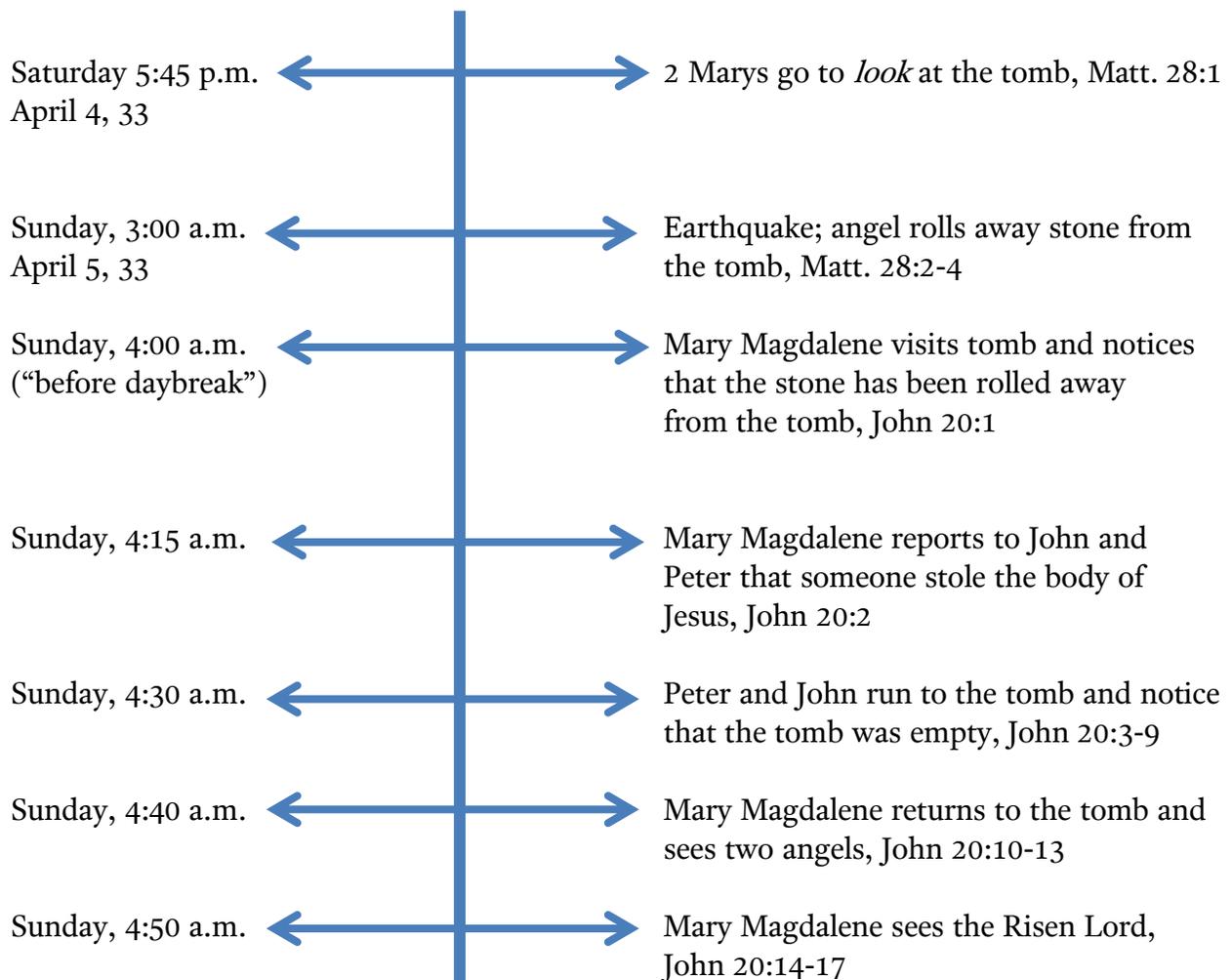
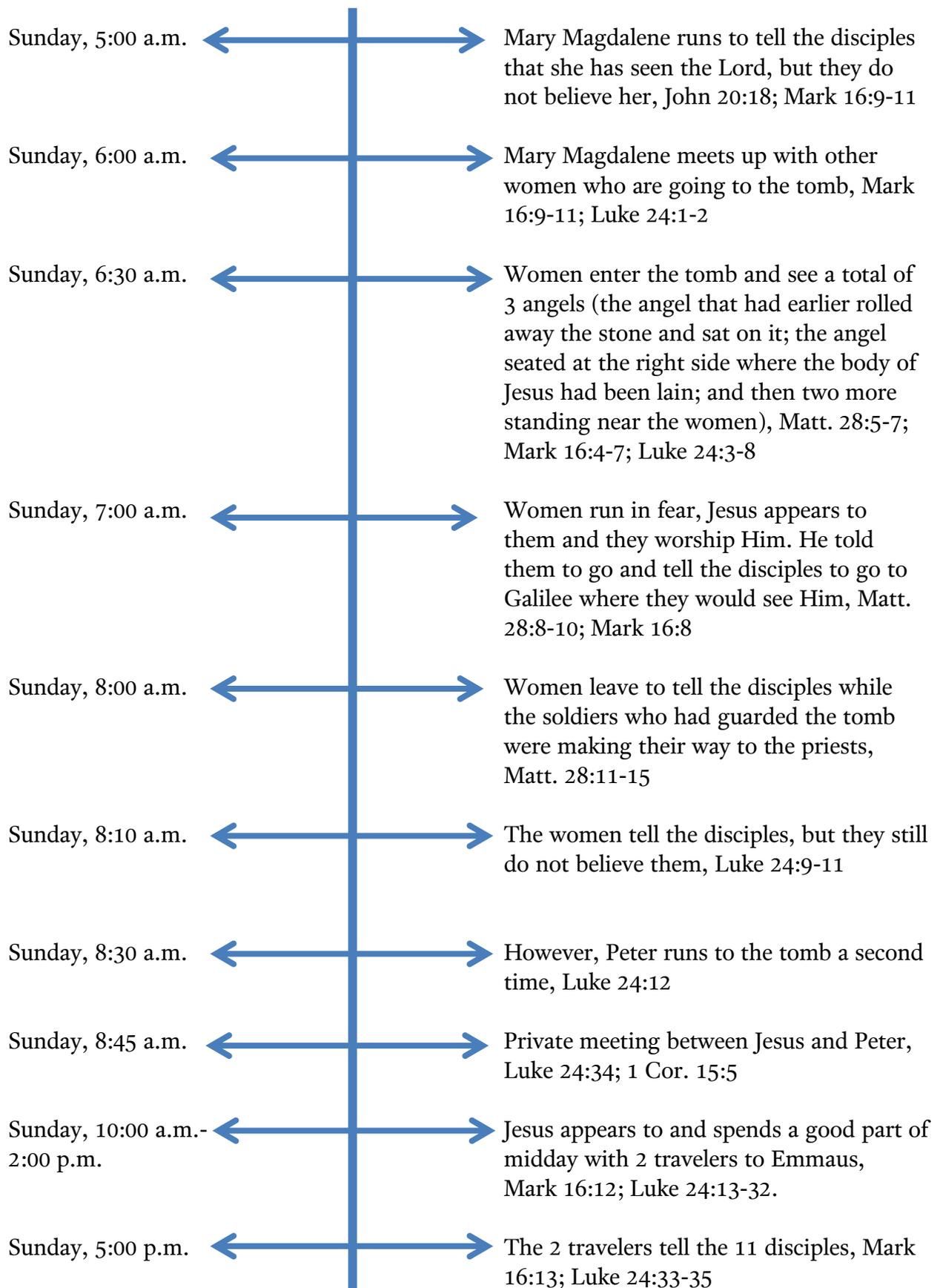
