

Appendix K: Harmonizing the Resurrection

Jesus' bodily resurrection is fundamental to Christianity (1 Cor. 15:12-19) and the details were recorded by 5 authors.

Before harmonizing this historic event, it will help to consider general features and themes of each resurrection account:

Matthew (Matt. 28) Matthew's gospel begins with, "all Jerusalem," troubled by Mary and Joseph birthing Jesus nearby⁹¹⁸ (Matt. 2:1-3). After escaping Herod, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus then travel to Galilee because of a divine message (Matt. 2:22). Intriguingly, no mention is made of Joseph and Mary originating from Galilee (cf. Luke 2:4).

However, when Jesus was still a child, Matthew records the family migrating (back⁹¹⁹) to, "Galilee of the Gentiles," (Matt. 4:15) which is shown throughout Matthew as the center of Jesus' ministry. But His mission continued to focus on the Jews (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:21-28).

As Jesus neared his death, Matthew shows Him telling His disciples, "After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee," (Matt. 26:32). This is repeated by the angel and the resurrected Jesus to the women who find the empty tomb (Matt. 28:7, 10). In contrast, other resurrection appearances—and even Jesus' ascension—is conspicuously missing in Matthew. As such, his account focuses the reader's attention squarely on Jesus' "Great Commission" in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20).

⁹¹⁸ Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "Six miles south by west of Jerusalem," (Bible Hub Online Parallel Bible n.d.).

⁹¹⁹ We only know they went back to Galilee because of Luke's account. Matthew makes no mention of them originating from Galilee. This, we believe, is purposeful in the message of Matthew's gospel.

In this commission, which is only mentioned by Matthew, Jesus sends His followers to, “all nations,” (Matt. 28:19)—not just to the Jews. This is contrasted by another element unique to Matthew: the Jerusalem guard conspiring with Jewish leaders to lead people away from believing Jesus resurrected (Matt. 28:11-15).

All of this, to us, signals a very clear Matthean theme: Jesus’ mission is extending from the Jews to the whole world. While born in Jerusalem (the capital of Judaism), Jesus’ ministry and major post-resurrection appearance happens in, “Galilee of the Gentiles,” (cf. Matt. 4:15) and focuses on a worldwide mission. Jerusalem, in contrast, is the place of Jesus’ crucifixion, and the Jewish leaders (who dwell there) oppose Jesus’ mission by conspiring with the guard against His resurrection.

As such, Matthew arranges his resurrection account to match this general thrust of a beyond-Jewish Messiah leading a beyond-Jewish mission. Jerusalem is minimized, while Galilee becomes the focus, because their geographies speak to Jewish and Gentile themes, respectively.

Mark (Mark 16)

Most contemporary Bible scholars and translators agree that Mark 16:1-8 is original with Mark, while disagreeing on what (if anything) followed these verses⁹²⁰.

However, whether or not Mark 16:9-20 was original to Mark, it could still be considered part of Scripture⁹²¹, and clearly was recorded and

⁹²⁰ Most English translations reflect this debate through footnotes and/or brackets at Mark 16:9-20 (for a fuller discussion, see NET Bible 2019d, n. 9).

⁹²¹ Nowhere is it claimed that Mark exclusively authored his gospel, and thus its integrity does not diminish if editors added to the original under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In fact, such a thing is directly stated as happening in Romans (compare 16:22 with 1:1), and inferred in Deut. 34:5-12 (where a book written by Moses [1:1] details Moses’ death and what followed his death—presumably written by someone after Moses).

received very early in the church's history based on the manuscript evidence (Wenham 1993). Thus, we regard it as an important and trustworthy witness in this harmonization (and leave speculation on its origins outside of this project).

Mark 16:1-8 shows similarities to Matthew 28:1-8, while Mark 16:9-20 follows closest to Luke 24:8-53 (though in a condensed form). At the least, this indicates that the early church saw no conflict between Matthew's account and Luke's. Neither—as shown in this harmonization—should we.

Congruous with the rest of Mark's gospel, Mark's resurrection account is more concise and abrupt than the other gospels⁹²², while still covering a broad range of salient details.

Luke (Luke 24 – Acts 1)

In striking ways, Luke's gospel counters Matthew's:

- Where Matthew begins in Jerusalem, while, “all Jerusalem,” is troubled by Jesus' nearby birth (see Matt. 2:1-3), Luke starts them in Galilee (2:4) until a registration moves them to Jerusalem (2:1-3).
- Matthew spends most of his gospel with Jesus in Galilee; Luke, however, before half of his gospel is finished, begins focusing on Jesus moving to Jerusalem (see 9:51), and from there the rest of his gospel sees Jesus going to, or being in/around, Jerusalem⁹²³.
- Matthew's resurrection account focuses exclusively on the resurrected Jesus in Galilee; Luke's resurrection account focuses exclusively on the resurrected Jesus in

⁹²² Though 1 Corinthians 15, which is written within an epistle addressing a specific problem within a specific church, and thus had a different purpose than the gospel narratives, is more concise than Mark's account.

⁹²³ See [Appendix J: Placing Luke 9:51-18:14 Within John 7:10-12:19](#) for more details on this.

Jerusalem, where He tells them to stay in Jerusalem.

- Further, Luke's 2nd book (Acts) shows the earliest disciples remaining in Jerusalem, as Jesus commanded (Acts 1-2).

In other words, where Matthew focuses on a Jerusalem-to-Galilee movement (i.e. a transition to a beyond-Jewish mission), Luke highlights a Galilee-to-Jerusalem movement.

He does not do this to suggest the Jesus movement is reverting to an exclusively Jewish focus (cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 28:28). Instead, we believe Luke wants to establish Jesus and his followers as respectable to the Jews of his day, though (and probably because) their mission goes beyond Judaism (see also [Appendix A: Reconciling Matthew's and Luke's Birth Narrative](#)).

As Paul's travelling companion (cf. Acts 16:10-17) and the writer of Acts, Luke frequently observes Jesus' followers accused of forsaking Judaism. In fact, the last thing he records (undoubtedly fresh in his mind when writing Luke-Acts) is Paul's arrest by the hands of Jewish leaders on this very charge (which also takes place in Jerusalem—see Acts 21-28). To guard against such charges, Luke seems careful to preserve words and actions that establish consistency between Judaism and the Jesus-movement (as opposed to things that could add extra and unnecessary strife).

As such, Luke's resurrection account is the only one to ignore any Galilean resurrection appearances. It also is the only account that remains silent on women being the first to witness

Jesus (a notion that was clearly disagreeable to the “upstanding Jews” of his day⁹²⁴).

Thus, when examining Luke’s resurrection account, we should expect words/actions arranged in such a way that would help Jews sympathize with—and even revere—the burgeoning Jesus movement.

John (John 20-21)

John 21:22-24 reveals one intent of John’s resurrection account: to add clarification regarding the events of Jesus’ life—especially His resurrection. This passage also teaches us to look carefully at the resurrection reports without quickly inferring or assuming things beyond what is written (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6).

