

## Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives, Event #20c: Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?”—2<sup>nd</sup> Person love (John 21:15)

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Review of the resurrection *events* up to this point (I have narrowed down the *approximate* hour of the events based on sunset of Saturday, April 4, 33 and the sunrise of Sunday, April 5, 33; MM is Mary Magdalene):

- Event #1: Saturday, 5:45 p.m., April 4, 33: Two Marys go to “look” at tomb, Matt. 28:1.
- Event #2: Sunday, 3:00 a.m., April 5, 33: Earthquake and angel from heaven, Matt. 28:2-4.
- Event #3: Sunday, 4:00 a.m., April 5, 33: MM visits the tomb before daybreak, Jn. 20:1.
- Event #4: Sunday, 4:15 a.m.: MM reports empty tomb to John & Peter, Jn. 20:2.
- Event #5: Sunday, 4:30 a.m.: Peter and John run to the tomb, Jn. 20:3-9.
- Event #6: Sunday, 4:40 a.m.: MM returns to tomb & sees 2 angels, Jn. 20:10-13.
- Event #7: Sunday, 4:50 a.m.: MM sees the Risen Lord, Jn. 20:14-17.
- Event #8: Sunday, 5:00 a.m.: MM tells disciples who do not believe her, Jn. 20:18; Mk. 16:9-11.
- Event #9: Sunday, 6:00 a.m.: MM & other women go to tomb of Jesus, Mk. 16:1-3; Lk. 24:1-2.
- Event #10: Sunday, 6:30 a.m.: Women enter tomb; 3 angels, Mt. 28:5-7; Mk 16:4-7; Lk. 24:3-8.
- Event #11: Sunday, 7:00 a.m.: Women run in fear; Jesus meets them, Mt. 28:8-10; Mk. 16:8.
- Event #12: Sunday, 8:00 a.m.: Women went to tell disciples; soldiers report, Mat 28:11-15.
- Event #13: Sunday, 8:10 a.m.: Once again, the disciples do not believe the women, Lk. 24:9-11
- Event #14: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.: However, Peter runs to the tomb a second time, Lk. 24:12.
- Event #15: Sunday, 8:45 a.m.: Private meeting between Jesus and Peter, 1 Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:34.
- Event #16: Sunday, 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Jesus & 2 travelers to Emmaus, Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-32.
- Event #17: Sunday, 5:00 p.m. The 2 travelers tell the 11 Disciples, Mk. 16:13; Lk. 24:33-35.
- Event #18: Sunday, 5:20 p.m. Thomas leaves; Jesus appears, Lk. 24:36-49; Jn. 20:19-25.
- Event #19: 8 days after the resurrection. Jesus appears to Thomas, Mk. 16:14-18; Jn 20:26-31.
- Event #20: 2 weeks after the resurrection. Jesus appears on shore of Sea of Galilee, Jn 21:1-25.

It was at this appearance that the Resurrected Lord, after had breakfast with the disciples, addressed Peter:

**John 21:15-17** So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." <sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that

I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

This section is filled with many wonderfully profound lessons. The one I will focus on today is the nature of 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal love for Christ. Note the Lord's grace as He did not say to Peter: "Simon, son of John, are you sorry for what you did? Simon, son of John, will you promise never to deny Me again? Simon, son of John, are you ready to do works of penance to make up for your three denials?" No! Instead, He asked him "Do you love Me?" This is what Jesus Christ wants from His people more than anything else. Sure, obedience is important. Of course, following the directives of the Word of God is essential. However, what Christ desires first and foremost is personal love (Rev. 2:4; Col. 1:18)—for if the personal love is there then there will by necessity be love for Bible doctrine; where you find true personal love for Christ, you will find joyful obedience; wherever you find personal love for Jesus Christ, you will find consistent fellowship *for an extended periods of time*.

Personal love for Christ is not some misty-eyed emotional *high* one gets when he thinks of Christ and His work on the cross. Personal love for Christ is more than just being faithful to Bible doctrine. Personal love for Christ requires internal integration. Apart from internal integration, *deep* personal love for Christ is impossible.

Internal integration includes three major components: 1) second Person orientation, 2) volitional orientation, and 3) doctrinal orientation. Each of these components involves very complex and profound psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Second Person orientation is how we orient to God on a personal basis. We relate to concepts, things, and persons on 1<sup>st</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person levels. These levels correspond to our grade school conjugations: "I (1<sup>st</sup> person) run," "you (2<sup>nd</sup> person) run," "he/she/it (3<sup>rd</sup> person) runs."

First person is from *our* perspective. In relation to God and Bible doctrine it would refer to how we feel about God and doctrine—our "subjective" experience. This subjectivity is not to be confused with something being relative in contrast to something being objective; rather, it just means that the focus is on the *subject*. With first person perspective the focus is on how people feel about God or Christ or doctrine on a personal level. There are grave errors in thinking that this subject-feeling in and of itself necessarily translates into personal love for Christ. How we *feel* about a doctrine as a subject is merely we *feel* about it. Just because we feel more powerfully about one doctrine than another does not mean that that doctrine is more important, or that Jesus looks at our feelings and deems them as more important because of the feelings, or in any way does it mean that they constitute personal love. Love is far more profound than feelings. They may include feelings, but again: they are far more than feelings themselves.