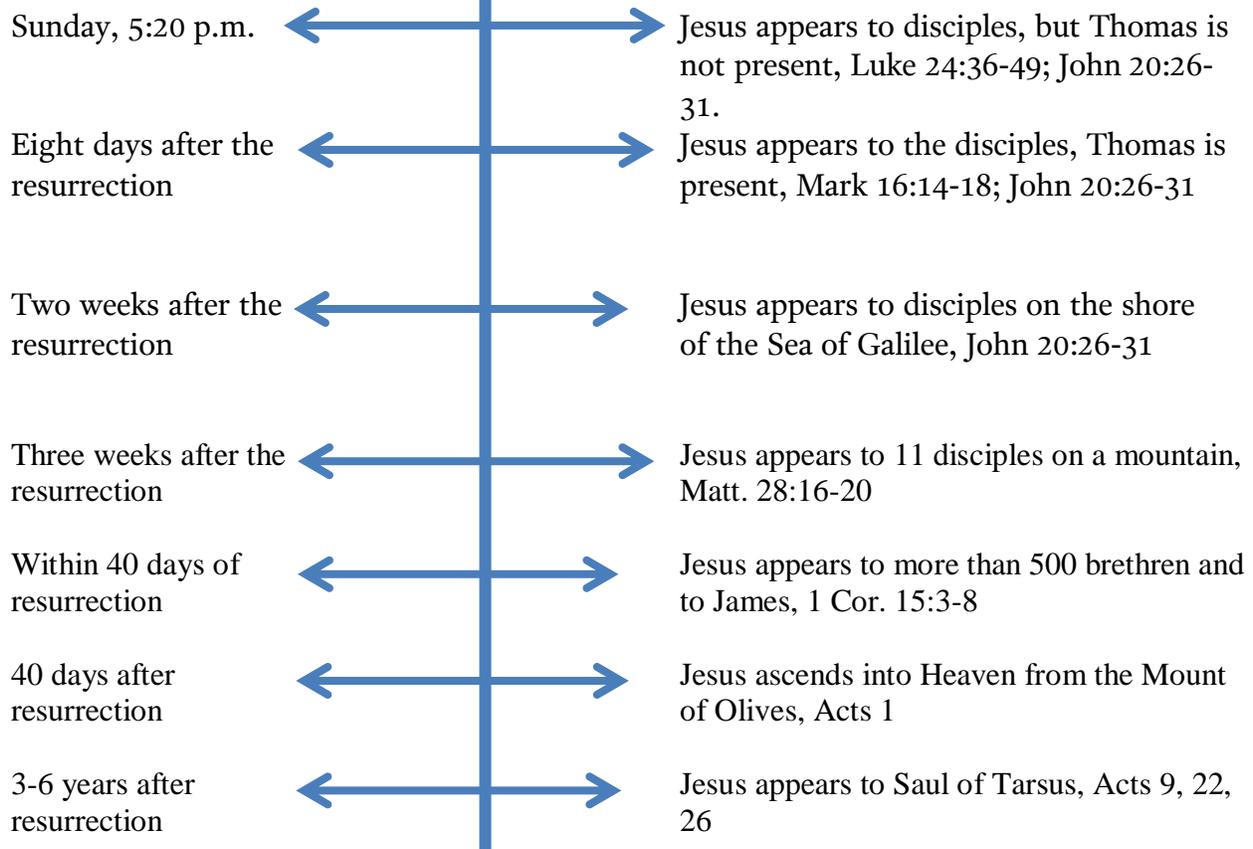


Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives: Summary-3, Christ to Saul, “It is hard for you to kick against the goads,” Acts 26:14.

SUMMARY OF THE RESURRECTION EVENTS







In Acts 26:14, Paul relates what Christ said to him in this last resurrection appearance: “It is hard for you to kick against the goads!” What a profound lesson! What an indubitable truth! No doubt that this doctrinal truth *pierced* deep into Paul’s soul, and he could not forget it. The metaphor is a very plain one. The ox-goad was a formidable weapon, some seven or eight feet in length, shod with an iron point, and capable of being used as a spear, and of inflicting deadly wounds. Held in the firm hand of the ploughman, it presented a sharp point to the rebellious animal under yoke. If the ox had readily yielded to the gentle prick, given, not in anger, but for guidance, it would cause no injury. However, if the ox kicks back against the sharp point, the ox-goad would be applied with more force striking harder and sinking deeper in the flesh. What would the ox get from rebelling but lacerated and bleeding flanks? Like the rebellious ox, Paul had been kicking back and as a result was being cut to pieces in his soul as the Lord’s would respond by striking the goad deeper it deeper into his “flesh.”

There are two important truths in this lesson. One is the utter futility of lives that are spent opposing the divine will. Think of the insanity of man lifting himself up and saying to God, “I will not!” when God says “Do this!” or “Be this!” God has given man the free will to rebel, but in the process of rebelling man ends up lacerated in conscience and soul as evidenced in man’s broken relationships, stinging consciences, and frantic searches for happiness to ease the pain. While rebellious man may attempt to seek a thousand things to distract him from God and suppress Him, at the end of the day God always wins! Man can only suppress God for so long. As Christ put it, ‘it is *hard* to set yourselves against the plan of God.’ Consider all of the hatred and vitriol in the new atheists like Richard Dawkins. Why so much hatred? What a resemblance

to an angry teenage boy who is bitter against everything due to his inability to find himself and because he really hates himself as he rebels against God and natural law—e.g, the laws of divine establishment. (In the next DDR series we will go through the Old Testament passages that Dawkins says reveal a hateful, sexist, racist, and blood thirsty God.)

Indeed, it is hard to kick against the ubiquitous divine ox-goads ready to prick us when we go against God and His natural laws. People can kick against the ox-goads, but they will only hurt themselves. To kick against God is to end up with a self-inflicted torn life. Every time a person kicks against the goads, they only cause them to sink deeper and cause more damage. All that is needed to stop the pain and damage is to accept God's grace—which Paul finally did wholeheartedly.

Christ in His great love—that love of desire for the beloved's good and a desire for union with the beloved in mind and presence—says this more in compassion than righteous indignation. It is no pleasure to Him to hold the goad and push the iron point deeper into rebellious man, nor that we should wound ourselves upon it by kicking back. He has another question to put to rebellious man, 'why, why should you be stricken and lacerated anymore? Turn, turn, before it is too late! Why should you inflict yourself with so much damage? Stop it for your own sake!'

There is another truth in the metaphor used in relation to oxen which we may set next to this one: "*Take My yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls,*" cf. Matt. 11:28-30. When the yoke is accepted (the plan of God), the goad is laid aside; and healing from its wounds are granted to us. What a revelation from Christ in Heaven! He knows about our superficiality, ingratitude, self-serving, and self-tormenting experiences and how we so love to blame others for our own self-inflicted misery and emptiness. He knows our fallenness.

What a Christ! He takes us as we are and lavishes grace upon grace upon us. All we need to do is quit kicking against the ox-goads and take His yoke of grace to find rest for our souls. Instead of living a futile, self-tormenting, and unreasonable life, man has the wonderful option of simply accepting His grace which makes the yoke easy and light,

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. 30 "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

In His Sacred Love,

Pastor Don