

Multiple selected Scriptures

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I begin with a quote by the late Henry M. Morris, the Founder and President Emeritus of the Institute for Creation Research.

“Just as creation is the most certain truth of real science, so the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most certain fact of genuine history. And as creation by God required His substitutionary death and bodily resurrection to give purpose and meaning to history, so Christ's resurrection required the power of the Creator to make it happen.”

Since this is indeed so, it can simply be said that creation was for the ultimate purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection. And therefore, Jesus' death and resurrection are the ultimate fulfillment of creation. Thus, our annual observance of Resurrection Sunday, which we commonly call Easter, is the greatest earthly celebration of God's power and glory. So welcome to the great celebration of God's Church happening around the world. This year it just happens to be celebrated mostly online, as we are doing today – but celebrating we are, nonetheless!

There is so much to be taught about the resurrection! What aspect to share with you today? Well, I decided that rather than focus on one aspect in detail, I would give you a glimpse into the multi-faceted wonder of the resurrection – not to overwhelm you with information (though there is much), but rather to titillate your senses with how many flavors, aromas and textures there are to Christ's marvelous resurrection. I have only chosen a few, but here is what we are going to briefly examine today:

1. How to unravel the confusing gospel accounts of what happened that resurrection morning
2. The many predictions and witnesses that authenticate the surety of the resurrection
3. The significant relationship of the resurrection to the Jewish feast of “first fruits”
4. What happened to Jesus during the hours between His death and bodily resurrection?
5. The critical importance of the resurrection to my salvation, and to my heavenly resurrection

Wow! That's a lot to cover! But it will help that most of the details and Scriptures of what verify my teaching I will give to you by way of appendix that you will receive in my notes. I do hope that you will read them when you receive them, to get the full impact of what I share with you today.

Ok – enough introduction. Let's get into it!

1. Unravelling the confusing order of resurrection events

Matthew tells us that “as it began to dawn ... , Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.” They saw one angel outside the tomb, sitting on the stone that had been rolled away, and are told to go tell the disciples, which they do.

Mark says that it was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome that came, “very early ... when the sun had risen.” He says they entered the tomb and saw one angel, seated, who spoke to them, telling them to go tell the disciples.

Luke records that the women who had prepared the spices (later in 24:10 said to be Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joanna, and others) who had prepared the spices the day before, came to the tomb at early dawn. They saw 2 angels in the tomb, standing, who spoke to them. They say to go tell “the eleven” (which would have included Peter and John) and Peter runs back to the tomb.

John tells what seems like yet a different story. He says Mary Magdalene (seemingly alone) comes to the tomb “while it was still dark.” John says when she saw the stone rolled away she ran and came to Peter and John (himself in the story). Those two then run to the tomb, enter and see the grave clothes neatly arranged. Then these two go to their homes. Mary returns to the tomb, looks into the

tomb and sees two angels sitting at the head and foot of where Jesus had laid., conversing with her. Then she sees Jesus outside the tomb. She then goes to the disciples to share these things.

SO – were the four gospel writers a little confused in their memory – probably, as that day was an emotional blur. But, this is Holy Scripture, with the Spirit directing what they wrote.

The most helpful detail to help us begin to unravel this is Mark's addition to his account in 16:9, not in some earlier manuscripts, but nonetheless in many later ones. It says, "Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene ..." If this is indeed true, it makes perfect sense that there were multiple trips to the tomb that morning. The first was by Mary Magdalene alone, recorded by John – "while it was still dark" and verified by Mark, "He first appeared to Mary Magdalene." Then later, "as it began to dawn" and "when the sun had risen" the other women came – Mary mother of James, Salome and Joanna and probably a few others not mentioned by name. They see one angel outside the tomb sitting on the stone. Entering the tomb they see another, probably joined miraculously by the one who had been outside to then make two, or possibly by yet another third angel. The angels apparently sometimes stood and sometimes sat during their encounter.

We must never see Scripture as in error, but always as infallible. Therefore we search for explanation to what seems to be discrepancies but can be resolved by reasonable assumptions. My Appendix #1 will give you the probable order of events according to those who have studied hard to put all the accounts together in a reasonable scenario. I encourage you to do the same on your own – it is time well spent that will bear powerful fruit of deeper belief in your soul.

