

A Lenten Bible Study



Messiah's Résumé:

From Confirmation to Affirmation



Lenten Bible Study
"The Messiah: From Confirmation to Affirmation"

INTRODUCTION: "The **Résumé**

"A **résumé** is a document used and created by a person to present their background, skills, and accomplishments. Résumés can be used for a variety of reasons, but most often they are used to secure new employment. A typical résumé contains a "summary" of relevant job experience and education. The résumé is usually one of the first items, along with a cover letter and sometimes an application for employment, which a potential employer sees regarding the job seeker and is typically used to screen applicants, often followed by an interview."¹

We have all no doubt had an experience where it was necessary to verify we were qualified for a job, or met the expectation for joining a particular organization. Some of us have surely had to create a formal résumé following a particular business form required by the prospective employer, so that the employer would see that we have the education and experience required for the job. The higher up the ladder of the position for which we are applying, the more detailed the inquiry into our experience.

A Résumé in our culture is a prerequisite for being hired, so when we view God's story of salvation through our present day lens we have reason to be surprised. Those God identified as being qualified for a particular job often seemed the most unlikely to be successful. Moses is a good Old Testament example as well as fishermen and tax collectors in the Gospels. Although there were no résumés, folks did have expectations and that is seen in Acts 4:13 *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they were amazed."*

In God's story of salvation Jesus is chosen for the role of Messiah and unlike our modern expectations he bursts upon the scene without any résumé. We today are privileged to look back through a lens showing the end of the story, and we easily conclude he was highly qualified.

We know the stories of his birth. *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."* (John 1:1 & 14)

We know Luke 1:30-33 *"30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

We know Matthew 1:18 *"Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit."*

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Résumé>

We know what Paul included in the Messiah's résumé. Galatians 4:4 *"4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 in order to redeem those who were under the law,..."*

We know all of this but the folks who saw the man from Nazareth and heard him speak didn't know what we know.

During this Lenten study we want to examine how the Messiah's résumé becomes evident in the life of Jesus by reviewing six major stories. (There are many more that we will not have time to deal with during these six weeks.)

"The Messiah: From Confirmation to Affirmation"

Week 1 - Confirmation:.....Baptism

Week 2 - Confrontation: Temptation

Week 3 - Selection:.....Disciples

Week 4 - Demonstration: Parade

Week 5 - Prosecution:Crucifixion

Week 6 - Affirmation:Resurrection

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Session 1 - Confirmation - **Baptism** John 1:19-34

It's impossible to examine Jesus' Baptism without understanding the role John played coming out of the wilderness and baptizing persons in the Jordan River.

N.T. Wright describes his importance in this way. *"Anybody offering water-baptism for the forgiveness of sins was saying: you can have , here and now, what you would normally get through the Temple cult. Anybody inviting those who wished to do so to pass through an initiatory rite of this kind was symbolically saying: here is the true Israel that is to be vindicated by YHWH....What John was doing must be seen, and can only be seen, as a prophetic renewal movement within Judaism - a renewal, however, that aimed not at renewing the existing structures, but at replacing them."*²

1. (a) What do we learn about the mind-set of the Jews toward John and his baptisms? John 1:19-23. (b) What was their main question? (c) How does John's response reveal what they might have been thinking? See also Isaiah 53:4-5

(a)

(b)

(c)

2.(a) What is the issue the Pharisees are concerned about? (b) What is John's reply? John 1:24- 28

(a)

(b)

² N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996, p. 160

3. (a) What happens the next day? (b) Who is John introducing? John 1:29-31
(a)

(b)

4. (a) What are the confirmations³ of Jesus as Messiah in the baptismal accounts? Matthew 3:16-17; John 1:32-34; (See Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1 for affirmation prophecy)

5. From our study of these verses how would you answer the question: “Why did Jesus have to be baptized, if John’s baptism was for “the forgiveness of sins”?

Concluding Statement:

A résumé looks back to experiences that document being qualified for a given position. Jesus’ baptism is the first event we list on his résumé where he experienced the confirmation/call to be the Messiah who would lead the renewal process.

