

The only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

September 2012						
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2 (Week 36)	3 John 12	4 Matt 24	5 Matt 25	6 John 13	7 John 14	8
9 (Week 37)	10 John 15	11 John 16	12 John 17	13 John 18	14 Matt 26	15
16 (Week 38)	17 Matt 27	18 Matt 28	19 John 20	20 John 21	21 Luke 24	22
23 (Week 39)	24 Acts 1	25 Acts 2	26 Acts 3	27 Acts 4	28 Acts 5	29
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### September Week 3 (Week 38) Summary

**Matthew 27, 28, John 20, 21, and Luke 24 - Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.**

### Harmonizing the Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection

This week, we will read first about the crucifixion. Then we will spend the rest of the week with some details of the time after the Lord's resurrection from the perspective of the gospels of

Matthew, Luke and John. We know from [1 Corinthians 15:5-9](#) that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred in the forty days before His ascension to heaven. We will focus in the next few days mostly on the time from His appearance to the disciples onward. Today though, let us spend a bit of time on the first hours of the day of His resurrection.

We need to keep a few things in mind. First, as is often the case with the Scriptures, events recorded in the four gospels are not always in chronological order. Also, as we have discussed before, each of the four was written to a different audience; and we find things phrased differently, as well as additional events in one gospel not found in another. Finally, we have seen time and again that there are some things we would like to know that the scriptures just do not tell us. In this case, the commentator James Burton Coffman says it best: "...it was part of the Father's wisdom to give men just the amount of revelation which would leave them free to make their own moral decision."

The resurrection accounts of the gospels are favorite citations for those unbelievers who feel compelled to invest their time trying to find alleged contradictions. Of course, such allegations are baseless. Putting the four gospel accounts together gives us a more complete picture of the events of that great morning. For a complete comprehensive and easy to read harmonization of the four gospels, I recommend the following book (also available in Kindle format): "The Fourfold Gospel" by John McGarvey (ISBN-10 # 1936341018, ISBN-13 # 978-1936341016).

Keeping Coffman's caveat in mind, the following is a summary of the events in all four gospels ([Matthew 28:1-10](#), [Mark 16:1-8](#), [Luke 24:1-12](#), and [John 20:1-18](#)) of the early morning of the resurrection up to Jesus' first appearances to Mary Magdalene and the other women:

1. Several women came to the tomb of Jesus before dawn on the first day of the week (Sunday) with spices to anoint His body. From the four gospels, we know that group included at minimum Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James (Jesus' mother), Salome, and Joanna.
2. The Sabbath ended at sundown on Saturday. The key sentence in [Luke 23:56](#) is that on the Sabbath, the women "rested according to the commandment." This means that they would not be preparing the spices and ointments until the Sabbath was over (at sundown).
3. The women set out for the tomb with the spices while it was still dark on the first day of the week. The translation of the grammar used in Mark confuses many, but the key to understanding is that [Mark 16:1-2](#) simply distinguishes the fact that when they went very early on the first day of the week, they did it in the morning - not just after sundown on Saturday!
4. There was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat on it. The fear that brought to the guards is stated - along with the statement that they became like dead men. Perhaps they were just paralyzed with fear, or perhaps they were made unable to move. We are not told. The point is that the seal was broken, and the stone would not be allowed to be moved back in front of the tomb.
5. At this point, we know from John that it was Mary Magdalene who ran to tell Peter and John that (as she believes) someone has taken the body. John and Mark both indicate that Mary had

left the other women. While she is gone, two angels speak to the women she had separated from, telling them that Jesus had risen and they must tell the disciples "and Peter" that He is risen and that they must go to Galilee. Many of the guards leave to go tell the Sanhedrin what has happened, while the other women leave to find the disciples. It is important to get word to all the disciples. But Peter is mentioned separately probably because it is important that in his grief, he does not think he would be cast off because of his denial (in [Matthew 26:69-75](#)).