2. Noting the many authenticating predictions and witnesses of the resurrection

The Old Testament authentication

I noted earlier that Henry Morris said "*the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most certain fact of genuine history.*" This is true because of the weight of predictions in the Old Testament, predictions by Jesus to his disciples, and then 40 days of multiple appearances by Jesus in His resurrected body. My Appendix 2 and 3 will give you many Scripture to review, but for now let me just share a few.

To me, the most fascinating bit of evidence about Old Testament predictions of Messiah's resurrection we find in Luke 24:27, when Jesus is walking with Cleopas and friend on the road to Emmaus, the afternoon of His resurrection. Cleopas is asking this stranger to them (Jesus) about the events of the day, regarding the supposed resurrection of Jesus (see the context).

Luke 24:27 *Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

Apparently Jesus gave them a walking Bible study from the Old Testament regarding prophesied resurrection of the Messiah. I want to hear that study replayed in heaven! My Appendix 2 gives 8 such O.T. prophecies. But for time, here are two of my "favorites."

√ Psalm 2 is a Messianic reference, as it refers to God's "Anointed" who is afflicted. Then in verse 7 the Anointed Messiah speaks and says:

Psalm 2:7 *I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, "You are my Son, today I have begotten You."*

Now we might think "begotten" is referring to the Messiah's human birth, or to His divine essence with the Father, as in John 3:16. But Acts 13:33 has New Testament Scripture interpreting Old Testament Scripture to reveal that this "begotten" is referring to Messiah's resurrection.

Acts 13:33 *God has fulfilled His promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son; today I have begotten You."*

Wow – pretty obvious that Psalm 2 gives a prediction of Jesus' resurrection.

√ My second “favorite” OT prediction comes from Zechariah 12:10, where by context the prophet is speaking in the voice of the Lord, whom the Jews have “pierced.” We see this as speaking of the awaited return of Jesus when the Jews will see Him for Who he really is, clearly resurrected.

Zechariah 12:10 *I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look of Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.*

The New Testament authentication of Jesus’ predictions

Before Jesus’ final year of ministry Peter made the great confession “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Here is what Matthew records following this confession:

Matthew 16:21 *From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.*

Until this time, Jesus had hardly mentioned His eventual death and resurrection. But He determined they were ready. And during this last year, as Jesus and His disciples make the final, long trek to Jerusalem from town to town, it is recorded that He tells them multiple times that He will be killed and be resurrected on the third day. He left no reason for doubt (though they still doubted). See my Appendix 3 for multiple Scriptures of this clear prediction.

The New Testament authentication of Jesus’ predictions

I need only mention Paul’s reference at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15 to the resurrected, bodily appearances to Peter, the 12 disciples, 500 at once, all the 120 apostles and then Paul himself. The gospel accounts add the appearances to Mary Magdalene, the other women and to Cleopas and friend. And we can add on the authentication by the radical change in the disciples after the resurrection, the evidence of the empty tomb and the subsequent history of the Christian church growing into the billions. Truly the resurrection of Jesus, despite its being mind-blowing and dismissed by many, is one of the most verifiable events in history.

3. Noting its relationship to the Jewish feasts – Jesus as “first fruits”

The idea of first fruits is that since God is the creator of all, all creation belongs to Him. Consequently, all which is first and best belongs to Him and is to be given to Him as a sacrifice of praise. Jesus was the best of mankind, and as such was the “first fruits” appropriately offered to God in resurrected life.

1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. But each in his own order; Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.*

Many do not know that Jesus died on the Jewish feast of “firstfruits” – Sunday of that year. The “Feast of Firstfruits followed Passover (Jesus’ death day) and Unleavened Bread (Saturday when the perfect bread of life was in the grave). How appropriate that mankind’s perfect and best sacrifice to God was given on the Jewish celebration of Firstfruits – Jesus being the first man to rise from the grave to a resurrected body. Amazing!

4. Where was Jesus between death and bodily resurrection? And did God die?

First let me answer the second question definitively – no!, God did not die. But the human body of Jesus surely died. His heart stopped beating, the brain waves stopped transmitting and the lungs no longer brought in oxygen. The humanity of Jesus died. But the divinity of Jesus, nothing could ever kill. His divine Spirit was alive and well for the 38 or so hours between his bodily death and bodily resurrection (3 pm Friday to a guess of 5 am Sunday).

So where was He and what was He doing those some 38 hours? We can’t know for sure, but the Scripture does give us a few things to piece together at least part of the answer. We assume He

received His glorified resurrection body right away, but I suppose He might have been in spirit form for a while first. We can't know. But we can know the following.