³ Confirmation of a particular vocation was part of Israel’s history. Prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were called/confirmed by God, as were Kings like Saul and David. See: 1 Sam. 3:2-21; Isa. 6:1-13; Her. 1:4-12; 1 Sam. 10:1-24; 16:1-13; 1 Kings 11:26-40

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2. Confrontation - **Temptations** Matthew 4:1-11

Embedded in Israel's history was the experience of exile along with God providing someone to lead an exodus into freedom. Because Israel believed they were God's chosen people they had celebrations that looked back at how God had provided, and with the promise from

their prophets that God would always make a way out of their exile. Living under Roman domination was being exiled in their own country. (Think 'house arrest')

For some of those living during those days there was a longing for a prophet who would tell them a deliverer was coming who would be their Messiah. It was John the Baptizer who made that announcement, and Jesus who was identified as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Imagine being hired to fill a high-profile job where the search committee took years before they vetted you and selected you, and there was no written job description. You would want some time to do some serious soul searching, reflect on your strengths and weaknesses, and wrestle with the major decisions that would shape your plan on how to proceed.

When Matthew chapter three ends, the next chapter begins with the word "Then" which is the segue into what happened next following Jesus being confirmed as the Messiah. He is led by the Spirit into the wilderness.⁴ He has no surprise reaction to this, so we are led to assume he is comfortable with the relationship he experienced with the Spirit's leading him into the wilderness. He is well aware of the stories of God calling prophets, judges, and kings for a specific purpose, and also providing time for them to be prepared.

We might wonder what did he wrestle with mentally during those 40 days. Did he decide to stay 40 days in the wilderness to symbolically identify with Moses' 40 years in the wilderness? Did he know the story of the wisemen who identified him as a child who was to be "King of the Jews."? Did he know and remember the family story of his parents fleeing to Egypt to spare his life? Did he recall that experience where he once told his parents, "I must be about my father's business." I think we may assume that he reviewed and processed all that he learned in his synagogue up-bring about Israel; about exile; about himself, and the way God always provided.

We have all surely known and appreciated a time of solitude prior to making a big decision. The wilderness is where Jesus spent that time of solitude and It would be in the mix of all his thinking that he was confronted with options and decisions that he had to make to fulfill the role of Messiah. We will examine three of those options which represent the process of his thinking, and the source from which his plan evolved.

THE FIRST DECISION - Matthew 4:1-4

⁴Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

- (a) How would you describe the choices he had in the first important decision he had to make? Matthew 4:1-4.
- (b) How did he respond to Satan's offer?
- (c). And what do these two Old Testament scripture tell us about Jesus' mind-set?
(Deuteronomy 8:3 and Nehemiah 9:15.)
- (d) How does this decision he made find its way into his later teaching? John 6:26-40

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

THE SECOND DECISION - Matthew 4:5-7

(a). What tactic does Satan use in making his second offer in Matthew 4:5-7?

(b) How did he respond to the option given him by Satan?

(c) How does Jesus demonstrate his confidence in the scripture Satan quotes by what he says to the disciples in Matthew 26:51-54 as they left the Garden of Gethsemane?

(d) What insight do we learn from Matthew 27:40-44?

THE THIRD DECISION - Matthew 4:8-11

(a) What assumption do we hear in the offer Satan gives to Jesus Matthew 4:8-11?

(b). What is the “quid pro quo”⁵ Satan expects of Jesus?

(c). What decision does Jesus make as a response?

(d) Jesus shows his knowledge of being immersed in the scriptures. How would the following scriptures have been of help to Jesus? Psalm 86:9; Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 60:14.

(e). How does John describe the success of the decision Jesus made in refusing Satan’s offer? Revelation 11:15

⁵ “A favor or advantage granted in return for something.”
https://www.lexico.com/definition/quid_pro_quo

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Session 3 - Selection - **Disciples**
Matthew 4:18-22

When Jesus left the wilderness and began his public ministry there were different rabbinical schools within his Jewish culture.