Furthermore, Satan loves it when believers feel good about certain doctrines as long as those doctrines are set in the context of false background knowledge (erroneous philosophical background, e.g. taking a passage that promises prosperity without understanding the proper context). Even Satan quotes Scripture! Satan loves it when Christians are memorizing and applying Scripture as long as he can control the background knowledge so that they are in reality misunderstanding and misapplying Scripture. Satan loves it when Christians feel emotional about a passage if he can get them to think that *just because* they feel a certain way about the passage then that must mean that they have personal love of Christ, and ergo God is pleased. The anti-

philosophical and anti-intellectual background that makes up such a large part of contemporary Christianity is just what Satan “ordered.” It is as if Satan himself personally designed the anti-intellectual (anti-logic/Logos, anti-correspondence Truth) background context himself that is so ripe/rotten in contemporary Christianity—and sadly, even among *some* “doctrinal” believers and pastors. Yep, there are doctrinal believers who use doctrine *religiously* because they do not really give a flip about Truth as such. To them God is but a Tool to solve a problem; and doctrine is a tool to get to another Tool, namely God. This is no different from an autistic child who lacks capacity to connect to people as *persons* and thus views people as tools in his “that knowledge” toolbox.

The third person perspective as far as God and Bible doctrine is in the realm of He, who, and it. This is knowledge about God and Bible doctrine. While 1<sup>st</sup> person perspective is about how *I* feel about God, third person deals with “that” knowledge of God and Bible doctrine as knowledge apart from myself. Although some believe that if you just fill yourself with all of this *information* about God, you will automatically personally love God; however, this is patently false for many reasons. This is not to deny the absolute necessity for 3<sup>rd</sup> person knowledge of God, Bible doctrine, and the protocol or the Christian way of life; however, in and of itself it does not provide the internal integration that is required for personal love for Christ.

Consider the interplay between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person knowledge. Say, for example, a believer faces a test in life so in the 1<sup>st</sup> person she experiences anxiety. As a believer she rightly goes to 3<sup>rd</sup> person knowledge and claims a divine promise that God will never forsake her and so at that point she is able to relax. This is all great right? Yes and No! It is right insofar as it goes, it is wrong in that it never really entered into the 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship with God. This believer bounced from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> person, yet perhaps really did not enter into the 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship with God to much, if any, extent. Yet, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship where the personal love is developed. As we have seen in our Job studies, this was the issue with Job and his friends. They knew God in 3<sup>rd</sup> person terms, but not much in 2<sup>nd</sup> person terms. It was only after tests and God’s address to Job in 2<sup>nd</sup> person *personal* terms that Job got it and acknowledged that ‘now he sees God’—all because of this 2<sup>nd</sup> person perspective. This is what God is always after in our tests.

As was pointed out to me after last Sunday’s Bible class by a believer during lunch as she noted that ‘one cannot even use 2<sup>nd</sup> person language unless the person is present.’ That’s right! Or as another believer noted that afternoon: ‘it is like many people today, including Christians, are autistic with reference to God.’ That’s right! Boy do I have a sharp believers in the congregation.☺ At this point I would like to take the time to express my appreciation for my congregation’s love for Truth. One is never sure how a congregation will handle the challenge of some of the philosophical concepts like logic and correspondence truth that is so critical to understanding Truth as such (i.e. by providing proper background knowledge). What a blessing to have a congregation who really is interested in Truth instead of just playing religious games. Simply put: one cannot be a true doctrinal believer and retain false background (philosophical) knowledge. One cannot hate logic and correspondence truth and truly love, let alone understand Bible doctrine or God. One cannot love and grow in doctrine and be anti-intellectual—though Satan would love for believers to “think” so. The idea that God’s Word can be understood and used in a context that rejects logic is diabolical. The idea that God’s Truth is not according to correspondence theory of truth is satanic. As a matter of fact, Satan himself is the epitome of irrationality as he rejects correspondence theory of truth (denial!) which precludes him from obtaining to any internal integration. The idea that all of this (philosophy, logic, theory of truth) does not matter is from the pit of Hell itself. All the devil needs to do to corrupt and pervert the

doctrines in a believer's soul is to corrupt this background knowledge which will make any internal integration and true 2<sup>nd</sup> personal true love for Christ *impossible* (for example: the believer who tries to learn or apply Bible doctrine when his background knowledge is painted with irrationality and coherence or pragmatic views of truth is precluded from internal integration). Neither Satan nor any believer can advance into genuine personal love for God apart from internal integration. Again, it is Satan's lack of internal integration which precludes him from moving to personal love for God. I will touch on the other aspects on internal integration in the next daily doctrine reflection and develop it further in our next Bible class.

On the Glory Road,

*Pastor Don*

