
The Forty Days

>>>>>> *Forty Days - Lesson 01* <<<<<<<

A few notes before we begin:

- 1) As you received in our last email, we will be using accounts from all four Gospels, the first part of Acts, and 1 Corinthians.
- 2) If you had a chance to read those passages you saw that they are somewhat of a patchwork quilt of facts.
- 3) If one reads these accounts separately and tries to treat each one as a “factual historical account” they will appear to disagree in many ways.
- 4) So, how do we deal with this?
 - a) First, we have to realize that our New Testament is NOT a history.
 - i) Not designed to be and does NOT fit the definition of a history.
 - (1) No chronology given or intended.
 - (2) References few and far between historically.
 - (3) LOT MORE DETAIL IN THE PAPER!
 - b) So, we can get ourselves in a real predicament very quickly by trying to reconcile them standing alone in that historical light.
 - i) **Oh my! This is wrong!** God must have made a **mistake** in His inspiration of these four different writers.
 - ii) **Or, Oh my! We just can’t believe any of it** because it does not agree – in some cases, again taken standalone, they do appear to disagree! (Baby out with the bathwater)
 - c) So what do we do? Trust God? (great idea)
 - 5) One question that goes along with the standalone approach is how come they are so disjointed? Why do they even appear to disagree?
 - a) First, the way they are fits God’s purpose and His design.
 - b) Second, I personally think the answer to that is possibly memory, recall, and time. Three things that are not really friends.
 - 6) The answer to all this **may** lie simply in taking the stance of trusting God and in so doing give each writer (and God) the latitude to say things in a certain way with a certain recall.
 - 7) That being said and on that premise, I believe a case can be made for saying simply that though they do appear disjointed and even contradictory in some ways, if we do analyze them carefully **they do fit together to form a timeline that is perfectly right and blissfully in order.**

- 8) We must remember that the Scriptures are Holy Spirit inspired and breathed.
 - a) This does not mean however, that God took hold of Matthew's hand and guided every stroke of the pen.
- 9) Add to that the fact that we do not even have the actual original papyrus scroll on which Matthew wrote.
 - a) These are called "autographs" and, truth be told, we do not have in our possession any of the original autographs of any of the books of the New Testament.
 - b) Don't panic! Through the past 2000 plus years, God has, through the Holy Spirit and the work of many righteous and God fearing men and women led us to and given us the scriptures we have today.
 - c) The knowledge of how we have gotten to this point is a very long and involved study – one which we do not have time to undertake at this point.
 - d) However, all that being said, we must still understand that we ***absolutely can trust what we have!***
 - e) Even though in attempting to harmonize these particular events, it can seem somewhat scattered, I truly believe it is a true account of the recorded activity from the day of resurrection to the ascension.
- 10) As we proceed from here, you will see that I have laid this out as a series of events and sub-events – 16 in all
- 11) We will begin by looking at the events that occur on the day of resurrection
- 12) We look first in Matthew chapter 28 for details of Event 1.
- 13) The Lord has been crucified and buried.
- 14) It is the morning of the first day of the week.

1) **Event 1** – The stone is rolled away

Matthew 28:2–4 (NASB 2020)

²And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. ³And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴The guards shook from fear of him and became like dead men.

- a) Try to imagine this scene.
 - i) It is barely light when this earthquake occurs. In fact when this takes place it may indeed still be dark.
 - ii) That part of the world is no stranger to earthquakes so these men probably took notice since it was a severe one.
 - iii) Then, things settle down for a second or so and then ...

- b) Suddenly a flash of bright white light (like lightening) occurs and then, we see this huge stone that had been placed over the mouth of the tomb rolled quickly away.
- c) The bright flash of light is now gone but there is a person, an angel, that is a light source, still bright as a flash of lightening and his cloths are brilliantly white sitting on the stone.
- d) Oh yes, and we now have two guards laying on the ground, passed out because of fear.
- e) O.K. – got it! Right?

2) Event 1A – The Women Arrive

- a) Moving on to Event 1A.
- b) We'll call this next event 1A because from what we read, the two things – the stone being rolled away and the group of women and Mary going to the tomb – were happening at about the same time.
- c) For this event, we will begin with Matthew's account but I'll also read the others in sequence before we begin our discussion.

i) *Pause Between Sections:*

Matthew 28:1 (NASB 2020)

¹ Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb.

- d) Moving to Mark's account we read ...

Mark 16:1–3 (NASB 2020)

¹ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might come and anoint Him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?"

- e) Now from Luke ...