*"Within his culture of early first-century Israel, there were seven primary rabbinic 'schools' of thought, ... At the poles of thought within these schools, the most lenient (or liberal, though not in a modern sense) of the rabbinical schools was the School of Hillel....At the other end of the spectrum, the School of Shammai was the most strict in its interpretations. The remaining five schools of rabbinic thought ranged between these two, Hillel and Shammai, with key nuances – emphases or de-emphases – from the other schools. When Jesus began his ministry near the age of 30, he entered into this context, and as one might expect, he was asked to weigh in on the great debates of the day."*⁶

Today Theological schools, as well as denominations and local churches, have the same reputations of being liberal or being conservative, (or somewhere in between) and their followers adhere to the same interpretations of scripture just as the Jews did with the Torah. When persons move into a new community and they go "church shopping," they have a list of personal beliefs through which they filter what they see and hear from attending a worship service, or viewing information about the church on-line.

When Jesus began his ministry, it would have been natural for him to know the importance of gaining a following from those within his Jewish tradition. He attracted persons who liked what he said, as well as those who were seekers eager to listen, and there were also those who challenged his teachings. Persons would have been able to distinguish and question the differences in his teachings compared to the other rabbinical schools. There were certain individuals in whom he saw potential and invited them to join him. He identified 12 men that we know as, "The Twelve Disciples." They were fishermen, tax collectors, and zealots which gives us reason to conclude they would not all have been followers of the same rabbinical school. What they had in common was they were impressed (no doubt for different reasons) with the teachings of the Rabbi from Nazareth.

In this session of our Lenten study, we hope our insights and discussion will deepen our appreciation of the life and teachings of Jesus as he launched God's messianic vision through his teachings, and those he selected to be his disciples.

⁶ <http://www.fishingtheabyss.com/archives/203>

1. What do we learn in John 1:35-42 (a) About John⁷ the Baptist? (b) About Jesus? (c) About their disciples?

(a)

(b)

(c)

2. Among the twelve Jesus selected he also identified three, Peter, James, and John, who were given special opportunities the others did not have. See 2 Samuel 23:8-9, 11-12, 11-15; Matthew 17:1-3; Mark 5:35-37; Matthew 26:36-38. (a) What possible reason would he choose three for this special privilege? (b) How do these three situations teach a common lesson?

(a)

(b)

3. (a) What important insights do we get from Matthew 16:13-16? (b) What do the following scriptures tell us about Jesus' reputation? Matthew 12:23; 9:27; 15:22; 20:31; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:19.

(a)

(b)

⁷John the Baptist was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25). Jesus was Mary's son, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38). Mary was Elizabeth's cousin (Luke 1:36). So the relation between Jesus and John the Baptist was that of second cousins.

4. What do we learn (a) about John's disciples in Mark 2:18-20? (b) How does Jesus respond? (c) What do we learn from Paul about John's disciples? (see Acts 19:1-7)

(a)

(b)

(c)

5. What insights do we glean from Matthew 11:1-6 (a) about Jesus' teaching style compared to the other Rabbinical schools? (b) About John and his disciples? (c) About Jesus' answer to John's Question? Matthew 11:4-6; (See also Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1-2)

(a)

(b)

(c)

The theme of this session has been: SELECTION - Disciples
The cartoon at the beginning of this session points out the selection process has not ended by those two little words, "so far."

The New Testament is full of examples of how that selection continued; and continues to this day.

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Session 4 - Demonstration: Parade - Matthew
21:1-11⁸



We have heard and experienced the Palm Sunday story year after year, embedding in our minds a familiarity that just may rob us of any deeper appreciation of its meaning.

To deepen our appreciation of the meaning of this event we must see it through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as well as

the one who is writing the story.

If you compare the various accounts listed in footnote #1 you will notice that each writer tells the same story but there are noticeable differences. We do not have the time in our one session together to unpack those differences, so our focus will be on the account written by Matthew. It's important to know Matthew's audience for whom he writes are his fellow Jews, and from verse one of chapter one he establishes his theme. A chapter many readers today skip over because of it being a list of names appearing in a genealogy, (We all know reading genealogy is not an exciting devotional exercise.) But to skip it is to miss the importance of Matthew's theme for the entire book.

Matthew 1:1 - "*An account of the genealogy of Jesus **the Messiah, the son of David,...***"

It's very brief but to the point. Matthew wants his reader to know Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the son of David. He will start at the beginning and document that truth, by telling the experiences Jesus had that verified the truth, as well as the process by which persons came to acknowledge that truth.

