

The Sequence of the Events After the Resurrection of Christ

Part I

The four Gospels each contain bits of information about the events occurring after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Putting the four accounts together provides us with a detailed harmonization.

1. **Christ rises from the dead very early Sunday morning.** A violent earthquake and an angel rolling away the stone and sitting upon it accompany this event. The guards are traumatized because they have seen this angel, and they freeze (Matthew 28:2-4).
2. **Mary Magdalene and another Mary either walk to the tomb** together or they had planned to meet there. When she (or they) arrives, the stone has been rolled away. (The guards are gone by now.) She returns to find Peter and John and tells them that someone has moved Jesus's body (John 20:1-2; Matthew 28:1).
3. **Another group of women were scheduled to meet the two Marys at the tomb.** They have acquired spices to complete the burial process, which had been hurried. They are concerned about finding some men to help roll the stone away, since it was large and needed to be rolled against gravity. To their surprise, these women see two angels, only one of which speaks, telling them that Jesus has been raised. The women are scared to death and leave [seeing angels has this effect] (Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-8, Matthew 28:5-8).
4. **Peter and John arrive after being summoned by Mary Magdalene,** who apparently follows them there. John looks into the tomb, but Peter goes inside. All he finds are the burial clothes. They return, confused, but Mary Magdalene apparently stays at the tomb to grieve that someone has removed Jesus's body (Luke 24:12, John 20:3-10).
5. **Jesus makes His first appearance to Mary Magdalene, after Peter and John have left.** At first she supposes Him to be the gardener, but she is then overjoyed to realize that it is the Lord (John 20:11-17, Mark 16:9).
6. **Jesus then appears to these other women** who had left before Peter and John had arrived. These are the women who saw the angels. Jesus tells them to communicate that the disciples were to prepare to travel to Galilee (Matthew 28:9-10).
7. **The women, joined by Mary Magdalene, report their meeting with Jesus to the disciples,** but they write it off as nonsense (Mark 16:10-11, Luke 24:9-11, John 20:18).
8. **The Roman guards report what they had witnessed to the chief priests.** They were bribed to say that someone stole the body of Jesus while they were asleep. The priests promised the soldiers protection from military discipline through their clout (Matthew 28:11-15).

Part II

Last week, we noted that the four Gospels each contain segments of information that, when put together, provide us with a detailed account of the events occurring after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Combining the summary statements with the specific details provides us with a more detailed harmonization. We looked at the first eight events last week. Here are some more.

9. **Jesus appears to Cleopas and his friend** (Luke 24: 13-22, Mark 16:12-13). This is on the afternoon of that first Easter Sunday as these two disciples were traveling toward Emmaus.
10. **These two disciples make a report to the eleven apostles that evening** (Mark 16:13, Luke 24:33-35).
11. **He appeared to the ten apostles,** (Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-25) either while Cleopas and his friend were still there or afterward. The eleven apostles are discussing this claim during the evening of that same Easter day. They had the doors locked, fearful that the Jews might plot against them and arrest them.

Jesus appears to the ten apostles (Thomas is absent), but they presume He is a ghost. He encourages them to look at His hands, feet, and side. He insists that they touch them. But this still does not convince the apostles that He is really risen. He eats with them, and the reality of the resurrection registers with them. They are overjoyed. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon them.

12. **A week later, on a Sunday, Jesus appears to the disciples with Thomas present. Doubting Thomas becomes convinced** (John 20:26-29).
13. **About two weeks later, Jesus appears to the disciples while fishing and eats with them. Jesus gives Peter a chance to undo his three denials by three affirmations of his love for Jesus** (John 21).

There are several other appearances of Jesus mentioned in Scripture, including His appearance to a large crowd of over 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6). He appeared individually to His brother James (1 Corinthians 15:5) and Peter. He appeared to Paul after the ascension (1 Corinthians 15:8). He also appeared to present the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and then during His ascension from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:6-11). As a matter of fact, Acts 1:3 summarizes as follows: **After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God.**

Why does Jesus eat with the disciples on several occasions? Is He hungry? No. The reason Christ eats with them is twofold: first, to convince them that He is physical. They are not seeing some ghost or apparition. Secondly, food is often associated with fellowship, like it or not. In almost all cultures, there is something special about eating a meal together.