

Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives: Summary and Paul's conversion account in Acts 22:6-11.

SUMMARY OF THE RESURRECTION EVENTS

Two Marys go to “look” at the tomb Saturday, 5:45 p.m., April 4, 33 (Matt. 28:1). Around 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 5, there was an earthquake and an angel rolled away the stone in front of the tomb (Matt. 28:2-4). Before daybreak (around 4:00 a.m.) Mary Magdalene visits the tomb and notices that the stone had been moved from the front of the tomb (John 20:1). Mary runs and tells John and Peter that someone had stolen the body (John 20:2). John and Peter run to the tomb and notice that the tomb was empty (John 20:3-9). Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb and sees two angels (John 20:10-13). Then she sees the risen Lord (John 20:14-17). She again runs and tells the disciples, but they do not believe her (John 20:18; Mark 16:9-11). Then Mary Magdalene meets up with other women who are going to the tomb (Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1-2). The women enter the tomb and see a total of three angels: one (the angel that had earlier rolled away the stone and sat on it) seated on the right side where the body of Jesus had lain, and then two more standing near the women; the first angel gave them the message that Jesus has risen, and the other two reminded the women that Jesus had prophesied His resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:4-7; Luke 24:3-8). The women “freaked out” at the sight of the angels and ran from the tomb, but Jesus appeared to them and confirmed what the angels had said; they held Him by His feet and worshipped Him; He told them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where they would see Him (Matt. 28:8-10; Mark 16:8). As the women were going to tell the disciples, the soldiers who had passed out at the sight of the angel earlier were making their way to the chief priests and received money to lie about what had happened (Matt. 28:11-15). The women tell the disciples but they still do not believe them (Luke 24:9-11). However, Peter upon hearing this ran to the tomb for a second time (Luke 24:12). Somewhere during this time there was a private meeting between Jesus and Peter (1 Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34). Jesus appears and spends a good part of a day with the two travelers to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32). These two travelers tell the eleven disciples (Mark 16:13; Luke 24:33-35). Jesus appears to the disciples, but Thomas is not present (Lk. 24:36-49; Jn. 20:19-25). Eight days later Jesus appears to the disciples when Thomas is present (Mk. 16:14-18; John 20:26-31). About two weeks after the resurrection Jesus appears to disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25). After about another week Jesus appears to eleven disciples on mountain (Matt. 28:16-20). Within the forty days between the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension, He appears to more than five hundred brethren and to James (1 Cor. 15:3-8). The last group appearance is recorded in Acts 1 where Jesus ascended into Heaven from the

Mount of Olives (Mk 16:19-20; Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-12)—where He will return at the Second Advent.

With the evidence of the resurrection and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit (cf. pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2) the Church continued to grow. Around five years later the Lord appears to Saul of Tarsus who had been persecuting believers: “*But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison,*” Acts 8:3.

In the last DDR we noted a few principles on Jesus’s appearance to Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:1-12. Today I would like to note Paul’s testimony of his own conversion in Acts 22:6-16:

Acts 22:6 "And it came about that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, 7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 8 "And I answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.' 9 "And those who were with me beheld the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. 10 "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go on into Damascus; and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.' 11 "But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. 12 "And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him. 14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 'And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

Wow! Paul saw and heard the risen Jesus, and that revolutionized his life; it made him what he was. Note his complete surrender to Christ’s will, “What shall I do, Lord?” Blind Saul, led by the hand into the city which he had expected to enter so differently saw better than ever before. “The glory of that light” enabled him to see far off realities that he could never have imagined. Wow!

Paul understands that it was the “God of our fathers” who had “appointed” this objective vision, and that the purpose of the vision was to make Saul a witness to all men. The point of it all was to “**KNOW HIS WILL**” and reveal that will to others. It was knowing the Lord and His will that would form the motivation and content in declaring to others what he knew to be true. We can only confidently communicate to others those things that we confidently and personally know. We can only communicate a Lord that we ourselves know, ‘that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that . . . declare we unto you.’

We live in pathological times as far as man’s noetic activity. This pathology has deeply infected the church and believer’s spiritual lives. A great deal of contemporary Christianity is very pathological (we noted some of this in our last Bible class as per the Word of Faith movement). This pathological mindset has led to serious pathological problems regarding the believer’s attitude toward Jesus Christ, the spiritual life, and the plan of God. This pathology cannot be cured apart from removing the fragmentation of first- and second-order wills. Until both wills are brought in harmony with Bible doctrine, the believer will miss out on the greatest

life imaginable (cf. Eph. 3:20). By our fallen nature, we all have very powerful evil proclivities for seeking first the things of the kosmos instead of God. The only way to break this curse is through sanctification. Sanctification requires three things: the Holy Spirit, Bible doctrine, and a *strong, persistent, unqualified* positive volition—as illustrated by Paul, “What would you have me do, Lord?” There is no stronger motivation for positive volition than personal love for God—it not only changed Paul’s life, it would also be the Solution to Job’s alienation from himself, hope, and God. The only way to destroy love for evil is through love for the Good and that means victory over the old sin nature—the old man. That is no easy task! Yet, it is the task and issue for every believer’s life. Mankind, all of us, naturally prefer darkness to God’s light and love—we so need His grace:

John 3:16-19 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

The believer whose first-order volitions (choices as per the fruition of first order desires) are dominated by the lusts of the sin nature and the things of kosmos diabolicus is precluded from entering into personal love for God. Though God’s love for the believer is unilateral and will never diminished, such a believer does not have the capacity for personal love for God. We so need the grace of God!

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father [personal love for God] is not in him.

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.

In His Perfect Undiminishing Sacred Love,

Pastor Don