6. Peter and John run to the tomb and eventually both go inside and leave, satisfied that Jesus is gone. John "believes" but Peter is puzzled about what happened. They went back home and the other women would come tell them (as well as the other disciples) what the angels had said to them.

7. Mary, back at the tomb weeping after Peter and John had left, now looks into it for the first time and sees it empty except for the angels - sitting at the head and foot where Jesus had laid. Perhaps from her tears blinding her or perhaps prevented from truly "seeing" (as with the disciples in [Luke 24:16](#)), she does not react to the angels or recognize Jesus until He calls her name ([John 20:16](#)). Jesus tells her not to delay by clinging to Him, but to go to tell the disciples that He is going to His Father (and their Father).

8. Mary does go and tell the disciples that she has seen the Lord. The other women are met by Jesus on their way ([Matthew 28:9](#)); and they are allowed the delay briefly, as they take hold of His feet and worship Him. Then He sends them to continue on to the disciples as well.

[Matthew 27](#) - When morning came, the Sanhedrin had Jesus taken to Pilate. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he had a change of heart, and took the thirty pieces of silver back to them, saying that he had betrayed innocent blood. But they are unimpressed. So he threw it down in the temple and went and hanged himself. Remorse, as we see, does not always include repentance. The Sanhedrin has no problem with lies and the murder of an innocent man, but they want no part of this blood money, so they use it to buy a potter's field. The scripture that this fulfilled, referred to in verses 9-10, is from both [Jeremiah 19:1-13](#) and [Zechariah 11:11-13](#).

Jesus answers Pilate's question of whether He was a king, but remains silent about the charges against Him. We find in verse 20 that the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to choose Barabbas when Pilate offered to free one of them. Fearing a riot, Pilate resigns himself to the will of the crowd, but uses the physical act of washing hands to declare his innocence of "this man's blood." "Having scourged Jesus" is mentioned in passing, but this Roman form of flogging was anything but incidental. It was a brutally painful beating with a whip weighted with sharp pieces of bone and metal. It was designed to lacerate, often exposing bone and intestines. Crucifixion was an agonizing and tortuous death, but this beating would be equally painful. A good article on this scourging can be found at [this link](#).

He was mocked and spit upon, stripped and made to wear a crown made of thorns. Then he was led away to be crucified. They made a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry His cross, and when they reached Golgatha (which means Place of a Skull), they tried to give him wine mixed

with gall (a very bitter herb that could also be poisonous) to drink. It was intended to dull the sense of pain, but it was God's will that He should suffer. As they crucified Him, "they divided his garments among them by casting lots" - referring to [Psalm 22:18](#). Verses 36-44 detail the continued derision, mocking and reviling inflicted on Him as He suffered.

Crucifixion was a slow and excruciatingly painful method of inflicting death, and there are many stories of the cruelty of Roman soldiers experimenting with different poses for crucified victims (Josephus, "Jewish War" 5.449-551). Hanging by one's arms caused great difficulty in breathing, only alleviated by the victim pushing up with their feet in order to take the weight off of the arms. But that caused severe pain in the feet, arms, legs, and back, making the exhausted victim slump down again, only to be barely able to breathe again. Finally, he would mercifully die of asphyxiation, if he had not already died as a result of the cumulative effects of the multiple physical traumas inflicted.

In verse 45, there was darkness all over the land from the 6th hour until the ninth hour (about noon to 3:00). About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" meaning, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This is from [Psalm 22:1](#). This is one of the most puzzling verses in the Bible. Jesus knows what is happening, and why He is doing it. One explanation that has been posed is that because Jesus did in fact become sin, at this moment Jesus felt the presence of God turn away from Him as He was dying. Jesus then gave up the spirit with another cry.