Luke 23:55-24:1 (NASB 2020)

⁵⁵ Now the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶ And *then* they returned and prepared spices and perfumes.

And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

¹ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

- f) Before we leave Luke, we need to look a little further down in his account to get a more detailed list of these women. He gives it as they return.

24:10 Now these women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

g) Finally, from John ...

John 20:1 (NASB 2020)

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already removed from the tomb.

- 3) O.k. What do you see as the big difference in these passages?
 - a) WHO WENT TO THE TOMB!
- 4) John's gospel only mentions Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb.
- 5) Matthew has the two Mary(s)
- 6) Though this is the case, John omitting the other women from his account and Matthew only the two Mary(s) I think we can make a reasonable assumption
 - a) That the description Luke gives is most likely correct – they were all part of this entourage that came to the tomb that morning.
 - b) We will see this inferred by other accounts as we proceed.
- 7) Now we have several distinct things happening here in Events 1 and 1A.
 - a) We find from Mark's account that their purpose for going was to complete the preparation of Jesus' body with spices.
 - b) At this this point, it looks like we have quite a crowd at the tomb.
 - i) First – we have the Roman guards who were passed out and like dead men.
 - ii) We have the angel setting on the stone that he rolled away.
 - iii) We have 2 Mary's, Salome (from Mark's account), and Joanna (and other women) from Luke's account .
 - iv) And, we will also see shortly that we have one angel in the tomb where Jesus was laid.
 - v) Additionally, Luke reports two angels who will speak to the women outside tomb (Luke 24:4–6)
 - c) So, let's see what happens next – we'll call this Event 2 – Jesus is not Here ...

8) Event 2 – Jesus is Not Here

a) For this event, we can only turn to Matthew's account ...

Matthew 28:5–6 (NASB 2020)

⁵ And the angel (**the one setting on the stone**) said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

- b) None of the other 3 Gospels document this conversation.
- c) Again, not a problem just a difference – right?
- d) Next, we have event 3 ...

9) **Event 3** – Come Look Where He Was Laid

- a) It is interesting here that Matthew tells of the invitation but doesn't tell of the women looking into the tomb.
 - i) For that, we must look at Mark's Gospel.
- b) Even though Matthew does not report them going into or looking into the tomb, I cannot envision these women not at least looking.
- c) Their curiosity would have to had gotten them at least that far.

Mark 16:5–6 (NASB 2020)

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. ⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; see, *here is* the place where they laid Him.

- a) As we see, in Mark's account when they enter the tomb they find the second angel sitting on the right.
- b) He tries to reassure the women and tells them Jesus has risen.
- c) When we look at Luke's account, he tells us about two other angels – maybe in the tomb, most likely however, outside.

Luke 24:4–6 (NASB 2020)

⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men *suddenly* stood near them in gleaming clothing; ⁵ and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,

- 5) As a little recap, let's do a head count and also look at what has been said so far.
 - a) Based on these readings to this point, I can see the possibility of 4 angels at the tomb that morning.
 - i) One sitting on the stone
 - ii) One sitting in the tomb where Jesus was laid but to the right.
 - iii) Finally, two others perhaps at the entrance of the tomb who speak to the women last.
- 6) Again, we need to address a difference here. Neither Matthew or John detail any of the events covered here in Mark and Luke.

- a) John skips from Mary seeing the stone rolled away to the point where she takes off running to Peter and John to tell them what she has seen.
- b) Matthew also skips most of these details and only tells the rest of the conversation with the angel setting on the rolled away stone.
 - i) He then documents them (Mary Magdalene and the other women) leaving to go tell the disciples.
- c) Piecing this together, it appears that the women have been spoken to multiple times to this point.
 - i) By Matthew’s account, the angel setting on the stone told them:
 - (1) He is not hear.
 - (2) He is risen.
 - (3) Come see where he was laying.
 - ii) By Mark’s account, as they looked into the tomb, the angel setting on right told them:
 - (1) Do not be amazed
 - (2) He has risen
 - (3) He is not here
 - (4) Here is the place where they laid Him.
 - iii) Then by Luke’s account, two angels standing near them in gleaming clothing told them
 - (1) Why are you seeking the living One among the dead?
 - (2) He is not here
 - (3) He has risen
 - (4) Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,
- d) We must add to this however that 2 of the angels also spoke to them regarding what they should do next.
- e) Angel sitting on the stone – Matthew 28:7

“go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you.”

