

Matthew 23-06-04b

We're ready now to resume our study in the Gospel of Matthew, and we're looking at these various accounts of the resurrection. And looking at them, because there are differences, there are allegations of discrepancies or contradictions. But in fact, and I wish I had time to draw out the reasons for the specific accounts as they occur in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, and in John.

The key to it, if you want to look at this for yourself, is to remember that Mark is Peter's testimony. Matthew is Matthew's testimony. He is one of the 12.

Luke is gleaned from several eyewitnesses. Most importantly, Mary, the mother of the Lord. Luke personally interviewed Mary, the mother of Jesus.

And John, of course, is an eyewitness. So Matthew, Mark, and John are direct first-person eyewitness accounts. Luke is reproducing a synthesis of interviews that he conducted when he was researching his book for Theophilus, who is either an individual or a pseudonym, meaning anybody who loves God.

Theo is theos, and philos is the word for appreciating and loving someone. It could have been theoagapus, I suppose, if you wanted to use agape. But philos is the root behind philadelphia, brotherly love.

And so someone who loves all things connected with the Lord Jesus is the specific addressee in the Gospel of Luke, and in Acts, for that matter. O Theophilus, anyone who loves and appreciates God and the things of God, you would expect if it was directly related to love for God in his person, it might have been a different suffix. Be that as it may, the first thing we want to do is figure out from Matthew chapter 28, it says, after the Sabbath, the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

Only these two ladies are mentioned. It doesn't say these two and no others. So the fact that the other gospels include some additional ladies is no more a contradiction than to see the garrisoned demoniac with the legion of demons mentioned alone in one account and his companion, who was a partner in assaulting people who tried to walk through the both of them and tried to be shackled and so on.

Same thing with the blind men outside Jericho and so on. Only talking about one does not exclude the other. And depending on my purpose, I will include or exclude details and people who are present on hand or a part of the story.

That is the case here. So there are a total of six women who are present. The first of these is, and you might want to write them down because each of them is there for a reason.

Joanna, the wife of Chuza. Joanna, wife of Chuza. We find this in Luke chapter 24, verse 10.

We've looked at these earlier. You don't necessarily have to turn to them. I've read each one of these.

But in Luke 24, remember the account starts in 24 one and goes all the way through 10. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James and other women with them who told these things to the apostles. Her husband, Joanna is very interesting because her husband is Chuza.

He is the household manager or steward for Herod, Herod Antipas. And you find this out in Luke chapter eight, verse three. Again, Luke has gone around and interviewed people to produce his gospel account.

And in Luke chapter eight, when Jesus is going through every city and village preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, the 12 are with him and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary called Magdalene out of whom had come seven demons and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. Herod at this time is, you know, there's several Herods.

This is Herod Antipas. And Susanna and many others who provided for him from their substance. So she follows Jesus and she is one of those who helps out with food, with lodging, with perhaps financial assistance.

You would imagine that if her husband is a close confidant and is high up in the cabinet and in the palace with Herod Antipas, that he's doing pretty well financially. And so she's able to, to chip in on expenses. So she is the first one we look at.

The second is of course, Mary Magdalene, just mentioned also in Luke eight, verse three. She is another whom Jesus has delivered. You find out in Mark 16, nine, which is a bit shaky.

It's early, but it's not a legit, you know, Mark ends at 16, eight, but the tradition is as recorded in Mark 16, nine, that Jesus had cast out seven demons. Luke says that these women had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. So evidently several, if not all of these women had either demon affliction or physical affliction, and Jesus had healed them.

And among them are the aforementioned Joanna and Mary Magdalene. She is prominent as we have seen in the crucifixion, burial and resurrection narrative. You find this in Matthew 27, verse 61, which we have just recently seen.

And again, in verse 57, when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. And in verse 61, Mary

Magdalene was there and the other Mary sitting opposite the tomb. They're there for the preparation.

She occurs again in our passage, 28, one of Matthew. She's mentioned in Mark 15, verse 40 and 47 and by John in John 19, verse 25. So the consistent witness to the resurrection in all four gospels is Mary Magdalene.

She's also in John chapter 20, verse 18. So if you want Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to attest, all four of them mentioned Mary. She goes to the tomb on this Sunday morning.

You find this in our account in Matthew. You find it in Mark chapter 16, verse one, you find it in John 20, verse one, and so on. She is evidently the first person to see Jesus alive.