Additionally, John repeatedly says his gospel is meant to help people believe in Jesus (even if they never see Him resurrected—e.g. John 20:29-31). Thus, while other gospels emphasize doubts about His resurrection (Matt. 28:17; Mark 16:11, 13-14; Luke 24:11, 41), John only tells of 1 doubter: Thomas. And Thomas’s skepticism-turned-to-faith, we believe, serves 2 themes of John’s:

1. **To encourage faith:** Thomas’s doubts led to a vivid encounter and inspection of the resurrected Jesus that, ultimately, built the faith of Thomas. This is meant to also build the faith of others (like John’s readers) who will not see and touch the resurrected Jesus (20:29).
2. **To contradict gnostic beliefs about Jesus**⁹²⁵: Jesus shows Himself to have a

⁹²⁴ A woman’s testimony in that day was looked down upon (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.15).

⁹²⁵ Gnosticism held that Jesus only appeared to be human, but did not really have a physical, human body (see <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1-300/gnosticism-11629621.html>, for instance). John’s writings (especially his gospel and 1 John) contradict Gnosticism when people touch

physical body that can be seen, touched, and examined, while simultaneously being God (20:25-29).

Thus, John's resurrection account seems to:

1. Assume the general elements of the other accounts, while adding pertinent details or clarifications.
2. Bring faith in Jesus as fully God and man.

Paul (1 Cor. 15:4-8) Paul writes 1 Corinthians to the immature and struggling Corinthian church. 1 Corinthians 15 specifically addresses bad teachings that some Corinthians believed concerning bodily resurrection.

Paul confronts these faulty beliefs by appealing to Jesus' own resurrection: "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (15:12). In other words, if Jesus resurrected, then resurrection does exist, despite what others may have taught.

So Paul delivers a popular creed of his day⁹²⁶ concerning Jesus' resurrection (15:3-11). It begins with, "I delivered to you first of all that which I also received," and ends with, "Whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed." The elements sandwiched between comprise the main parts of the creed.

A creed, by nature, is not meant to be exhaustive or detailed in the least. On the contrary, it is simply a quick retelling of the most pertinent facts. Further, it was probably told and retold as a defense of the faith, and thus excluded points that

Jesus' body (1 John 1:1; John 20:25-29) and when blood and water (human elements) are seen within Him (John 19:34; 1 John 5:6).

⁹²⁶ See, for instance, <https://beliefmap.org/bible/1-corinthians/15-creed/date/>.

may have caused unease (such as women being the first to witness Jesus).

With this introduction of the resurrection accounts in mind, below is our tentative reckoning of the sequence of resurrection events.

Jerusalem: Friday, 6pm – Saturday, 6pm

1. **Weekly Sabbath (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1)**

The Jewish day began at 6pm and ended at 6am. Thus, for instance, Genesis 1 talks of “evening and morning” (in that order). The weekly Sabbath took place from Friday, 6pm – Saturday, 6pm.

Jerusalem: Saturday Evening – Resurrection Sunday Morning (Before Dawn)

2. **Women buy and prepare anointing spices (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1)**

The women who went to the tomb bought anointing spices, “when the Sabbath was past,” (Mark 16:1). Then they prepared the spices (Luke 24:1), and left for the tomb with them around dawn⁹²⁷ (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). It is almost certain they purchased the spices on Saturday evening, when the shops reopened (see Wenham 1993, 68). Then, the preparations would have followed either later that evening or very early on Sunday morning.

⁹²⁷ John says the women left, “while it was still dark,” (20:1). Matthew and Mark say they came as the day, “began to dawn,” (Mt. 28:1), “when the sun had risen,” (Mk. 16:2). The Greek word used for, “left,” is the same word used for, “came,” thus, it is plausible that the women left while it was still dark, walked the distance to the tomb, then arrived when the sun had risen (this interpretation is reflected in various translations). It is also possible that the writers are all using different ways of describing the same time (similar to a person describing a glass as, “half full”, while another says it is, “half empty”). In either case, it seems clear that they left around Sunday’s dawn.

Jerusalem: Resurrection Sunday Morning

3. **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and perhaps other women went to Jesus' tomb (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1, 10; John 20:1)**

Though John only mentions Mary Magdalene (20:1) going to the tomb, he also reveals that Mary had companions (see 20:2—"we do not know where they have laid Him"). Comparing this with the other accounts, we see 4 women named as traveling to the tomb, while other women (presumably less prominent) may have joined them (cf. Luke 24:10).

4. **An angel (accompanied by an earthquake) moved the stone and frightened the guard away (Matt. 28:2-4; Mark 16:3-4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1)**

Mark, Luke, and John record the women approaching the tomb, surprised to see the stone already rolled away. Part of their surprise was due to the stone being, "very large," (Mark 16:4). In fact, the women did not think they could collectively roll it away (Mark 16:3). Thus, we know a strong force must have moved the stone before the women arrived.

Matthew fills in the details, saying, "There was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it...the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men," (Mt. 28:2-4). This same angel would later speak to the women (Matt. 28:5; see notes below).

Though Matthew records this event *after* the women's journey to the tomb, we should not assume he means it took place after the women arrived. Elsewhere Matthew clearly records things out of chronological order so that he could preserve specific themes. He even admits to doing so earlier in the description of Jesus' death-resurrection (see 27:51-54).

Further, when comparing the other gospel accounts, it is clear that the women found the stone moved, but did not know how it

happened (perhaps the angel[s] who moved it described the event to them later). Thus, they were not there to witness the angel frightening the guard, which happened before they arrived⁹²⁸.

Finally, note that the stone was moved to let people enter the tomb and observe Jesus as missing. It was not moved to let Jesus out (He needed no help getting through physical barriers—see John 20:19, for instance).

5. The women arrive at the tomb and see the stone moved (Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1)

6. Mary Magdalene leaves the tomb to notify John and Peter (John 20:2)

John tells us that Mary Magdalene brings Peter and John to the tomb *before* the women find angels⁹²⁹ (John 20:2-13; see also Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:3-7). Luke, however, records Peter, John, and Mary's visit *after* the women see the angels (24:9-12, 22-24).

John is believed to have preserved the actual time-sequence of events because:

1. As seen consistently in this gospel harmonization, John is the most interested in recording things in chronological sequence

⁹²⁸ Not only are Mark, Luke, and John silent about the angels and guard being present when the women arrive, but they also show the women (A) freely inspecting the tomb and (B) asking a gardener about Jesus' whereabouts-- unlikely events had the women seen angels or guards present. This further corroborates that the activity with the guard and angels happened before the women arrived to the tomb, and Matthew records it in his sequence for thematic reasons (see also the introduction of the resurrection accounts, above).

