we see that Mary Magdalene preceded the other women and conferred with Peter.
- (10,11) We know more about Mary Magdalene than we do about the other women (Lk. 8:2,3). According to Deut. 19:15, three witnesses was legal proof and here we have three witnesses named. The disciples though, thought these witnesses were “seeing things.”
- (12) AROSE -> RAN -> SAW -> DEPARTED -> WONDERED
Note their eagerness. See also Jn. 20:3-10 and note that John ran with Peter.

166. Appears to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18) [Mk. 16:9-11]

- (11,12) Read the Mark account. Mary is weeping because she presumes that the tomb is empty. To make sure she looks into the tomb. She sees two angels. Compare the placement of the angels to the cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant.
- (13,14) While Mary converses with the angels, Jesus appears but is not recognized. Why did Mary not know Jesus? Was it grief or a miracle?
- (15) Jesus asks the same question, then asks “whom do you seek?” She presumes that Jesus is the gardener and might have moved the body. Mary offers to take the body if it is not to be entombed in the garden.
- (16) Now when Jesus calls her by name she recognizes Him. She calls Him “Teacher.”
- (17) This is a difficult passage. McGarvey interprets it to say, “Do not detain me.” Johnson concurs and adds that Jesus had other more important things that He must do. Thayer says that faith should show Mary that it was indeed Jesus without having to physically touch His body. Jesus is saying that it is of course His body because He has not returned to His purely God-like state. It was more important for her to go to the brethren and inform them.
- (18) The grief that the disciples felt is why the Lord wanted Mary to go quickly and inform them of His resurrection.

167. Appears to the Other Women (Mt. 28:9-10)

- (9) As the women returned from the tomb, Jesus met them. They held Him and worshipped Him.
- (10) Jesus reiterates the message of the angels as well as the message He gave Mary Magdalene. Jesus promises to meet them in Galilee.

168. Report and Bribery of the Guards (Mt. 28:11-15)

- (11) In the meantime some of the guard reported to the council. The soldiers told them that the tomb was empty. Had they seen the risen Savior? Did Jesus need the tomb to be opened? Did the disciples need the tomb to be opened?
- (12,13) This does not appear to be the entire Sanhedrin. They choose to ignore the facts and instead turn to bribery. Why was their lie improbable? 1)- How could men have opened the tomb without waking the guard? 2)- It is impossible to know what happens while you are unconscious.
- (14) It was the death penalty for any Roman guard to sleep on duty. If Pilate heard of this, he would require persuasion to keep from killing the guards.
- (15) The soldiers took the bribe and told the lie. The secular historians say that the Jews dispatched special messengers throughout the world spreading this “story.”

169. Third and Fourth Appearances – to Cleopas and Another Disciple and to Simon (Lk. 24:13-35) [Mk. 16:12-13]

The Road to Emmaus

- (13) Read Mk. 16:12,13. There appear to have been five sightings of Jesus on this first day of the week: 1)- Mary Magdalene, 2)- the other women, 3)- the two going to Emmaus, 4)- Simon Peter, and 5)- the ten Apostles. Emmaus was about seven miles from Jerusalem. Who were these two travelers? We know they were not Apostles – why? (See v. 33.)
- (14) Cleopas and the “other disciple” were discussing the events of the day. They compared their views and conjectures.
- (15,16) They were confused concerning the empty tomb. Jesus joined them, but was not recognized for two reasons: 1)- He appeared in another form and 2)- their eyes were “restrained” or “holden.”
- (17) Jesus asked them, “What is this thing that you throw back and forth between you?” This caused them to halt and look sadly at Jesus. Jesus of course knew what they were discussing, but used this as a way of entering into their conversation.
- (18) Cleopas is not the Cleophas of Jn. 19:25. He cannot believe this man is the only person in Jerusalem that does not know of the strange things taking place.
- (19,20) Jesus induces these men to speak. He does not answer their question directly, but does inquire as to what events are being discussed. In their eyes Jesus had been a prophet mighty in miracles and teaching. They knew how the chief priests had delivered Him to be crucified.
- (21) These disciples may have expected Jesus to be a temporal deliverer. Jesus did deliver Israel from their sins, not the Romans. They mention the third day as though it were significant. Perhaps they were expecting the resurrection or at least something to show the establishment of the Kingdom.
- (22,23) The disciples had heard the report of the women, including the story the angels and that Jesus lived.
- (24) Also certain of the men (Peter and John) tomb and found it empty, but did not see Jesus.
- (25) Jesus calls them foolish for not believing what had been prophesied. They did not connect the suffering of Jesus, His crucifixion and resurrection as fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.
- (26) To fulfill prophecy Jesus necessarily had to endure all that had befallen Him. The Messiah had to suffer what Jesus had suffered.
- (27) Jesus taught them from the Messianic prophecies of Moses on down. He covered all the scriptures that concerned Himself.