Keep in mind our previous comment of how Jesus was an "Itinerant Rabbi". He travelled from large cities, to towns and villages teaching the importance of the "Kingdom of God, healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead. There were no Jerusalem Times, or Nazareth Post newspapers to report and promote his message, but everywhere he went people began to ask themselves and one another "Who is he?"

Matthew's intention was to show that he was "The Messiah, the son of David."

⁸ See also other gospel parallels: Mark 11:1-25; Luke 19:28-48; John 12:12-19;; John 2:13-17.

1. Matthew, after telling of Jesus' birth, baptism, temptation, and call of the disciples wants his reader to know what about Jesus? What did the reader and we learn about Jesus' popularity? Matthew 4:23-25

2. What is Matthew's report of the response after Jesus laid out his vision in what we know as "The Sermon on the Mount" Matthew 7:28-29? How did the scribes differ from Jesus' teaching"

3. What is the common word in the two scriptures we have looked at, along with the following scriptures? Matthew: 9:8; 12:15; **12:23**; 13:2; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2; 22:33
What had the crowd begun to ask? (12:23)

All of the above is a prelude to our scripture for this session in Matthew 21:1-11. Keep in mind the roads to Jerusalem are filled with folks who are going to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. We can rightly assume that some of those were folks who had been among the "crowds" mentioned in the previous scriptures.

4. How has the mind-set of those in the crowd changed? (verse 9) What dots were they connecting that changed their minds? Zachariah 9:9-10; Psalm 118:26; (See A quotation from the prophet Zechariah contrasting Pilate and Israel's Messiah entrance into Jerusalem. ⁹)

5. Review how Matthew has prepared the Jewish reader for their identifying Jesus as the Messiah? See Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 8:17; 21:4

6. How does Matthew describe the mood of the people in Jerusalem when Jesus arrived in the city? Matthew 21:10 (compare Ruth 1:19) See also Matthew 27:51; 27:54.

⁹ The first demonstration was programmed for (our) Palm Sunday, and it was not just a criticism but a lampoon of Roman power. For security and crowd-control at Passover, Pilate came up to Jerusalem with extra troops from his base at Caesarea on the coast. Imagine him coming in from the west on a powerful stallion as Jesus was coming in from the east not just on a donkey but on a nursing donkey with her little colt trotting along beside her.

<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/a-pre-easter-reflection-on-going-to-jerusalem-by-john-dominic-crossan/>

7. Where does the parade end upon entering the city? What is his purpose for going here, and who took offense with Jesus' actions? Matthew 21:12-17

8. After his second day in the temple (Matthew 21:18-46 how angry were the Chief Priests and Pharisees, and why? What did they want to do to Jesus, but what kept them from doing it? (45-46)

A concluding summary

Matthew meticulously spelled out how Jesus' teachings and actions reflected the Old Testament prophets' words, and how they led to the confrontation with the existing power of the religious leaders. It began with a march on Jerusalem which led to the powerful demonstration in the Temple.

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Christ before Pilate by Mihály Munkácsy

Session 5 - Prosecution - **Crucifixion**¹⁰ Matthew 27:11-26

We have seen the important role “the crowd” has played over the three years of Jesus’ public itinerant ministry. If a pole had been taken he would have had a very high favorable rating. We know his popularity captured the attention of the Chief Priest, Scribes, and Pharisees and they saw him as a threat to their traditions, and Torah teachings. They also knew, as the Jewish religious leaders, that they were responsible to control “their people”

so they would not do anything to disrupt the peaceful cooperation that existed between them and the Roman rulers.

Following Jesus’ public demonstration of accepting the accolades of the palm waving pilgrims to be the Messiah, and his public outrage in the Temple, the Chief Priests debated with Jesus but could not trap him with their questions. They stopped asking questions and made a decision.

3 *“Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5 But they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.” (Matthew 26:3-5)*

John defines their mood and intentions in chapter 11:48-50 *“If we let him go on thus, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.” 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all; 50 you do not understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should be destroyed.”*

Jerusalem had once again become the center of injustice and of betrayal of God’s covenant. God’s justice was replaced by human justice. The prophet Micah also cried out against it hundreds of years before.

“Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?—2 you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people, and their flesh from off their bones...9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, 10 who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong.” (Micah 3:1-2; 9-10)

Isaiah also spoke word of warning against the leaders of Jerusalem.
21 How the faithful city has become a harlot, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers... 23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the fatherless, and the widow’s cause does not come to them.” (Isaiah 1:21, 23)

¹⁰ Gospel crucifixion chapters: Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19.