⁹²⁹ "Angels," and, "men-in-white," refer to the same beings here (and elsewhere) in the Bible. Consider:

- Matthew 28:2-3: "an angel...his countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow"
- Mark 16:5: "a young man clothed in a long white robe"
- Luke 24:4: "two men...in shining garments"
- John 20:12: "two angels in white"

Comparing the accounts clearly shows that all writers are speaking of the same angelic being(s) clothed in shining, white garments. "Men-in-white," and, "angels," are thus used interchangeably here (especially compare Luke 24:4-7 with 24:23), as they are in other Scriptures (cf. Acts 1:10).

The variance of one angel (cf. Matthew and Mark) versus two (cf. Luke and John) is no different from 1-versus-2 variances elsewhere in the gospels (see [Appendix M: Matthew's Plurals](#) on this). Thus, perhaps one angel played a more prominent role.

(see especially the [Appendix J: Placing Luke 9:51-18:14 Within John 7:10-12:19](#)).

2. The events in John’s resurrection account are more detailed and time-specific, leaving less room for an out-of-sequence timeline.
3. In contrast to John, Luke connects the ordering of these events by two single words (“*de*” in 24:12, and “*kai*” in 24:24). Both words are very loose connectors. For instance, various translators use “[but](#)” for “*de*” in 24:12 and, “[kai](#)” is left out of the [translation altogether for 24:24](#).
4. As said in this appendix’s introduction, Luke writes his account in order to add respectability to the Jesus movement in the sight of Jews. Thus, he minimizes the details of the women witnesses—not mentioning 2 visits or their encounter with Jesus between the 1st and 2nd visit—while still keeping his record true (though selectively so).

We believe Mary Magdalene went alone to get Peter and John because there is no mention of other women accompanying her. However, there may have been other women traveling with her not mentioned in Scripture, and it makes no difference to our timeline whether or not she had company.

7. Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb with Peter and John (Luke 24: 12; John 20:3-4).

8. Peter and John find the tomb empty, and then return to their dwelling(s)⁹³⁰ (Luke 24:12; John 20:5-10).

John and Peter, after finding the tomb empty, went back to their own lodging and wondered at what they had observed.

9. The women entered the tomb, but saw nothing (Luke 24:3).

Luke does not tell us at what exact point the women enter the tomb and see nothing. They may have entered before Mary Magdalene left, while Mary Magdalene was gone, while Peter and John

⁹³⁰ “The expression rendered *to their homes* [in John 20:10] is not that of [John] 19:27 (*eis ta idia*); here, the expression is roughly equivalent to the French idiom ‘chez eux’ (‘at their own [place]’).” (Carson 1991, 639).

entered, after Peter and John left, or any combination of these.

However, Luke tells us that their finding the tomb empty, “perplexed,” them, and while they were perplexed they encountered the angels (24:4). This reads similarly to Mary’s perplexity and sadness regarding the empty tomb, which also happens immediately before she see angels (John 20:11-12), and is recorded *immediately after* Peter and John enter and leave the tomb (cf. John 20:3-10).

Thus, Luke’s account of their finding the empty tomb most likely occurred at the same time as, or immediately following, Peter and John looking into the tomb. This would have likely been in addition to the women entering and exiting the tomb prior to Peter and John (presumably in light of their finding the stone strangely moved).

It is also possible that Luke is telescoping multiple entrances/exits of the women to/from the tomb. If this is the case, he does not have 1 visit in mind, but multiple visits packaged together as 1 general observation of the tomb.

Finally, the fact that Luke 24:3 records the women finding no angel in the tomb is not a contradiction to Mark 16:5. It is likely that the women examined the tomb multiple times (especially upon Mary Magdalene’s discovery of angels, see below). And, as John 20:3-10 compared with John 20:11-12 explicitly shows, angels could appear and reappear at will within the tomb. Thus, it seems that the women initially found the tomb empty of angels, but later, upon Mary Magdalene’s discovery, they saw angels in that same tomb (see more below).

10. Mary Magdalene discovers angels in the tomb (John 20:11-12).

All accounts show the women interacting with angels (cf. Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:3-7; John 20:11-13). However, John’s account of Mary finding angels within the tomb seems separate from the other accounts recorded.

For instance, in John 20:11-13, Mary:

- looks in to see the angels (as opposed to entering the tomb,

see Mark 16:5; Luke 24:3),

- is the only one mentioned as observing them in John (as opposed to multiple women observing them, see Matt. 28:5; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:5), and
- seems to have a relatively uneventful conversation with no instructions from the angels (in contrast to the awe-filled and specific instructions given by the angels in Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7, 23).

In light of this, we believe Mary's initial discovery of angels on her own drew the other women to come see them as well (see below).

11. Other women join Mary and the angels within the tomb (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7, 23; John 20:11-13).

As stated above, Matthew (28:5-7), Mark (16:5-7), and Luke (24:4-7, 23) record the group of women fearfully receiving specific instructions from the angels while inside the tomb (Mark 16:5).

In contrast, John records Mary Magdalene—alone—briefly conversing with angels (without much excitement), receiving no instructions, and then abruptly turning to meet with Jesus (John 20:12-14).

Though multiple plausible harmonizations exist between Matthew = Mark = Luke and John⁹³¹, we believe the following is the most straightforward—and therefore the most likely⁹³²—reconstruction:

1. While hovering around the tomb, Mary Magdalene discovers the angels⁹³³.

⁹³¹ For instance, see Bock for 4 popular theories (1996b, 2:1886–88).

⁹³² See Occam's Razor (Encyclopedia Britannica Editors 2018).

⁹³³ It seems clear that Mary happened upon angels when she was not looking for them (John 20:11-12). This allows for only 3 possibilities when comparing with the other accounts:

- 1) Mary encountered angels separate from, and without knowledge of, the other women's encounter of the angels,
- 2) Mary and the other women discovered the angels together, though only Mary's perspective is specifically recorded, or
- 3) Mary first discovered the angels, and the other women joined.

Option 1 is possible (as Wenham persuasively argues for, 1993), but adds an extra layer of complexity when the gospels routinely record 1 general angelic visit (albeit from very different perspectives).

2. The other women are/go inside the tomb⁹³⁴.
3. Mary exits to consult the, “gardener,” who turns out to be Jesus (see below)⁹³⁵.
4. The other women stay longer with the angels, receiving specific instructions from within the tomb⁹³⁶.

Option 2 seems unlikely for the reasons listed above, such as (A) Mary is recorded as discovering angels by herself (John 20:11-12), and (B) Mary’s conversation is much more casual than the awe-filled commands of the other records of this angelic visit.

This leaves option 3 as the best possibility. Further, this option is in line with Mary Magdalene being the featured woman in these accounts, a clear theme in the narrative:

- 1) Mary Magdalene is the only one named in all 4 gospels as being at the cross and at the tomb with the angels
- 2) She is the only one named as retrieving Peter and John
- 3) She is mentioned as the first woman to encounter Jesus (Mark 16:9)

Further, if Mary Magdalene = Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha (see below), she takes a lead role in other places as well (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:31; 12:1-8), which shows continued consistency of this theme.