This is Mark 16, verse nine. Once again, nine is a bit suspicious, but putting the accounts together and especially our account in Matthew chapter 28, Mary, after the earthquake and the stone being rolled away, that account mentions Mary in person, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. And as they go to tell Jesus in 28, nine, Jesus met them.

So there is the two Marys specifically in Matthew. So obviously she is there. She's number two, Joanna, number one, Mary Magdalene, number two.

Number three is Mary, the mother of Jesus, the apparent and evident widow of Joseph of Nazareth. It is evident that Joseph is no longer on the scene when Jesus entrusts the care of Mary to John from the cross. We know that Mary had at least six other children beside the Lord Jesus.

This is a nice thing to tuck away. People generally know that Jesus had some brothers and sisters, but there are at least six others. If he had two sisters, then Mary and Joseph had six plus one.

They had six of their own children and Jesus making the perfect seven. And I like that construction. I choose to believe that we're not told specifically, but I choose to believe that Jesus had two sisters and that makes a total of seven children, six natural children and one supernatural child.

He's number seven or number one of the seven, depending on how you want to look at it. But we actually know the names of the four sons. This is James or Jacob, the author of the book of James, the one mentioned in the middle of the book of Acts.

The one that Paul has interaction with men from James come and spook Peter. And that's what you might call the half brother of the Lord, son of Mary and Joseph. Uh, there is, uh, a Joseph junior Joseph or Josés, J O S E S as you find it in the King James in many cases.

So you have Jacob or James, uh, you have Joseph or Josés. The third brother is Shimon

Simon. And again, Shimon is an extremely common name.

Uh, you have, uh, Shimon of Cyrene, you have Shimon the sorcerer, you have two Shimon's amongst the disciples, et cetera. And, uh, Shimon is, uh, the third brother of the Lord. And then you have Judas or Jude who wrote the book of Jude and is mentioned in the lists of, uh, uh, the, the brothers of the Lord.

And we know from Mark chapter six, verse three, when people say are not his brothers and sisters here with us that that's sisters plural. So at least two ladies, possibly more, I'm going to go with two, uh, Mark chapter six, verse three. So four brothers and at least two sisters, uh, all as children of Mary.

So Mary, the mother of the Lord, that's number three, number four, there is confusingly another Mary who is also the mother of two sons named Jacob and Joseph or James and Joseph. Just remember anytime you see James in the new Testament, it's Jacob. And it's annoying to me that they didn't just translate it like they should.

Um, and I wonder if King James had something to do with that in any case. Uh, and I think not, I researched that and they started calling him James before that guy came on the scene. I think it's the other way around.

I think he was named James because there was Bibles that called Jacob James. It's a weird path through Latin and whatnot. In any case, number four, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph or Joseph, uh, her son is James the younger.

Uh, and because he's called James the younger, uh, it's likely that this is James Jr, meaning his father was also named James or Jacob, uh, and Joseph or Joseph. You find this in, uh, our passage, Matthew 27, verse 61. She is the other one mentioned along with Mary Magdalene in our account, the other Mary that's her, uh, also in, uh, verse 56 of our chapter, uh, 27.

Um, those, uh, looking on the crucifixion from afar are Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, uh, or Joseph and the mother of Zebedee's sons, uh, which is Salome. So those three ladies you mentioned there, uh, Mark chapter 15 verses 40 and 47, give us the same information. So number four, Mary, the mother of James slash Jacob and Joseph's slash Joseph.

And you notice that Mary, the mother of the Lord also has two sons with those same names. So, but he's, her son is not called James the less or James, the younger that's four of the ladies. Number five is Mary, the wife of Clopas or Cleopas.

She is from Galilee. Uh, in John 19, 25, you find her mentioned, uh, there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. How can there be two Marys in the same family? If the wife of Clopas is Mary's sister, did Mary's parents named two of their daughters? Mary, this is not like

George Foreman where he named all of his sons, George.

Um, how many sons is George Foreman at three or four? They're all named George. Uh, this is not the case. Uh, from early witnesses, early church history, historians, Eusebius and Hegesippus and these guys, uh, we are told that Clopas or Cleopas was Joseph's brother, Joseph, the husband of Mary, Joseph, who took her to Egypt and brought her back.

Joseph who received the message from the angel. Don't be afraid to take her as your wife. Joseph, the stepfather of the Lord Jesus and the father of these four sons.

And at least two daughters that we just looked at that Joseph had a brother named Clopas or Cleopas. And he married a girl named Mary. So two brothers, Joseph and Cleopas married women, both of whom were named Miriam, Mary.