These ancient prophetic words were also very applicable for the leaders who want a way to have Jesus killed. They had to find a way to convince their Roman overlords that he was a threat to their authority. Their problem was his actions were not in conflict with anything that concerned the Roman authorities. All of his actions were only a problem to the Jewish leaders, which meant they would have to provide some charges against him that would get the attention of the Roman leaders. If they could do that, then the Romans would have the power to prosecute him and sentence him to die.

In our study today we will examine the process they devised to persuade the Romans to carry out their desired prosecution.

An important prequel for understanding the Jewish leaders' hostility toward Jesus is to know they based their case against him on Deuteronomy 13. The three categories where death was an appropriate verdict were the prophet who persuades persons to follow other gods; the friend or family member who is guilty of the same offense; and the scoundrel who leads astray a whole town.

1. What was at the heart of Jewish law that was punishable by death? Deuteronomy 13: 5 & 10, See John 7:12, 45-49

2. How frustrated were the Chief Priests and the council? Matthew 26:59-66

3. What would have been a reason they did not carry out their verdict by killing Jesus since they had the Jewish law to back up their decision?

4. What three charges did they trump-up and bring to Pilate? Luke 23:2
(1)

(2)

(3)

5. How does Pilate respond? What is Jesus' answer? Matthew 27:11. How is Isaiah 53:7 being fulfilled?

6. What was Pilate's final effort to solve the matter? Matthew 27:15-26. What opinion do you have of Pilate's decisions?

7. What is the irony in Luke's final word regarding Pilate's decision to release Barabbas? Luke 23:19

Comments/Questions

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Session 6 - Affirmation - Resurrection
Matthew 28:1-20



When we put a puzzle together it's common for folks to start by looking for the border pieces that frame the puzzle. Piece by piece a picture begins to take shape that will define the central theme. I think we would agree it is much more difficult to start with the center and work toward the borders.



Approaching our theme for this session, The Resurrection of Jesus, think of a puzzle with black, white and red pieces as a metaphor for how his resurrection was understood as the central core teaching of the Christian faith. Think of the border on the right side as the church which has come into being and the pieces that connect it to the resurrection of Jesus. Think of the border on the left as the biblical story told in scriptures beginning with Old Testament prophecies and the coming of the Messiah. Our prior five weeks have been key puzzle pieces moving us toward the central foundational event of resurrection. All of Jesus' healings, exorcisms, miracles and teachings are part of the one thousand piece puzzle that connect the borders to the central theme.

Teaching about this central theme cannot be understood without the pieces that connect it with the past, and all that the resurrection has done to shape the future faith of Christianity. Our brief time with this topic cannot do justice to the needed examination of that past and future, so we make a very big assumption that you have a basic understanding of those puzzle pieces that support the theme.

We hope this Lenten series has provided food for thought in putting together some of those pieces of the puzzle that have enabled us to journey with the Messiah from his Confirmation to his Affirmation.

It is important that we know what Jewish leaders believed and taught about the resurrection of the dead during the time of Jesus' Here is a summary quote from a Jewish website.

traditional Jewish theology. Traditional Jews believe that during the Messianic Age, the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, the Jewish people ingathered from the far corners of the earth and the bodies of the dead will be brought back to life and reunited with their souls. It is not entirely clear whether only Jews, or all people, are expected to be resurrected at this time.

This belief — distinct from, though connected to, the belief in the immortality of the soul — is mentioned explicitly only twice in the Hebrew Bible, in the books of *Isaiah* and *Daniel*, though hints of it are extrapolated from other biblical sources. The medieval philosopher *Maimonides* includes it as one of his 13 principles of the Jewish faith, and the Mishnah states that those who don't believe in resurrection "have no share in the world to come." (*Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1*) The *Amidah* prayer recited *thrice daily* by traditional Jews includes a blessing praising God as the resurrector of the dead."¹¹

We first look at the right side border of our resurrection puzzle which defines what happened after the resurrection?

1. What New Testament author was first to write about the importance of the resurrection, and where did he get his information? 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; 2 Timothy 2:8.