⁹³⁴ Mark tells us that the women were inside the tomb when speaking with the angels (16:5). It is possible that the women were already there when Mary discovered the angels (perhaps, for instance, Mary left the tomb to walk with Peter and John a moment as they left, and then saw the angels before re-entering). It is also plausible that the women were outside of the tomb at the point of Mary’s discovery, but then enter the tomb when they realized something was happening.

⁹³⁵ It is impossible to know whether Mary Magdalene = Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha. Some have given grounds for connecting these two (cf. Wenham 1993, chap. 2), but the arguments are not sufficient to have any certainty, and since such identification does not affect our timeline, we will not probe deeper. However, whether or not they are the same person, there seems a striking connection between Mary’s (sister of Lazarus and Martha) actions in John 11:28-37 and Mary Magdalene’s discovery of Jesus after He resurrected (if our timeline is correct):

- 1) Both become aware of something privately (John 11:28 cf. 20:12)
- 2) Both go on their own to find Jesus (John 11:29 cf. 20:14)
 - a. Both leave “quickly” (John 11:31 cf. 20:13-14)
- 3) Both fall at Jesus’ feet (John 11:32 cf. 20:17)
- 4) It was asked, “Where have you laid him?” (by Jesus to Mary of Lazarus and Martha—John 11:34 cf. by Mary Magdalene to Jesus—John 20:13, 15)
- 5) Others joined them after they went on their own (John 11:33 cf. this is the tentative conclusion of this harmony).

Such things are not meant to prove Mary Magdalene = Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha. Nor do they affirm our resurrection timeline as truthful. But, at the least, it shows our timeline is plausible when similar events occur elsewhere in Scripture. And, at the most, it could indeed show subtle confirmation of our resurrection timeline and/or give some grounds for identifying Mary Magdalene as Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha.

⁹³⁶ In Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s accounts, we see the angels telling the women: (1) “Jesus is risen,” and (2) “This is just as He said.” Matthew and Mark also add the angels saying: (3) “Don’t fear,” (4) “Report this to the disciples,” (5) “You will find Jesus in Galilee.” In contrast, John shows Mary Magdalene leaving her angelic encounter still being confused regarding Jesus’ body.

As said above, it seems apparent that Mary Magdalene missed some important details supplied by Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s accounts. We conjecture, therefore, that Mary Magdalene left the angelic

5. After the angels commission them to leave, the other women begin their journey back, and find Mary now with Jesus (see below).
6. The other women join Mary and Jesus (see below).

12. Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus (Mark 16:9; John 20:14-17).

We know that Mary Magdalene is the first person to encounter the resurrected Jesus (Mark 16:9), and John records that episode (20:14-17).

Assuming she left the angelic encounter before the other women received their instructions, Mary would have been meeting with Jesus simultaneous to the women meeting with the angels (co-incidentally, both the angels and Jesus gave the message that: 1. Jesus is alive, and 2. the women need to report this to the disciples).

13. Other women leave the angels to tell the disciples (Matt. 28:8; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:8-9).

14. Other women join Mary Magdalene and Jesus (Matt. 28:9-10).

Matthew is the only gospel to record multiple women meeting with Jesus (28:9-10), while Mark and John record one woman (Mary Magdalene) meeting with Him⁹³⁷. We allege that Luke is silent on the issue due to the nature of his audience and purpose (see this Appendix's Introduction).

Matthew says the women, "Went out quickly...and ran to bring His disciples word," (28:8). In route, they meet Jesus (28:9). It is possible this refers to only Mary meeting Jesus, but if we take the text straightforward, it would seem the entourage of women collectively met Jesus.

encounter early, before these added details were supplied. It is not clear whether Mary knew they were angels when she left or mistook them for humans (as she does with Jesus), and it does not affect our timeline in either case.

⁹³⁷ There is a consistent thread throughout the gospels of Matthew reporting multiple people where other gospels record only one; such a phenomena in the resurrection should not be surprising (see [Appendix M: Matthew's Plurals](#)).

Such a setting is consistent if the women left the tomb and angels to join Mary Magdalene, who is already speaking with Jesus (as proposed above).

15. The women leave to tell the disciples (Matt. 28:11; Mark 16:8; Luke 24:8-9; John 20:18).

After Jesus commissions the women, they collectively leave to report these things to the disciples.

16. The guard conspired with the Jewish leaders (Matt. 28:11-15).

Matthew alone speaks of the guard (see this Appendix's Introduction). They conspired with the Jewish leaders, "While they [the women] were going [to tell the disciples]," (28:11).

17. The women report what they saw to doubting disciples (Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:10-11; John 20:18).

Mark and Luke tell us that Mary Magdalene returns to tell the disciples she saw Jesus alive (Mark 16:10; John 20:18), while Luke mentions Mary Magdalene and other women sharing with the disciples what they saw (24:9-10). From this, it seems that Mary Magdalene had a lead role in (A) what the women actually observed, and (B) later reporting what the women saw. This agrees with our harmonization, which claims Mary was the first to discover the angels and Jesus.

Mark (16:11) and Luke (24:11) also recount the disciples doubting the women's report. Later, Matthew (28:17) records doubts toward Jesus when He revealed Himself in Galilee (presumably by non-apostles, see below), while John (20:25) records Thomas doubting after the 10 apostles encounter Jesus. Thus, doubting is a prevalent theme within these resurrection accounts, which includes the initial doubting of the women's report⁹³⁸.

⁹³⁸ After all, it is not every day that a man resurrects himself! Further, the testimony of women was viewed with suspicion by Jews of that day (See Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.15).

Jerusalem Area: Resurrection Sunday Afternoon – Evening

18. Cleopas and his companion encounter Jesus in Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-33).

Mark says that after the women reported to the disciples, “He [Jesus] appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country,” (16:12). Luke gives further details, saying that they travelled to, “Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem,” (24:13), and that one of their names, “was Cleopas,” (24:18).

They arrived at Emmaus, “toward evening,” (24:29). Jesus was then revealed to them inside their lodging, and disappeared shortly after (24:31). “So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem,” (24:33).

Thus, they would not arrive back at Jerusalem (a 7-mile journey—Luke 24:13) until nightfall to tell everyone.

19. Peter encounters Jesus and reports this to others (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

By the time the Emmaus pair return to Jerusalem, they hear that Jesus appeared to Simon⁹³⁹ (Luke 24:34).

Before they set out on their journey, the women had reported their findings to the disciples (Luke 24:22-23), and Peter and John had

⁹³⁹ Some allege that Simon was Cleopas’s travelling companion, and thus he met Jesus in Emmaus with Cleopas. According to this theory, Luke 24:34 is a record of what the 2 in Emmaus share to the others (namely, that Jesus appeared to them/Peter). Some difficulties with this include:

- (1) There is no explanation for why Cleopas is the only character named in the story when Simon would be more notable.
- (2) It seems out of Peter’s character to be so quiet in the narrative while Cleopas does the talking (cf. Luke 24:18).
- (3) The 2 to Emmaus describe Peter as someone separate from him during their travels (cf. Luke 24:12 and 24:24).
- (4) The Greek suggests that it was not the 2 to Emmaus who were speaking in Luke 24:34 (see Bible.org 2014d, n. 93).
- (5) The resurrection records indicate the 2 to Emmaus are separate from Simon or the apostles (cf. Mark 16:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:5).

