

3/31/24 Easter

All four of the gospel books of the New Testament record this most unique and important event in the history and future of creation. They are found in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20. The significant doctrinal issues agree precisely. The specific characters and details differ.

The central truths are - that Jesus was resurrected from the dead and that the resurrected Jesus appeared to many people are clearly taught in all of the four Gospels. The apparent inconsistencies are "side issues" like how many angels did they see in the tomb? How many women did Jesus appear to, and to which of them did He appear first? All of those are redundant to the essential truths for life.

Today I have chosen the account from Luke because he tells us about doing his research and for what purpose: **Luke 1:1-4** *Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.* Dr. Luke does not claim to have been present at the resurrection, but through careful study and personal conviction having talked with many who were in attendance he put together this account for us. Another very interesting note on Dr. Luke is that it is commonly accepted that he was a gentile and was not one of the 12 Apostles. He, of the four gospel book writers is the only one not of Jewish ancestry, which I would argue gives him special credibility of having done the research and obediently living accordingly, totally of his own volition- which is further authenticated in **2 Timothy 4:11** *Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.* That was written by Paul over 30 years later after our Resurrection Day account. Oh by the way Dr. Luke also wrote the book of Acts and is the only gentile writer of the New Testament canon.

We turn now to glean some encouragement for our lives and personal kingdom service, starting on Resurrection morning in **Luke 23:55-56** *And the women who had come with Him*

from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. What were those women thinking and feeling? Sad, sorrowful, confused, but determined to do what they knew to do in spite of the circumstances?// What are we thinking and feeling as we read it and as we consider our own physical space in the universe and circumstances around our daily lives? Don't we also sometimes feel sad, sorrowful, and confused, but determined to do what we know to do through it all? These verses recording their experience will help us in our commitment and resoluteness!

Luke 24:1-8 *Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "* 8 *And they remembered His words.*

I heard that Michelangelo in the very early 1500's admonished his fellow artists to stop filling gallerias with pictures of the suffering Christ on the cross and instead fill them with victorious and glorious pictures of His resurrection. What a wonderful testimony for us who exist in a culture of media influences that fill our eyes and ears with the pictures and stories of violent and gruesome deprivation rather than the wonderful stories, sights and sounds of victorious, joyous, fulfilling life as it could be and is intended by the Creator. Society is subtly being duped into thinking what they see and hear is the normal for them to imitate! I boldly declare to you that we Christians should stand out in society by our appearance, our attitude and our lifestyle what we watch and listen to./// Woefully, we have been taught and manipulated from our youngest ages to blend in, go with the flow, follow the rules, styles and habits of the majority. I have seen research that Christians are not any different than the media influenced culture in which

they live. /// I naively “think” there is still more good intent around us than all the evil that we are being systematically brainwashed to be recognized as normal. And am assured that is an ongoing miracle of God in action. In other words, standing with Michelangelo - Christians should be focusing on and modeling the risen, glorious, victorious Jesus who defeated satans tool of death. Our focus and celebration of life is with the hope and promise of life eternal in heaven beyond the everyday physical sojourn of life on earth. That is a faith lesson from the resurrection – to live joyously and victoriously in our lives and testimonies if we have any hope of leading others to the promised salvation. That victory & joy continues in **Luke 24:36-40**

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

Those women who were the first to see the risen Savior and with mixed emotions still struggled just like we often do - but then as they gained understanding and were encouraged just as our lives gain understanding are encouraged after accepting and living for Jesus: **Luke 24:41**

*But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” The word “joy and marveled” seem almost an understatement to me... **Luke 24:42-43***

So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence. Jesus provided those first resurrection witnesses with unmistakable evidence that it was their dearly beloved resurrected Jesus in their presence by eating... That reminds us of how many ways God provided and continues today to provide evidence of His love for us? One way to enhance that experience is to pray for our physical senses to become more aware of God’s evidence of love for you, to identify, and even perhaps to list those results and be faithful to thank Him for every one of those expressions of love. /// As an example, I want to tell you of one way God evidenced His love to me this week: I was walking to work at 6:30, it was still mostly dark but looking up, shining brightly and proudly in the Western sky was a mostly full

moon – it was as if it was smiling down just on me! And to make it even more emphatic some birds began to sing a medley in the trees nearby pouring Gods love all over me through my physical senses. The next morning I saw the cross on the mountain reminding me of my faith, again the moon that made me think of God’s love, and then the lighted flag in the cemetery reminding me of our Freedom. Oh thank You God for that unconditional and undeserved love you bathe me in everyday. /// I do hope you will work on developing those senses, they are wonderfully comforting, delightfully encouraging and daily inspiring.