1. The graveclothes were folded neatly. So can you imagine Him carefully arranging the His garments to be curiously noticed by those who entered the empty tomb, as a clue that He was indeed alive.
2. Jesus had told the repentant thief on the cross that "today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). So we can assume that He went to "Paradise" to meet and be with the thief as he entered into the glory Jesus promised. And if so, we can imagine there might have been quite a stir among the angelic beings at His pre-ascension visit, and perhaps a well-deserved congratulations by His Father.
3. It is told in both Ephesians and 1 Peter that Jesus went to "the lower parts of the earth," or what we would call "hell" or "Hades." Here are the two references.

Ephesians 4:8-10 *It says, "When He [Christ] ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.*

1 Peter 3:18-20 *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark ...*

So apparently, Jesus "descended" to make "proclamation" to those in "prison" in the underworld during this time. What did He proclaim? Surely not the gospel, for there could be no reception of the gospel by this audience. But it makes sense that He went to proclaim victory over sin and death and of the ultimate punishment awaiting those prisoners. "That He might fill all things" implies that His visit to the underworld was the make clear that He was victor and Lord over heaven, earth and the underworld of Satan.

And then, we know that He returned to the tomb to meet Mary Magdalene as she exited the empty tomb that morning. I guess the rest of what He did those hours will be something to learn in glory!

5. The critical importance to my salvation, and to my resurrection to heaven

Finally we come to the last facet of Jesus' resurrection we will consider today. But keep in mind there are so many more! But certainly this one hits closest to home – for it is how His resurrection relates to you and me.

√ **It is of first importance!**

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

√ **It is essential belief for salvation!**

Romans 10:9 *That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Revelation 1:17-18 [Jesus:] *"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*

√ **It assures the believer ultimate resurrection to a glorified body**

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said .. "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.*

1 Corinthians 6:14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming ...

2 Corinthians 4:14 Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

So, the mind-blowing resurrection of Jesus has many fascinating facets –

1. The flurry of activity around the empty tomb
2. The clear predictions before its occurrence
3. The prophetic association with the Jewish feast of First Fruits
4. The mysterious peeks into the whereabouts of Jesus after earthly death
5. The critical importance to my salvation and ultimate resurrection

My stated goal of the day was “to titillate your senses with how many flavors, aromas and textures there are to Christ’s marvelous resurrection.” And I hope that I have achieved my goal for I want your celebration of this greatest event in the history of creation to be as full and rich as possible.

Dear children of the Father and follower of our precious Lord Jesus,

HE IS RISEN - HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Now don't forget to check out the appendix material which will be sent to those of you on our email chain, and will be available on our oaksbiblechurch.com website.

HAPPY RESURRECTION DAY, OAK BIBLE CHURCH !

APPENDIX 1 - The likely order of events on Resurrection Sunday

(underlined Scriptures are primary)

EASTER MORNING

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|--|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Summary: Women come | Mt. 28: 1 | <u>Mk. 16: 1</u> (these are general statements of multiple comings) | |
| 2. Angel Rolls Stone Away | <u>Mt. 28: 2-4</u> | (again, a general summary) | |
| 3. Mary Magdalene Comes (before dawn) | | Mk. 16: 9 | <u>Jn. 20: 1</u> |
| 4. Mary runs to Peter & John (probably at their residences) | | | <u>Jn. 20: 2</u> |
| 5. Peter & John Into the Tomb | | Lk. 24: 12a | <u>Jn. 20: 3-9</u> |
| 6. Peter & John Go Back Home (other disciple have not yet heard) | | Lk. 24: 12b | <u>Jn. 20:10</u> |
| 7. Mary Returns and Weeps By the Tomb | | | <u>Jn 20: 11</u> |
| 8. Mary Sees 2 Angels Near the Graveclothes | | | <u>Jn. 20: 12-13</u> |
| 9. Jesus Appears 1 st to Mary Magdalene | | Mk. 16: 9 | <u>Jn. 20: 14-17</u> |
| 10. Mary Tells the (other) Disciples | | Mk. 16: 10-11 | <u>Jn. 20:18</u> |
| 11. Women At Dawn With Spices | Mt. 28:1 | <u>Mk. 16: 1-4</u> | Lk. 24: 1-3 |
| 12. 2 Angels Appear To Women | Mt. 28: 5-7 | Mk. 16: 5-7 | <u>Lk. 24: 4-7</u> |
| 13. Women Run To Tell Disciples | Mt. 28: 8 | <u>Mk. 16: 8</u> | |
| 14. Jesus Appears To Women | <u>Mt. 28: 9-10</u> | | |
| 15. Women Report To Disciples | | | <u>Lk. 24: 8-11</u> |