Thus, we confidently place Peter’s encounter of the risen Christ as a separate event than the 2 to Emmaus.

inspected the tomb, but had not seen Jesus (Luke 24:24). However, by the time they return, Peter had seen Jesus (Luke 24:34). Thus, somewhere between their going to and coming from Emmaus, Peter encountered Jesus.

After Jesus joined the pair traveling to Emmaus, they had a substantial conversation and Bible study covering much of the Old Testament. Then they reached Emmaus (Luke 24:15-28). Thus, Jesus must have met them early in their journey. However, after Jesus is revealed in Emmaus He disappears, and then the two return (probably briskly) to Jerusalem. This means there was more time for Jesus to appear to Peter *after* He appeared in Emmaus. Further, Luke (who is the only one to record both the Emmaus appearance and the appearance to Peter) writes it as if the 2 to Emmaus encounter Jesus before Peter does. This evidence leads us to believe that Jesus appeared to the 2 to Emmaus before He appears to Peter.

Significantly, we know no details of Peter's first encounter with Jesus, other than the fact that it happened (see Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). Perhaps this silence is best understood along the lines of King, who writes:

I doubt if Peter ever told the others what transpired between him and the Lord that afternoon. The Gospels give no hint, nor Peter's two Epistles; and all Paul says is "After that, He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." I don't think Peter will ever tell us. I don't think it will be fair to ask him. What goes on between a backslider and the restoring Lord is not for public hearing. There are some things not lawful to be uttered, and this is one of them. (1948, 53)

Jerusalem: Resurrection Sunday Evening

20. Cleopas and his companion report what they saw (Mark 16:13; Luke 24:33-38).

Mark 16:13 indicates that Cleopas and his companion (the 2 Emmaus travelers) told their account to *disbelieving* disciples. By contrast, Luke 24:34 shows the Emmaus travelers telling their account to *believing* disciples.

There are a few solutions to the seeming discrepancy:

1. **The disciples had a mixture of belief and unbelief.** This seems most likely considering Luke 24:36-43 shows the disciples clearly doubting after they claim, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (24:34). Further, such a phenomena is found elsewhere in Scripture (Matt. 28:17; Mark 9:24; etc.), and, I imagine, most readers could identify with doubt mixing with faith in their lives as well.
2. **The people who said, “The Lord is risen indeed,” (Luke 24:34), are different than those who doubt in Mark 16:13.** Though this is reasonable (especially considering there were more than the eleven apostles there, see Luke 24:33), it seems unnecessary in light of solution #1. Further, Mark and Luke write as if the whole community of them responded to the 2 Emmaus travelers (thus, even if only 1 or 2 people spoke, it is written as if the entirety of the people agreed, and thus the entire group is said to affirm Jesus being alive [Luke 24:34] while also doubting [Mark 16:13] the Emmaus travelers).
3. **The people doubted that Jesus appeared to the 2 Emmaus travelers, but believed Jesus appeared to Peter.** This is also a possibility, since Peter would have been treated with great esteem as a leader among the apostles (see Matt. 16:17-20; consider also that every listing of the 12 apostles places Peter as the 1st apostle [and Judas Iscariot as the last], while the ordering of other names varies). *Surely*, the apostles may have thought, *if Jesus were alive He would be seen by Peter, then all of us apostles*. This would help explain why they believed Peter’s testimony over the women’s testimony (see also the place of a woman’s testimony in Judaism of that day, above). Thus, for

pride (or other reasons) they may have doubted the testimony of the 2 Emmaus travelers, considering that, at least Cleopas, was not 1 of the 12 apostles. Though this theory has some weight, it does not fully explain why they continued to doubt when Jesus did appear to the apostles directly in Luke 24:36-43. Perhaps it is a combination of #1 and #3—that is, they believed that if Jesus was alive He probably would appear to Peter, and they want to believe He is alive, but they still have doubts since they have not seen Him directly.

21. Jesus appears to the apostles (and others) while Thomas is absent (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).

While the disciples are discussing Jesus' appearance to Peter and the two to Emmaus, the resurrected Jesus enters the room (see Luke 24:36). Mark 16:14⁹⁴⁰; Luke 24:36-43⁹⁴¹; and John 20:19-25 all

⁹⁴⁰ Mark 16:14-18, on the surface, reads like one event. The problem with this view, though, is that Jesus' ascension is said to have happened, "After he had spoken [those things] with them," (Mark 16:19). In other words, if Mark 16:14-18 is one event, Jesus must have ascended *around the same time* He resurrected, but Acts 1:3 says He ascended *40 days after He resurrected*. There are a few possibilities to harmonize these accounts, but a simple solution is to see Mark 16:14 as a separate occasion from Mark 16:15-18, consolidated for purpose of the narrative. This is certainly possible as the transitional word in 16:15 (Greek: *kai*) is used elsewhere by Mark to introduce a new event (e.g. Mark 7:1). Additionally, the subject matter of 16:15-18 may better match Jesus' later words (cf. Matt. 28:16-20), as opposed to what He speaks at the first post-resurrection meeting with the apostles (cf. John 20:19-24). If this be the case, then Mark 16:14 happened the evening of the resurrection and Mark 16:15-18 happened around 40 days later, shortly before the ascension. That is how we break it up in this harmonization.

⁹⁴¹ Like Mark 16:14-18 (see above), Luke 24:36-49 also may initially seem like one event, but fits better as two (or more) events telescoped:

- Event 1: Jesus meets the apostles the evening of His resurrection (Luke 24:36-43)
- Event 2 (or more): Jesus meets with the apostles later on (Luke 24:44-49), probably shortly before He ascended

The reasons for viewing Luke 24:36-49 as multiple events consolidated (like Mark 16:14-18) include:

1. The ascension that follows (Luke 24:50-52) seems to have happened shortly after Jesus spoke. Yet Luke knows Jesus ascended 40 days later than Luke 24:36 (see Acts 1:3).
2. The transitional language Luke uses (Greek: *de*—translated by NKJV as, "Then," in 24:44, and, "And," in 24:50) is used elsewhere by Luke to introduce a new event (e.g. 1:57), and does not demand that these things happened at the same time (see Wenham 1993, 107).
3. Luke 24:36-43 seem to match other accounts of Jesus' initial revelation to His disciples, while 24:44-49 seems to match better with Jesus' later appearances (see note above on Mark 16:14-18).
4. Luke records Jesus commanding the disciples to, "Tarry in the city of Jerusalem," (24:49). Though it is possible this is spoken before they left for Galilee (see discussion in *Resurrection Event #23*, below), it is easiest to understand if Jesus spoke it later (after they returned from

describe this event⁹⁴².

Mark and Luke say Jesus appeared to, “the eleven,” (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36 cf. v. 33). While John says He came to only 10 of the apostles (Thomas being absent)—John 20:19-24.