The Disciples’ Eyes Opened (vv. 28-35)

- (28) When they reached Emmaus, Jesus acted as if He would continue His journey.
- (29) Jesus was willing to stay if invited. From v. 27 we presume that He would have continued if he had not been invited. Jesus never forces Himself on anyone (Rev. 3:20). However they persuaded Him or invited Him to abide with them. They were grateful for His teaching and probably wished to hear more from Him.
- (30,31) While Jesus was breaking bread; whatever power He used to restrain their vision was removed and they recognized Jesus. When they did recognize Jesus, He vanished from their presence.
- (32) After He vanished they recalled how His teachings had affected them. Now they knew this feeling was caused by who was doing the talking. Now they understood scripture they previously had not. We do not know how much time Jesus actually spent with these disciples.
- (33,34) While this trip to Emmaus may have been a “Sunday stroll,” they probably hurried back to Jerusalem. They went to the disciples and told them their experience. There were others with the eleven (1 Cor. 15:5).

- (35) They add their testimony to that already recorded. Their testimony confirmed the testimony of the women. The disciples were now ready to see the risen Savior.

170. Appeared the Same Day and Ate With Disciples (Lk. 24:36-43) [Mk. 16:14-18; Jn. 20:19-23]

- (36) Mark indicates that they reclined at the meal. John tells us that the door was locked and Thomas was absent. How did Christ enter the room? Note His customary greeting.
- (37) The disciples were astonished and terrified. They had just heard of the appearance some miles away and now he suddenly appears in their midst. The thought He was a ghost.
- (38) They still refused to believe He had risen, but it could not be denied.
- (39) To prove Himself He displays his hands and feet. Note the engagement of the three senses: sight -> touch -> hearing.
- (40) He showed them His pierced hands and feet.
- (41) They were still slow to believe. So Jesus gives more evidence – He eats food.
- (42,43) He was given fish and honeycomb. This was not a dream or mirage, it was not a mass hallucination.
- Note: We will discuss “The Great Commission” under point 174 (Mt. 28:16-20).

171. Thomas, Being Absent, Doubted (Jn. 20:24,25)

- (24) Thomas (the Twin) was not present when Jesus appeared. He is skeptical that Jesus is resurrected. However, he is really no more unfaithful than the ten who were hard to convince in Luke 24.
- (25) Thomas refuses to believe any man; he will not even believe his own eyes. He takes on an attitude bordering on defiant – he must feel the nail prints and the place where the spear had pierced Christ’s body before he will believe.

172. A Week Later, Christ Appears Again, With Thomas Present (Jn. 20:26-31)

- (26) Notice the emphasis on the first day of the week beginning with the resurrection of Jesus. This is the second Sunday mentioned. Remember that Peter’s sermon of Acts 2 takes place on Sunday as well.
- (27) Jesus asked Thomas to administer the tests that he had said would be required. The sincerity of Thomas was not in question or Jesus would not have extended this special treatment to him.
- (28) Did Thomas carry out the tests? Thomas confesses Jesus as Lord and God. This is a direct testimony as to the deity of Jesus.
- (29) Thomas saw and believed. Those of us that have not seen and believed are given a special blessing because we walk by faith instead of by sight.
- (30) None of the gospel writers reveal all of the deeds of Jesus.
- (31) Here we see the reason for the Gospels. They are written to reveal Jesus to the extent a faith is produced based on Jesus as the object of that belief. John concludes his argument for Jesus as the Christ that he began in Jn. 1:1.

173. Appears to Disciples Again at the Sea of Tiberius. (Jn. 21:1-25)

a. Breakfast by the sea (vv. 1-14)

- (1) Jesus had told the disciples to return to Galilee (Mt. 28:7, Mk. 16:7). In Galilee, He appeared to the Twelve and 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6). While waiting for Jesus, Peter decides to take up his former occupation. Sea of Tiberius is another name for the Sea of Galilee. What do you make of the “strangeness” of the appearances of Jesus?
- (2) Seven disciples are listed; all are regarded to be Apostles. Nathaniel is elsewhere referred to as Bartholomew.
- (3) Peter is portrayed as the leader. The others had followed Peter to the boat for a night of unsuccessful fishing.
- (4) As dawn was breaking, Jesus appeared on the shore, but either because of the poor light or a miracle He was not recognized.
- (5) The literal translation here is “fellows have you caught any fish?”
- (6) The disciples followed his direction regardless of whether they recognized him or not. They caught so many fish that they could not retrieve the nets.
- (7,8) John perceived that the man was Jesus. Remember the former draught of fishes? Peter felt he should be properly dressed before the Lord even though he was going to swim to shore ahead of the boats. The boat was out about 100 yards. Who do you think was most commendable here, Peter or the six?
- (9,10) The breakfast is already prepared. Jesus calls for additional fish.
- (11) Peter goes back to work at the command of Jesus. The number of fish was so great that it could have broken the nets.
- (12,13) Something about Jesus caused the disciples to have questions, but their realization that it was indeed Jesus caused them to remain quiet. Jesus acts as the host.
- (14) Is this the third appearance of Jesus? Note: John says, “to the disciples.”

b. Jesus restores Peter (vv. 15-19)