EASTER DAY

1. Guards Report To Priests	<u>Mt. 28: 11-15</u>		
2. J. Meets 2 on Emmaus Road		Mk. 16: 12-13	<u>Lk. 24: 13-32</u>
3. J. Appears to Simon Peter	[1 Cor. 15:5]		<u>Lk. 24: 34</u>
4. Cleopas Report to Disciples in Jerusalem			<u>Lk. 24: 33-35</u>
5. J. Appears to Disciples (not Thomas)			<u>Lk. 24: 36-43</u> Jn. 20: 19-23
6. Disciples Report to Thomas			<u>Jn. 20: 24-25</u>

APPENDIX 2 – Primary Old Testament prophecies of the resurrection of Messiah (Note: these were hard for the pre-resurrection readers to see a clear prediction, but we have the perspective of post-resurrection, and we now can perceive them as referring to Jesus’ coming resurrection. Note also Luke 24:27 where Jesus explains to Cleopas and friend on the road to Emmaus the things in the Old Testament Scriptures that concern His resurrection. Jesus obviously knew those predictions were there.)

Job 19:25-26 (Chronologically the earliest recorded prediction of Jesus’ resurrection, and of His followers’ subsequent resurrection.) As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives. And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God.

Psalm 2:7 (In context, it is clear the Anointed Son of God is speaking) I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to Me, “You are my Son. Today I have begotten You.” (Note: Now we might well think this is referring to the birth of the Son, but see Acts 13:33 , where Scripture interprets Scripture to show that Psalm 2 is rather speaking of the resurrection of the Son. **Acts 13:33** God has fulfilled this promise [of resurrection; see v.30] to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son; today I have begotten You.”)

Psalm 16:9-11 (Here the worshipper is speaking, affirming his resurrection, and then the resurrection of the “Holy One” who is Jesus.) Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. My flesh also will dwell securely. You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. [spoken of in Acts 13:35 as referring to Jesus’ resurrection] You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Psalm 22:25-27 (Note the psalm to this point clearly prophesies Jesus speaking while on the cross and in agony to death; then here is what follows, we the worshipper speaking.) For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him for help, He heard. From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations will worship before You.

Psalm 110:1 The Lord [God] says to my Lord [Jesus]: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet. (Note: In Matthew 22:44 Jesus teaches that this is about Himself, obviously post-resurrection, with King David speaking prophetically.)

Isaiah 53:10-11a (We know this chapter well, speaking of the suffering of the Messiah/Servant in verses 1-9. But note what follows.) But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering. He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it [the prolonging of His days] and be satisfied.

Hosea 6:1-2 Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us. He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day. (This prophesies our “revival” based on Christ’s death, and our resurrection based on Christ’s resurrection on the third day.)

Zechariah 12:10 (This prophecy is at the return of Jesus to the earth, when the Jews will see Him for who He is. Jesus is speaking, clearly alive post-resurrection.) I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

APPENDIX 3 – Jesus’ gospel predictions of His resurrection (primary ones – there are others)

John 2:19 (at the first cleansing of the temple, when the Pharisees asked for a sign of His authority) Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (v.21: But He was speaking of the temple of His body.)

John 10:17-18 (Jesus teaching his disciples in Jerusalem with others listening, in Jerusalem, mid-ministry) For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

Matthew 12:40 (when early in His ministry the scribes and Pharisees wanted to see a sign from Jesus) But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Note: this is the only mention of “3 days and 3 night” in all of Jesus’ predictions. All the rest refer to being raised “on the third day.” “3 days and 3 nights” was a Jewish idiom that referred to “a long time” like the time Jonah endured. We can’t hold Jesus to a literal prediction of 3 days and 3 nights when using a common idiom, an when all His other predictions were specific about “the third day.”)

Matthew 16:21 (after Peter’s great confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”) From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

Matthew 17:22-23 (shortly after the Transfiguration and the subsequent healing of the demoniac) And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.” And they were deeply grieved.

Matthew 20:17-19 As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him. And on the third day He will be raised up.”

Matthew 26:31-32 (during His last night, on the way to Gethsemane) Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’ [Zech. 13:7] But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.