Then in verse 51, the curtain of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. It was between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, and was woven from 72 twisted plaits of 24 threads a piece. It was 60 feet high and 30 feet wide. No one was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place behind the curtain except the high priest, and then only on the Day of Atonement. Being torn in two represents the removal of the separation between God and the people. A high priest was no longer needed - Jesus is our high priest now. More elaboration of this event, and what it symbolized, is in [Hebrews 9:11-10:22](#). Then the earth shook (Palestine sits on a major seismic rift), rocks were split, and tombs were opened. As Matthew often groups events together topically, he then jumps ahead here in verse 53 to events after the resurrection, as many of the saints were raised and came out of the tombs to appear to many in the city. We are not told whether they were taken to heaven after these eyewitnesses received these visits. But clearly, God wanted many witnesses to understand the profoundly momentous significance of what had happened.

In verse 57, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came to Pilate that evening to request Jesus' body. He took the body and wrapped it in a linen shroud and placed it in his own tomb. This fulfilled [Isaiah 53:9](#). Then he rolled a big stone in front of the entrance. Then the chief priests, remembering how he had said that he would rise after 3 days, went to Pilate voicing their fears that Jesus' disciples might come and steal the body. So he gave them a guard of soldiers, and they sealed the tomb and stood guard.

[Matthew 28](#) - (Note: for a summary of the events of this chapter from the resurrection at dawn to Jesus' first appearances to Mary Magdalene and the other women, please see post at [this link](#) – also at the top of this doc. After the resurrection, Jesus - as He had told the disciples in [Matthew 26:32](#)

*that He would meet them there - would be with them at the Sea of Galilee and at a mountain there that He directs them to. But several other events occur before and after this, the details of which are interspersed throughout the gospels in Luke 24 and John 20. And events in a single chapter are in some cases separated by days, and even weeks, as Jesus remained for forty days before the ascension.)*

Then some of the guard that had been on watch at the tomb went to the chief priests to tell them what had happened. After deliberating, they gave money to the guards to have them say that His disciples had come and stolen the body while they were asleep, promising to keep them out of trouble if word got back to Pilate. Their acts of unbelief in the face of these eyewitness accounts is stunning, but such was their love for power that they would not let it be jeopardized.

Jesus meets His apostles in verse 16 on the mountain in Galilee that He had directed them to. In verses 18-20, Jesus gives the eleven chosen ones the Great Commission - to go and make disciples of ALL nations "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Jesus has confirmed that His Kingdom is open to everyone. Because this is the end of Matthew, some confuse this event with the time of the ascension. But that comes later at a different mountain - Mount Olivet, after they returned to Jerusalem.

[John 20](#) - (Note: for a summary of the events of this chapter from the resurrection at dawn to Jesus' first appearance to His apostles, please see the beginning of this document).

In the evening of the day of the resurrection, verse 19 tells us, the disciples had the doors locked where they were "for fear of the Jews." But Jesus comes and stands among them. This is not to imply that the risen Lord was now some disembodied spirit. But a locked door was certainly no challenge to the Lord, who had raised the dead. He showed them His hands and His side' and in verses 21-23, John gives his account of a foretaste of the Holy Spirit to come to them when He leaves. Verse 23 confirms what He told them in [Matthew 18:18](#).

The "doubting Thomas" verses are next as Thomas was not with the others on the above occasion. When the others told Thomas they had seen the Lord, he said "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, Jesus again enters where they are locked in and He has Thomas do exactly those things. When Thomas acknowledges Him as the Lord, Jesus says "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*"

Though there still remains one chapter in the gospel of John, he ends this chapter by stating that Jesus did many wondrous things that were not written in his gospel. But he says it was written "*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*"

[John 21](#) - In this final chapter of John's gospel, Jesus appears to seven of the disciples that have gone fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). Appearing to them 100 yards from shore at daybreak, they did not recognize Him until they cast their net out where He told them - and then were unable to haul it in, so great was the catch (verse 6). John must have at once been reminded

of the similar incident in [Luke 5:4-6](#), as he exclaimed to Peter that "It is the Lord!" Peter, impulsive as usual, jumps in to swim to shore while the others drag the fish with the boat. Jesus had a fire going, and was cooking them breakfast. There have been many attempts to make some symbolic interpretation of the number of fish they caught (153) in verse 11, but fishermen naturally counted their fish before taking them to market. Verse 12 is simply an indication that even though they knew this was Jesus, the disciples were still getting used to the fact that He was alive again.