There are multiple plausible resolutions:

1. Mark (and possibly Luke) may be telescoping multiple gatherings of Jesus together. Thus, Jesus does meet with the 11 cumulatively over 2 meetings, and perhaps similar elements exist in both meetings (e.g. food was present). Therefore, instead of giving the specific details of only 10 being present at the first gathering, and all 11 being present the next gathering, Mark (and maybe Luke) smooch the two events together as a general encounter Jesus had among the apostles in those days.

This view has some merit in that:

- a. Other parts of the resurrection narrative seem to telescope events (see above).
- b. Paul may be doing something similar in saying Jesus appeared to, “the twelve,” (1 Cor. 15:5)—when in reality He appeared to 10 plus others, and then 11 plus others.

Galilee). Certainly, this is in line with the same command spoken in Acts 1:4, 8, which clearly happens directly before the ascension (cf. Acts 1:9).

5. There may be purposes for the author consolidating in this way (for instance, Luke may have wanted to focus only on Jerusalem appearances—see this Appendix’s Introduction).

Furthermore, as W.E. Brown points out, ancient narratives were not as interested in, “keeping to a chronological order,” as we are today, and, instead, tended to: (1) lump thematic elements together, regardless of the sequence of events, and/or (2) jump back-and-forth between parallel events without warning (cited in Wenham 1993, 78). This gives even stronger evidence that Luke (and Mark) might be stringing separate events together without adding clarifying notes within the text.

⁹⁴² It is clear that Mark, Luke, and John all speak of the same event:

- Mark (16:14) indicates that this was *the first time* Jesus was seen by the apostles (note that they were rebuked here for not listening to others regarding Jesus’ resurrection, which shows that they had yet to see Him for themselves).
- Luke (24:36-43) also indicates this as *the first time* Jesus met the group of apostles, placing the event in the middle of their discussion with the Emmaus pair (this was the evening of Jesus’ resurrection, see above).
- John directly states that the Resurrection evening meeting (20:19-25) was the first time Jesus met the group of apostles (cf. John 21:14), and tells us explicitly that it happened, “The same day [as His resurrection] at evening,” (20:19).

- c. Luke acknowledges that Jesus appeared to the apostles over 40 days before ascending (see Acts 1:3), which points to considerable compression in Luke 24, and thus the very real possibility of telescoping events.
 - d. An aspect of John's resurrection account is clarifying details knowingly missed by the other accounts (see this Appendix's Introduction), and thus it fits that John alone would take time to tease out the 2 separate gatherings
- 2. Though all 11 apostles were together, Thomas left the gathering (for whatever reason) before Jesus appeared to them, and returned after Jesus left. Thus, Jesus did join the gathering of the 11, but at the time of His joining, only 10 were present. If this were so, Mark's statement that, "Later He [Jesus] appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table," could be understood as, "Later He appeared to the *gathering of* the eleven as they sat at the table." Luke, further, allows for less than 11 apostles at the time of Jesus' appearing, as he writes that, "Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them," (24:36)—where "them" refers to the general gathering mentioned in 24:33-34, and allows room for some of the gathering to have departed by then. Such a scenario would further agree with John's purpose of clarifying details in the resurrection account (see this Appendix's Introduction), as even John might have left the impression that all the disciples are gathered together (cf. 20:19) until he later revealed that Thomas was missing (20:24ff).
- 3. "The eleven," may be a title synonymous with, "The Apostles." Thus, it would be accurate to say, "the eleven," gathered, even when only 10 individual members were present. This would be similar to saying, truthfully: "I presented before the board of directors," even though one member of the board was absent at the meeting. Such a reading may have some additional support in that Paul says Jesus appeared to, "the twelve," (1 Cor. 15:5), even though there were only 11 of them at the time. However, it may be that Paul is indicating that Matthias was among those who saw Jesus at that time, and would later comprise the 12 apostles (cf. Acts 1:26), as we discuss below.

It seems impossible to be certain about which scenario happened (or if

a combination of them, or even a different option occurred). For our purposes, though, we can confidently state that Jesus appeared to the apostles minus Thomas on the evening of His resurrection (cf. John 20:19-26).

22. Disciples report what they saw to doubting Thomas (John 20:25).

Jerusalem: 8 Days after Resurrection Sunday

23. Jesus appears to all the apostles, including Thomas (John 20:26-29; 1 Cor. 15:5).

From the time of Moses (c. 1500 B.C.), God commanded the Jews to celebrate 3 feasts in Jerusalem (e.g. Deut. 16:16), as they were able.

These included:

- (1) Passover-Unleavened Bread (a 7-day festival) and
- (2) The Feast of Weeks = Pentecost (50 days after the start of Passover—see Acts 2:1).

As such, the apostles (presumably following Jesus' example) would have naturally stayed in Jerusalem for all 7 days of the Passover-Unleavened Bread Feast before returning to Galilee.

Passover-Unleavened Bread began the day of Jesus' crucifixion (14 Nisan, traditionally thought to be Thursday, 6pm – Friday, 6pm⁹⁴³ during the year of Jesus' death-resurrection). Thus, the last day of the 7-day feast would have been Wednesday, 6pm – Thursday, 6pm (or 21 Nisan). This was 3 days before Jesus appears to Thomas (cf. John 20:26).

There are various explanations for why the disciples waited 3 days after the 7-day feast before returning to Galilee—as Jesus instructed (cf. Matt. 28:7, 10; Mark 16:7). Perhaps their stay related to the Jewish practice of not traveling, “any further than...two thousand cubits,” on a Sabbath-day (Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, 13.8.4). Jesus also could have given them instructions not recorded in Scripture regarding *when* to return to Galilee. Or, perhaps something else entirely kept them in Jerusalem.

Whatever the case, intriguingly, this is not the first time that Jesus surprised others by appearing in Jerusalem 3 days after a Passover-Unleavened Bread feast ended. Luke 2:46 records Jesus (at age 12) appearing in the Jerusalem temple 3 days after his family began the journey back to Galilee, following Passover-Unleavened Bread. Thus,

⁹⁴³ The Jewish day ran from around 6pm-6pm (as explained above).

not only is it clear that some would linger longer in Jerusalem, but Jesus Himself did so on at least one occasion.

Therefore, for whatever reason, the apostles remained in Jerusalem long enough for Jesus to appear to all of them (including Thomas) 8 days after He resurrected.

This extended Jerusalem stay does not seem disobedient to Jesus' command to go to Galilee (cf. Matt. 26:32; 28:7, 10; Mark 16:7). For, firstly, Jesus gives no time indicators for *when* the disciples were to journey to Galilee. In fact, as C. F. D. Moule suggests:

‘I will go before you into Galilee’ may only mean ‘When you return (as you naturally will), you will find me there already’; and the appearances in Jerusalem and Galilee will represent...the conception of Jesus showing himself wherever his friends happened to be at the time. (1957)

Also, Matthew (26:32; 28:7, 10) and Mark (16:7) are the only accounts to mention Jesus commanding his disciples to meet Him in Galilee, which shows that such a command was not the sole command—or even that all people thought it the most pressing command—of Jesus.