Luke 24:44 *Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”* That is yet another reminder of the validity of inspired scripture from which we learn to identify God’s love, purpose and promises. /// I want to pause for another very practical faith lesson here: Yes we are to model God’s unconditional love to others - Jesus said that. But at times when we try, we are are ignored or even more painful, directly attacked, insulted and sometimes cursed. And frankly that fear is why most do not share their faith with others or invite them to church. Think for a moment how those refusals makes you feel --- now you know what is in the heart of the Heavenly Father when His love is rejected and reviled. That bitter insight gives me incentive to rejoice and express thanks for the resurrection of Jesus and His unconditional love and courage to try again.

Luke 24:45 *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.* What a dynamic revelation to those first century brothers and sisters as well as to us. As we accept and do what we know at any given point of life, that equips us to be able to receive more understanding and application from scripture. Hallelujah – thank You God. Saying it another way: when you accept Jesus and follow through with baptism, you receive the indwelling Holy Spirit who is mandated to help you understand scripture and discern scriptural instruction to live a more productive and joy filled life – and it never stops! When you learn and practice something, you are able to learn and practice something else throughout life. Peter said it like this: **2 Peter 1:5-8** *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control [a]perseverance, to*

perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither [b]barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you remember the familiar old cliché 'THE JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEP. It has never been more true than with our personal Christian lives.

I confess, I did not know much of anything about God and the Bible when I was baptized, and now 70 years later, I find in every day a reason for celebration when God again delivers on that 2,000 year old promise: *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

Luke 24:46 *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, [read twice]* That folks is a comprehensive, theological, God revelation unknown and unknowable to mankind that challenges a mere mortal to grasp! In fact it can only be dealt with through faith in action./// We have all sorts of questions like wasn't there another way for salvation without Jesus having to die for me? /// But the lesson is that what we may not and cannot by human limitation understand,- we learn to accept by faith, then rejoice later on, - as our understanding increases.

From this passage I see a bit of God's character revealed in the creation of the universe, His unconditional agape' love for mankind – and whether you understand that statement right now or not, God's love is the greatest reality in creation. If you are a growing Christian, you have already or you will by life experience understand it more and more. ////

So far in your life, and adding today's scriptures you are given to know that the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus was God's agape/love provision for mankind to inherit a mansion in heaven for eternity.

Another lesson for life - is - to be always aware of the inherent condition of Christian responsibility as it was instituted from the beginning – the older are to teach the younger, the one who understands something is to share it with those who have not heard – it is a divine authorization to every believer to use the gifts and resources provided to them in their kingdom

service just as we are told in **Luke 24:47-49** *and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*” The book of Acts chapter 2 records the reason for staying in Jerusalem and that being “*endued with power from on high*” meant that the gift of the Holy Spirit was gifted to every believer at baptism. 40 days after today’s scripture, the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father in Heaven set in motion the authority for the universal dispersion of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We conclude our 24th chapter of Luke this morning with **Luke 24:50-53** *And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.*

My closing thought for your resurrection day - the Bible from the first word “In” to the last word “amen” is given for us to understand and abide in agape love proven on Calvary and by the resurrection.

Luke 1:1-4

2 Timothy 4:11

Luke 23:55-56

Luke 24:1-8

Luke 24:36-40

Luke 24:41

Luke 24:42-43

Luke 24:44

Luke 24:45

2 Peter 1:5-8

Luke 24:46

Luke 24:47-49

Luke 24:50-53