- f) Angel sitting where Jesus laid – Mark 16:7

“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.’ ”

- 7) There are two common ideas here:
 - a) Go tell the disciples what they have seen.
 - b) Tell them they are to go to Galilee to see Jesus there. (we will return to this idea in a while)
 - c) Moving on to EVENT 4

8) Event 4 – GO TELL (with an interrupt).

- a) We begin our look at this event with Matthew’s account of the trip back to tell the disciples.
- b) At first read, it seems rather straight forward – the women leave the tomb and at some point along the way, they are met by Jesus which obviously interrupts their trip abruptly.

Matthew 28:8–10 (NASB 2020)

8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to report to His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Rejoice!” And they came up and took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go, bring word to My brothers to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

- c) Obviously, in this account, we have an interruption with a purpose.
- d) The purpose is again to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where they would meet Him.
- e) I think we can safely assume that there was more of a conversation than just that.
- f) It may have lasted a few minutes but it is unlikely that it was just this one comment and then Jesus simply disappears.
- g) Next, we look at Mark’s account of the exodus from the tomb. –

Mark 16:7–8 (NASB 2020)

8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

- h) I make another assumption here that they said nothing to anyone *as they left the tomb*. Obviously from what we read after this they will be speaking to the disciples
 - i) And, some of course, to Jesus Himself.
- i) Just an side note here, as we mentioned earlier, this is where Mark’s Gospel ends in some early manuscripts.
 - i) This very sentence is one of the bones of contention with that being the only ending to Mark. He ends with a preposition γὰρ meaning FOR.
 - ii) The contention is that this is at best a very odd way to end any writing – especially one that is as well written as Mark’s Gospel is.
- j) So, moving on, Luke is even a little more terse (vs 8-9) in his report than is Mark though, this is where he list the group of women who were in the party vs 10 –

Luke 24:8–10 (NASB 2020)

⁸ And they remembered His words, ⁹ and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now *these women* were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

- k) In this case, what things they tell to the 11(?) would be all that had happened including seeing Jesus.
- l) Now, this raises another question, in John’s account, as we mentioned a moment ago, he indicates that Mary Magdalene reported only to Peter and John. –

John 20:2 (NASB 2020)

2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him.”

- m) As we see, she only reports the empty tomb.
 - n) The big question then becomes – why did she not tell what would be the more important fact that she had seen Jesus risen?
 - o) Here, I have a theory.
 - i) I think that even though the women all left at the same time, Mary Magdalene went on and possibly got ahead of the rest so that she could get to Peter and John as quickly as possible since the angel had specifically mentioned Peter to them by name.
 - ii) If this is the case, then Mary would not be with the other women when Jesus appeared to them.
 - iii) Obviously, if she was not with them then she could not testify to His resurrection.
 - p) The other women would have been delayed even further by spending even a small amount of time with Jesus.
 - q) This combination of events would also explain why Mary would have only told Peter and John of the empty tomb.
- 9) We now know what Mary has told Peter and John – we will get to their reaction in a bit but now, let’s turn to Luke’s account to see what the rest of the women tell the other disciples.

Luke 24:8–12 (NASB 2020)

⁸ And they remembered His words, ⁹ and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now *these women* were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe the women. ¹² Nevertheless, Peter got up and ran to the tomb; ...

- a) We can assume that the rest of the women arrived shortly there after Mary and told of their encounter with the risen Christ.
- b) This was probably a chaotic conversation or group of conversations regarding all that had gone on that morning thus far.

- c) However, we do know that from these conversations three people took off back to the tomb to check out at least the missing body portion of the story.
 - i) They were, Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene.
 - ii) Peter alone is reported in Luke.
 - iii) John however ...

John 20:3–4 (NASB 2020)

3 So Peter and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first;

- d) We know that Mary also went because further down in John 20:11 he comments that she is “standing outside” meaning outside the tomb. (MORE ON THAT SHORTLY)
- e) Back to what the women reported. We are told the rest did not believe (words seemed to them an idle tale “nonsense”).
- f) I think here we are actually saying that none of them believed the women had seen Jesus and probably some did not even believe that the tomb was empty.
- g) Perhaps they thought it was just a result of someone moving the body – not a resurrection event.
- h) Luke pretty much sums it up when he tells us “their words seemed like nonsense”!
- i) Before we move on to Event 5, we need to look at the LE of Mark’s gospel.
- j) As I stated at the beginning, our assumption here will be that the LE (vs. 9-20) is viable and we will make reference to it.
- k) That being said, verses 9 – 11 very definitely confirm the disciples reactions.

Mark 16:9–11 (NASB 2020)

⁹ [[Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe *it*.