In fact, Mark clearly indicates that Jesus had other intentions and commands for the apostles, since he only records Jesus' Jerusalem appearances (*after* recording Jesus' command for them to go to Galilee—16:7). And Matthew, while ignoring the main Jerusalem appearances, does so because of his specific objective (see this Appendix's Introduction), and not because he thinks Jesus only wanted to appear in Galilee. In fact, Matthew also tells us that Jesus gave additional commands regarding His resurrection appearances not recorded in His gospel (cf. Matt. 28:16⁹⁴⁴), and even shows Jesus appearing in Jerusalem *before* Galilee (Matt. 28:9-10).

Thus, the disciples' Galilee trip (which was, undoubtedly, a pivotal

⁹⁴⁴ Here we read that the disciples went, “to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them,” but nowhere in the gospels do we have record of Jesus directing them to a specific mountain.

encounter⁹⁴⁵) was one of multiple places where Jesus wanted to reveal Himself, and fits well between the two Jerusalem festivals (Passover-Unleavened Bread and Pentecost).

Finally, though Luke records Jesus instructing the disciples to stay in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:3), they still leave for Galilee. This seeming discrepancy can be resolved in various ways:

1. As said above, there are solid grounds for thinking Luke 24:36-49 refers to multiple interactions between Jesus and the disciples within the 40 days after Jesus resurrected. Thus, Jesus' command to stay in Jerusalem occurred after they returned from Galilee, shortly before Jesus ascended. Such compression is demanded at some level when considering that Luke 24:36 happened the day Jesus resurrected, while 24:50 happened 40 days later (cf. Acts 1:3).
2. Even if Luke 24:36-49 speaks entirely of Jesus' Jerusalem meeting on the evening of His resurrection, his command to stay in Jerusalem could still be taken as a general command that allowed for exceptions—especially considering that earlier the same morning Jesus commanded them to go to Galilee (see above). Such a phenomenon occurs elsewhere in Luke. For instance: “He charged him to *tell no one* [the command], but ‘go and show yourself *to the priest* [the exception]...” (5:14). He may have even spelled out such exceptions within His command to stay in Jerusalem, though Scripture does not record this.
3. Alternatively, if Jesus commanded them to stay in Jerusalem before they went to Galilee, He may have only applied this to their post-Pentecost activity (and thus does not speak to their time before going to Galilee). Again, this is not spelled out in Scripture, so we should hold it cautiously, but there are clearly large details Luke leaves out of his resurrection account (cf. Acts 1:3), and perhaps this is one of those details.

Whatever the actual scenario, it fits well within Luke's scheme to focus on Jesus' command to stay in Jerusalem while ignoring their

⁹⁴⁵ The chief aim of Matthew's resurrection narrative (which is the climax of his entire gospel) seems to be the, “Great Commission,” of 28:16-20. Thus, at least Matthew viewed it with the highest importance, and this tradition is continued today with so many missionary events and churches focusing on “The Great Commission” of Matt. 28:16-20.

Galilean excursion (see this Appendix's Introduction), and should not be seen as evidence against their Galilee visit.

Sea of Galilee: Between 8 and 40 Days after Jesus Resurrected

24. Jesus appears to 7 apostles fishing in the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23).

This event happened after the initial Jerusalem encounters (which took place within the first 8 days of Jesus' resurrection, see above), but before Jesus ascended from Jerusalem (see below).

John calls this the, "third," appearance Jesus made to his disciples (21:14), and thus it must have happened before the revelation to the 500 at the Galilean mountain (cf. 1 Cor. 15:6—see more below). Perhaps (as Wenham suggests, 1993, 113), Jesus here gave more instructions and details to these 7 disciples concerning His upcoming Galilean mountain encounter (which included specifying the exact mountain for the meeting, cf. Matt. 28:16).

Galilean Mountain: Between 8 and 40 Days after Jesus Resurrected

25. Jesus appears to more than 500 people at the Galilean mountain (Matt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 15:6).

Matthew alone records Jesus' "Great Commission" at a specified Galilean mountain (28:16). He also tells us that some who saw Jesus at this particular meeting doubted (28:17)—which indicates that people outside of the 11 disciples were at this meeting (since the 11 all saw and touched Jesus by this point, see John 20:29).

Paul, on the other hand, is the only one to record Jesus appearing to more than 500 people at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). He says this event happened between:

- (A) Jesus appearing, "to the twelve⁹⁴⁶," (1 Cor. 15:5), and
- (B) Jesus appearing "to all the apostles⁹⁴⁷," (1 Cor. 15:7).

Thus, the appearing to the 500 must have taken place between:

- (A) Jesus' appearance to Thomas (part of "the twelve") on the 8th day after His resurrection, in Jerusalem, and
- (B) Jesus' ascension from Jerusalem on the 40th day after He resurrected.

This most naturally suggests that the 500 saw Jesus in Galilee (between the Jerusalem festivals). Further, a Galilean mountain would be a natural location for a large group of people to clandestinely⁹⁴⁸ see

⁹⁴⁶ In 1 Cor. 15, Paul seems to focus on apostolic qualifications while sharing of Jesus' resurrection appearances (see Grudem 1994, chap. 47). And, in writing roughly a few decades after the resurrection, the "new" 12 apostles (with Matthias replacing Judas Iscariot—see Acts 1:26) would have been well established officers within the church. Thus, when Paul refers to, "the twelve," (1 Cor. 15:5), he probably is referencing the original apostles plus Matthias (and minus Judas Iscariot). This would, presumably intentionally, have Paul place Matthias among the earliest to see Jesus resurrected, which was a qualification for his apostleship (cf. Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1). Under this line of reasoning, Paul can show that he, too, is an apostle because he has also seen Jesus resurrected (1 Cor. 15:8). Furthermore, the crowd at Jesus' ascension included, "all the apostles," since: "He [Jesus] appeared...then to all the apostles [after appearing to "the twelve"—see 1 Cor. 15:5]," (1 Cor. 15:7).

⁹⁴⁷ "All the apostles" seems to reference all those who saw Jesus resurrected (see footnote above).

⁹⁴⁸ 500 seeing Jesus at once (1 Cor. 15:6) is considerably less than the thousands of people thronging to see Jesus during his earthly ministry (whereas a resurrected Jesus would have drawn even more attention had his appearance been broadcasted publicly). This lesser amount, however, seems due to Jesus/God's interest in selectively showing Himself to a comparative few, and thus He sought clandestine

Jesus (especially opposed to Jerusalem during a festival), and we know that new people were present at the Galilean Mountain meeting of Matt. 28:16-20 (cf. Matt. 28:17, see above). Thus, it can be tentatively thought that the appearance to the 500 (1 Cor. 15:6) = the “Great Commission” from the Galilean mountain (Matt. 28:16-20). This is even more certain if we assume the 4 gospels collectively record all the major appearances of Jesus resurrected⁹⁴⁹.

opportunities to appear. The same pattern happened throughout His resurrection appearances in Jerusalem (e.g. “when the doors were shut...Jesus came,” John 20:19).