Verses 15-19 make up the "feed my sheep" conversation between Jesus and Peter. Much has been written and discussed about the two different Greek words for love (agape and phileo) that are in the text. But the two words are used interchangeably in the book of John, and even throughout the Septuagint. It is no more valid to make something different of this than the two different words this very same text uses for "feed" and even "sheep." There are only two things of significance. One is that Peter denied Jesus three times; and though it grieved Peter (verse 17) that Jesus asked him whether He loved Him a third time, Jesus knew that it would also be somewhat of a comfort to Peter later. The command to him to "feed my sheep" came from "the Good Shepherd" Himself ([John 10:11,14](#)) for Peter and the other apostles, and is carried forward to all elders to "shepherd the flock of God that is among you" ([1 Peter 5:1-4](#), [Acts 20:28](#)). With verses 18-19, Jesus foretells Peter's being bound and led to his own crucifixion.

As this gospel wraps up, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" wants us to know that Jesus did so much more while He was here than was written about.

[Luke 24](#) - It is still Sunday, the day that Jesus rose; and two of His disciples were traveling to the village of Emmaus. One was named Cleopas, but we do not know the name of the other. We are told in verse 16 that "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" when Jesus drew near. When He asks them about the conversation they are having, the two men proceed to tell him about Jesus of Nazareth. They speak of how great he was, how the chief priests and rulers condemned and crucified him. And now, they say, some women of their company had been to his tomb and found it empty - a fact which others confirmed! They are clearly distressed.

Jesus then gave them a mild rebuke for being slow to believe what the prophets had spoken. He then interpreted Scriptures from Moses and the prophets concerning the Christ. As they reached the village, they urged him to stay with them, as the evening would be coming soon. He blessed and broke bread with them, and it was at this point that their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Jesus then vanished from their sight.

That very hour, they went back to Jerusalem and found the eleven, who confirmed to the two traveler's that yes, Jesus has risen (verse 34) and has appeared to Simon (Peter). No details here or in the other three gospels are given of that appearance to Peter (although Paul does speak of it in [1 Corinthians 15:5](#)). But given Peter's intense grief over his denial of Jesus, it was important to reach him quickly; and it was important to get to the rest of the eleven this day as well.

Jesus then entered while the men were talking, and they were frightened, as if He was a spirit. He had them touch him, and even ate some fish in front of them - spending some time to assure them both that he was a living man, and the same Jesus they had known. He then opened

their minds to the Scriptures concerning Him. Jesus then tells them a bit about the witness they will bear to the world in the great commission, but he says they must stay in Jerusalem until they are "clothed with power from on high" (the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts). When He tells them to stay in Jerusalem, he means after he is gone. They will be with him at the Sea of Galilee ([John 21:1](#)), and on a mountain in Galilee that He has directed them to ([Matthew 28:16](#)) before his ascension.

Luke records Jesus' ascension to heaven (at the end of forty days) in verses 50-53, as he leads them from Jerusalem to Bethany. We are told in verses 52-53 that they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God."

*Side note: Why did Jesus appear to them in Jerusalem, when He knew that they would meet Him in Galilee - and He had told Mary Magdalene and other disciples as well? Peter and the other apostles, as well as many other disciples (witness the "road to Emmaus account") were grief-stricken, traumatized, and even afraid for their own lives ([John 20:19](#)). Two very well-written articles that deal with this subject can be found [here](#) and [here](#).*