- (15) Many commentators believe that Jesus is giving Peter an opportunity to repent for denying Jesus three times. Peter has certainly mellowed since the night he said that he would *never* forsake the Lord. If Peter does love Jesus, then Peter will work for Him.
- (16) Jesus repeats His question again using the word *agape* for love, while Peter replies with *phileo*. Jesus adds sheep to the lambs. Peter has downgraded his previously professed love of Jesus to a “modest affection for Him.”
- (17) Jesus changes His question to *phileo* and once again Peter answers and is grieved.
- (18) Peter had denied Jesus to save his own life. In the future, he would have to sacrifice his life on Christ’s account. He would be bound and led to his death.
- (19) Peter was to die a martyr. Secular history records that Peter was crucified. “Follow me” now takes on an additional meaning. Earlier Jesus meant for them to physically follow Him during His earthly ministry, now He means for Peter to emulate His life and follow in His footsteps even unto a similar death. (See 2 Pet. 2:21,22.)

c. The Beloved Disciple and His Book (vv. 20-25)

- (20,21) Peter asks what will become of John. They were close companions and Peter naturally wondered what would happen to his friend.

- (22) Each apostle (disciple) had work to do. Peter's work was active; John's work was more patient and less active. Indeed John did tarry until Jesus came. Many years hence John would be on the isle of Patmos to receive the Revelation. He would be the last living Apostle delivering the last revelation of Christ.
- (23) John himself was unclear as to what Jesus meant, but did understand that Jesus was not saying he would physically live forever.
- (24) John is identified as the one being spoken about. Some commentators feel that another writer appended this verse and verse 25 to the original.
- (25) The extent of Jesus' ministry was beyond the scope of what could be recorded in a book of this nature.

174. On a Mountain in Galilee (Mt. 28:16-20)

- (16,17) **The Great Commission.** This is probably the same meeting mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:6. This is the only record made by Matthew of the appearance to the Apostles, so the incident with "doubting Thomas" is perhaps included or was among the 500 appearances mentioned by Paul. (See Mk. 16:15-18.)
- (18) Jesus prefaces the commission with a statement of His authority. This power or authority is all-inclusive.
- (19) The Apostles were not to wait for sinners to come to them, but were to go and take the gospel to the world. Who is to be baptized, the disciples or the nations? It has to be the disciples, which means that first you become a disciple, then you are baptized. This act of baptism brings the recipient into a divine relationship. Baptism is referred to elsewhere in the NT as a birth. It is through this birth that the recipient is allowed to assume the name of Christ (Rom. 2:24; Jas. 2:7). (See also Mk. 16:17,18.)
- (20) The Apostles were to pass on the things that Jesus had taught them. Jesus promises to be with them until the end of the age. (See Lk. 24:44-49; 1 Cor. 15:7; and Acts 1:3-8. Note the appearance to James and all of the Apostles as recorded in 1 Cor. 15:7.)

175. (Lk. 24:44-49) [Acts 1:3-8; 1 Cor. 15:5-7]

- (44) Luke summarizes everything Jesus did between His resurrection and ascension. 1)- He taught all things that must be fulfilled according to Moses, the prophets and the psalms.
- (45) 2)- Jesus opened the minds of the Apostles so the scripture could be understood. This "opening" could be of a miraculous nature or through teaching.
- (46,47) To suffer, die, and rise again was God's plan. This plan also included the preaching of repentance and remission of sins. This "Good News" was to be preached to all nations. While the Apostles were to offer the gospel to everyone, they were to begin by offering it to the Jews.
- (48,49) The Apostles were witnesses of the things Jesus wanted taught. They were not trained professional orators or speakers, but simply teachers of the Word. Here they are instructed to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and baptizes them (Isa. 44:3; Jer. 31:33,34; Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28.)

176. The Ascension of Our Lord (Lk. 24:50-53) [Mk. 16:19,20; Acts 1:4,5]

- (50) Jesus and the disciples have returned to Jerusalem. From there Jesus took them to the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. (See also Mk. 16:19,20 and Acts 1:9-12.) Note that Luke has passed over the 40 days, the appearance to the eleven, the appearance in Galilee, etc.
- (51) As Jesus was blessing the group, He ascended.

(52,53) It is from Acts 1:3 that Luke teaches us that Jesus was on the earth 40 days after His resurrection. His repeated appearances during these days had comforted the disciples, cleared their spiritual vision, reestablished and confirmed their faith, and went a long way towards correcting their former view of the Kingdom. Now they came to realize that Jesus was truly the Messiah and what His mission on earth entailed. After the ascension they returned to Jerusalem and went to the Temple to worship Jesus and meditate on the things that they had witnessed. Note that Luke began his gospel with Zacharias in the Temple and concludes with the Apostles in that very same place.

177. Appeared to Paul (1 Cor. 15:8)

The accounts of Jesus appearance to Paul will follow in our study of Acts.

178. Appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 1)

Jesus appearance to John will be studied in depth when we study the book of Revelation.

This concludes our study of the Fourfold Gospel.