⁹⁴⁹ This point should not be stressed since the gospels themselves admit they did not record everything (cf. John 21:25).

Galilee(?): Unknown Time

26. Jesus appears to James, His brother (1 Cor. 15:7)

Only Paul mentions this event, placing it after the 500 see Jesus, but before, “all the apostles,” see Him (1 Cor. 15:6-7). If the 500 met Him at the Galilean mountain (see above), and “all the apostles” saw Him at His ascension (see above), James must have encountered Jesus sometime between Galilee and the ascension.

Though it is possible that James did not see the resurrected Jesus until they were in Jerusalem (shortly before Jesus ascended), there would be more time and opportunity for him to have seen Jesus in Galilee. Further, if James’ encounter was a private affair, Galilee is almost certainly the place this must have happened (since the trip to, and stay at, Jerusalem during a major festival was quite a public affair—especially this festival among Jesus’ friends and family, with so much excitement attached to reports of Jesus’ recent death/resurrection).

Jerusalem Area: 40 Days After Resurrection

27. Jesus meets with the apostles, and other disciples (Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8; 1 Cor. 15:7).

So far, the chronology of Jesus' resurrection is:

- **Days 1-8: Jerusalem** – Appearances in/near Jerusalem
- **Days 9(?)-12(?): Travel to Galilee** – If we assume they departed for Galilee shortly after Jesus appeared on Day 8 in Jerusalem (John 20:26), and took the shorter (and more preferred) route through Samaria, they would have likely travelled the next 3 or so days (see Carson 1991, 215–16).
- **Days 12(?)-35(?): Galilee** – It is unclear exactly when they left Galilee. However, since they were established at Jerusalem by the 40th day of the resurrection (Acts 1:3ff) the latest would have likely been on the 37th day (to allow for 3 days of travel). Their coming by the 40th day would allow them 10 days before Pentecost (Acts 2:1)—which seems more than enough time to be situated for the festival. Thus, it seems probable that they were not back at Jerusalem much earlier than the 40th day of Jesus' resurrection (unless they had other reasons to return earlier unmentioned in Scripture). If we allow for them to arrive at Jerusalem on the 39th day (to situate them somewhat before the events of the 40th day), then count backwards 3-4 days for travel, they would leave Galilee around the 35th-36th day after the resurrection. We are estimating the 35th day to be conservative in allotting for their travel.
- **Days 35(?)-38(?): Travel to Jerusalem** – As stated above, it is unclear when they returned to Jerusalem, thus we hold this timing tentatively.
- **Days 38(?)-40: Jerusalem** – See below.

As stated in resurrection event #21, there are reasons we believe Mark 16:15-18 and Luke 24:44-49 happened immediately before Jesus ascended (40 days after the resurrection), while the verses immediately preceding (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43) describe Jesus' appearance to the apostles on the evening of his resurrection (which also happened at Jerusalem).

This means, then, that Jesus shared a meal with the apostles and—

shortly after—went to Bethany (2 miles outside of Jerusalem—John 11:18) to ascend.

It is unclear why the apostles returned to Jerusalem when they did. Pentecost (celebrated the 50th day after the Passover—see Josephus, *War of the Jews* 2.3.1) would have drawn many Jews throughout Israel to Jerusalem by the 47th (or so) day after Jesus resurrected (cf. Deut. 16:16). Calculating extra time for adequate preparation and provision beforehand may fully explain the timing of their travels. But there just as easily may have been other extenuating circumstances (even a direct command from Jesus not recorded in Scripture) that caused them to return to Jerusalem by the 40th day after Jesus resurrected.

Regardless of the reasons for their return to Jerusalem by the 40th day, four passages seem to speak of Jesus with the apostles (and other disciples) in Jerusalem at this time:

1. Mark 16:15-18: Jesus commissions the apostles, says the Holy Spirit signs will follow
2. Luke 24:44-49: Jesus teaches from the Bible, commissions the apostles, tells them to wait for the Holy Spirit
3. Acts 1:4-8: Jesus commissions the apostles, tells them to wait for the Holy Spirit
4. 1 Cor. 15:7: “Then [after Jesus appears to James, He was seen] by all the apostles.”

The theme is consistent: Jesus commissions the apostles and assures them the Holy Spirit will help. Though this is similar to Matthew’s Galilean commission (28:16-20), these are 2 separate events, and their similarities show Jesus consistently emphasizing the same theme at the end of His resurrection appearances⁹⁵⁰.

Jesus said these things while meeting with the apostles in Jerusalem around 40 days after He resurrected. Then, immediately following, He

⁹⁵⁰ In Matt. 28:18-20 (like Mark 16:15-18 and Luke 24:44-49), the disciples are told to go into the entire world to spread Jesus’ message with the promise that He (Jesus) will be with them (which is only true by the Holy Spirit). Such repetition should not be surprising to even the casual gospel reader (as seen throughout this harmony). Certain themes are repeated in Jesus’ ministry, some being peculiar to certain times or places (for instance, Jesus does not start saying He would die and resurrect until later on in His ministry—though He repeats the refrain multiple times: Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34).

ascended to heaven (Acts 1:4, 6 - see below).

28. Jesus ascends to God's right hand in Bethany, at Mt. Olivet (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-51; John 20:17; Acts 1:2, 9-11; 2:32-34; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:19-20; 1 Pet. 3:21-22).

Mark 16:19-20; Acts 1:2, 9-11 tell us that after Jesus gave commands to His followers (see *Resurrection Event #27*) He was, "taken up," to God's right hand. Luke 24:50-51 says this was in Bethany, at Olivet (a short distance from Jerusalem—Acts 1:12). Thus, it seems the same city Jesus and the disciples lodged preceding His final Passover (cf. Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:1) became their residence preceding Pentecost.

Jesus foretold his ascension after resurrecting (John 20:17), and it was affirmed by Paul (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:19-20; etc.) and Peter (Acts 2:32-34; 1 Pet. 3:21-22) afterwards.

29. Apostles and disciples return to Jerusalem, worshipping Jesus (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 1:12-14).

Luke 24:42-43 and Acts 1:12-14 show the disciples worshipping Jesus and returning to Jerusalem immediately after He ascended.

30. Apostles receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2).

Though not, strictly speaking, part of the chronology of Jesus' resurrection appearances, Pentecost clearly plays a part in the resurrection narrative.

This festival presumably drew the apostles back to Jerusalem with many other Jews, "from every nation under heaven," (Acts 2:5). It was held roughly 10 days after Jesus ascended (around 50 days after He died, see above). And here the private appearances of the resurrected Jesus received public vindication as the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jesus-followers, a sign that Jesus is now firmly established as resurrected, ascended, and seated at God's right hand (Acts 2:32-33).

Such a testimony of God's Holy Spirit continues to the present day,

reminding us all that He is still resurrected, still ascended, and still sitting at God's right hand!