

Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives, Event #20: God's Unique Plan for your life-1 (John 21:21, 22).

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.

There is one more incident in event #20 that I would like to touch on in a few DDRs before moving to the next event in our chronological look at the resurrection appearances. After Jesus prophesied Peter's martyrdom (which would include Peter going where he would not want to go: to be crucified upside down), Peter turned to the Lord and said in effect 'what about John, will he have to suffer martyrdom too?' The Lord responded by rebuking Peter:

John 21:21, 22 Peter therefore seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?"
Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!"

There are many wonderful lessons in this exchange. I shall try to bring out a few of them in the next few DDRs. The first thing to remember is that God has a different plan for every individual. Peter would suffer a painful martyrdom in the Neronian persecutions around A.D. 67-68. John, on the other hand, would not suffer martyrdom. John would out live his natural life (A.D. 6-100). Peter died in his sixties by being crucified upside down whereas John died in his nineties from natural causes. One may be tempted to object, “No fair! Doesn’t Jesus love both John and Peter the same? Why should Peter have to suffer, yet John get to live out his life as well as get the privilege of writing the book of Revelation in his golden years?” One of the first things people often do when faced with difficulties that others do not share is start feeling sorry for self because it all seems so *unfair*. Why this illness? Why this limitation? Why this treatment?

But how did the Lord respond to Peter? He certainly did not apologize for God’s perfect plan which includes Peter’s excruciating martyrdom. He basically told Peter to mind his own business. You see, God has a unique plan for every individual. The worst thing we can do is to compare our lives with other’s and feel sorry for ourselves. I had a very rough childhood. But that was God’s *perfect* plan for me to bring Him glory. Having a rough childhood, nonetheless, has it advantages. Given my druthers, I would much rather be raised where I had to learn to do things for myself than to grow up to be a mommy’s boy who later expects his wife to be his mother and take care of him like a child. One of the worst things any mother can do is create a mommy’s boy who grows up and expects his wife to be his mommy. I would not wish that one anyone—certainly not on any wife!

I understand that there are other alternatives to neglect and spoiling, my point is that being “taken care” of can also create other problems. What the world calls “advantaged kids” (because of money) are some of the most messed up kids on the planet (cf. Jersey Shore, Kardashians, Lindsay Lohan)—they really are not advantaged in the most important things of life. They might know the price of everything, but they do not know the value of nothing.

God’s plan for my life and your life is absolutely perfect. Likely, you did not have a childhood like mine. So what? I believe that the reason God put me in those circumstances was that they were most conducive to me seeking Truth. Since there was not any truth in my family, I had to seek it for myself in the Lord and Bible doctrine. The Lord led me to one of the greatest categorical minds in the world, R.B. Thieme. He became my spiritual father as far as the categories of Bible doctrine and the priority of teaching God’s Word regardless of the circumstances. Then the Lord led me to Dr. Carnagey, one of the greatest minds with regard to the biblical languages. I have learned so much from these two men. They have blessed me beyond what I could have asked or imagined. Thieme enabled me to understand the Bible categorically, Carnagey gave me the ability to open the Greek and Hebrew texts and read them for myself. Both of these men are so different. They both had strengths and yes, they both had weaknesses. I have tried to learn from them both the good and the bad.

Just as we should take what is good from our teachers, we also must recognize what is not good and reject it. We are all human and sinners, and we all have issues. One of the worst things a person can do is to follow the person instead of the teaching. Follow no man! As Thieme put it, “It is not the man, it is the message.” What great insight! It is unfortunate that some of his followers have not learned that lesson. There are pastors who actually go around acting like little colonels as if that makes them spiritual. What pretentious nonsense. There is only one colonel! And there is only one personality that each person should be and that is himself. Be your own personality and follow Jesus! Peter and John had very different personalities, but the mandate for

both was to follow the Lord. One of the worst things you can do is try to be someone you are not just to please others. Don't do that to yourself or to God.

Jesus made it clear that God has a unique plan for each individual. There is only one person who can fulfill your shoes and that is you. God had a unique plan for my life. It may sound a bit strange, but I would not have changed it one bit. The things that I understand about God, Bible doctrine, Greek, Hebrew, and philosophy far outweigh any difficulties that I have experienced as a child. The fact that I can engage in high level thinking and conversation about doctrine, Truth, and God with some of the greatest minds in the world is priceless. Imagine, some poor average kid from the projects of Houston growing up and being able to seriously engage Thieme about plenary genitives over lunch when he was in Tulsa, or Carnagey over Hebrew jussives, or a Dr. Howe over Esse and on the mind's ability to abstract essences from forms. Imagine some average kid who grew up in gangs in Houston actually learning more Greek and Hebrew than my spiritual fathers. What a blessing for an average kid! What grace for the kid born on the wrong side of the tracks! What a blessing to be able to glorify the Lord in our own unique ways with our own unique stories of the plan of God which was designed especially for us. All we have to do is as Christ told Peter, "Follow Me."

In His Sacred Love,

Pastor Don