2. How did Paul reinforce "the first importance" of the resurrection teaching?
1 Corinthians 15:14-17

Resurrection puzzle pieces on the right border (Post resurrection) which show us pieces from the left border (Pre-resurrection pieces).

3. The Apostles preaching that affirms personal witness as well as Old Testament fulfillment. Acts¹² 2:22-32; 3:13-15; 4:10-11; (see also Psalm 16:8 and 118:22).
1 Peter 2:21-25 (see Isaiah 53:9)

As our resurrection puzzle begins to close in on the center from the borders we begin to see where the red pieces begin to fit into the puzzle. The red pieces are the words of Jesus.

¹¹ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-resurrection-of-the-dead/>

¹² See also Acts 4:33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:32-37; 17:18, 31; 26:23

4. What words of hope did Jesus share with the disciples regarding his death and resurrection.?

[a] _____ Mark 8:31; Matthew 17:22; John 11:25-27

[b] _____ John 2:19; Mark 14:58 (also in Matthew 26:61) John 2:19

[c] _____ Matthew 12:39; 16:4

[d] _____ John 11:25-27

Time does not permit us to identify the puzzle pieces representing the various resurrection appearances, so we will use just the closing appearance in Matthew's gospel and Jesus' final words, as the final red puzzle pieces. These words are the connecting pieces that unite the left border (Pre-resurrection) with the right border (Post Resurrection)

5. What are the four major connecting puzzle pieces in Matthew 28:18-20?

[a]

[b]

[c]

[d]

Comments/questions regarding any portion of this six-week study

Appendix A

A Possible Harmonization of the Resurrection Accounts¹³

"My esteemed Biblical exegesis professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, George Eldon Ladd, didn't really recommend a harmonization approach to the resurrection accounts. However, to answer his own question of whether the accounts could be harmonized, he worked out the following harmonization, he said, "for my own amusement."¹ Later he found a nearly identical harmonization by Michael C. Perry. ² Here is George Ladd's approach to a harmonization:

The earthquake and removal of stone occurs before dawn.

A group of four women come early to the tomb, wondering who will move the stone. As they approach, they are amazed to see that the stone has been rolled away.

Mary rushes off to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus has been stolen (John 20:2).

The other women stay in the garden. They enter the tomb and are met by two angels, who tell them to carry the word of the resurrection to the disciples. ³

The women rush away from the garden, filled with mingled emotions of fear and joy, speaking to no one about the vision of the angels at the empty tomb (Mark 16:8).

Later in the day, Jesus met them. (Matthew 28:9 does not say that this meeting occurred in the garden.) They had to run away from the tomb. Jesus tells them to bear the word to the disciples; they depart to find the disciples, who are not together but scattered (Matthew 26:56).

Peter and John, having been informed by Mary, come to the tomb after the women have left. They see the clothes; vague comprehension dawns on John. they rush off to gather the disciples.

Mary returns to the tomb after Peter and John have left; they had run to the tomb (John 20:4), leaving Mary behind. She still thinks the body has been stolen. She is weeping outside the tomb, knowing nothing of the experience of the women she had left in the garden. She sees the two angels, then Jesus (John 20:11-17).⁴

After the first shock of amazement had worn off, the women find some of the disciples; the disciples cannot believe the fanciful story (Luke 24:11).

The disciples have gathered together.

Mary arrives and tells her experience (John 20:18).

That afternoon, the walk to Emmaus.

Sometimes that afternoon, an appearance to Peter (Luke 24:34).

That evening, the disciples are all together in the closed room. They had been scattered, but the testimony of the women, of Peter and John, then of Mary, serves to bring them all together. Thomas was absent.

A second appearance to the eleven, including Thomas.

Galilee (Matthew 28:16). The appearance by Tiberias (John 21) and to the 500 brethren (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Return to Jerusalem; the final appearance and ascension.

Ladd concludes, "This harmonization does not mean that the author intends to suggest that the events actually happened in this order. We cannot know."⁵

References

1. George Eldon Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection* (Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 91-93.
Michael C. Perry, *The Easter Enigma* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), pp. 65, 70.

¹³ <http://www.jesuswalk.com/resurrection/resurrection-harmonization.htm> (Dr. Ralph F. Wilson)