And so Mary is standing there when it says Mary, the wife of Clopas, her mother, his mother's sister. This means sister-in-law, sister-in-law. And they just, they didn't use the same type of phraseology.

If you were an in-law, you were a sister or you were a brother. They didn't tack on a bunch of, uh, extra adjectives. So she is, uh, the mother of, uh, and again, we get this from Hegesippus quoted by Eusebius.

Um, Clopas was the brother of Joseph of Nazareth. And so, uh, that makes Jesus, this Mary's nephew. She is his aunt, uh, their son, Shimon or Simeon will later become a leader of the Jerusalem church after James, after James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, the next leader of the Jerusalem church, according to early church history is Shimon or Simeon, who is instead of the Lord's half brother, he is the Lord's cousin.

And you can see that there was quite a lot of family connection, uh, involved in, in those early times and the leadership of the group. So she is number five, Mary, the wife of Clopas, Jesus aunt. Number six, as we've already seen is Salome.

Uh, this is the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Zebedee's wife, uh, James and John. Uh, but she went to the, uh, tomb on Sunday. She witnessed the crucifixion.

We find this out in Mark 15 verse 40 and Mark 16 verse one. So sometimes this additional group of women is just called the other women or the others, uh, in various accounts, they're mentioned by name, not mentioning them. Doesn't mean they weren't there.

Our Matthew account only mentions the two Marys doesn't mention the four Marys, uh, and doesn't mention who are either at the cross or at the resurrection, these six ladies. So this is not a contradiction in any sense. Again, we start from a position of faith.

We know scripture does not lie. We know the word of God is inspired by God and profitable. And when we are or are not read into the presence or absence of an individual, as we have seen in our gospel studies, looking at the two blind men, looking at the two demon possessed man, looking at other accounts, uh, this principle of only including details that are pertinent and useful to that writer's current purpose.

And that's why, uh, there is a, there is a saying I ran across and I think it's a great one. Uh, you should never read a verse of scripture. You should never read a verse of scripture.

This is another way of saying the three C's or the first, second and third rules of interpretation, right? Never read a verse, read verses, get the context. If you read a verse, you are in great danger of misapprehending, misusing and misapplying whatever you see in that verse. Never read a verse of scripture.

And you'll remember in our, in our Bible memory verse study, and those verses, by the way, are still on the website. Um, if you've lost your card ring that Debbie made for us, uh, if you have forgotten some of them and want to review and you don't have your cards handy, uh, there is a complete list of all of our memory verses on the website. There's a thing in the menu.

You can get to them. And most of them are not single verses. Uh, you can get away with it in the Psalms and occasionally in the Proverbs, but most of our verses have context.

Uh, we don't just go to Psalm one, one, we have Psalm one, one through five. I believe, uh, we don't just do Psalm 91 verse one or verse three. We have one through five or one through six.

Um, and there's a reason for that. Uh, we have to be very careful if we're going to verse. So the early attacks, the attacks began right away.

Uh, Satan is in the garden attacking the word of God right away. After the inception of the church, after Jesus ascends and the church age gets underway at Pentecost right away, uh, there are attacks. If the earliest and, uh, best witnesses to the resurrection are the women because they see him in that morning on that day.

And they witnessed the empty tomb. Uh, Josephus, uh, tells us that even the witness of multiple women is not acceptable quote because of the levity and boldness of their sex. That's Josephus, the Jewish historian saying women can't be relied upon because they're frivolous, their levity and their boldness.

They'll say anything there. They're, uh, they'll modify, add to take from, uh, and they can't, their testimony can't be trusted. So Jewish courts of law wouldn't admit even the testimony of multiple women, three or four women could all say the same thing.

They wouldn't accept it. But do you notice that scripture says on the testimony of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. It doesn't say the testimony of two or three men.

It says witnesses. How many witnesses does God provide to the empty tomb and the resurrection early on Sunday morning? At least five. And very soon after that, James and John are going to come, right? So that's a total.

If you count the five women who are specifically mentioned as being at the tomb, we have no indication that Mary, the mother of the Lord went to the tomb, but the other five that we have just reviewed all went to the tomb. If you add them and then Peter and John rushing immediately to the tomb, uh, Peter gets there first, but stops. John goes in or vice versa.

Um, yeah, John gets there first, but Peter rushes in because he's the impulsive one, but John's probably younger and faster. Um, but how many does that up to five women and two men? How many witnesses do you have on Sunday morning? Seven. I have seven witnesses, five ladies, two men.

So the fact that, that, uh, three of the five women are named Mary is, is interesting in and of itself. And then you have Salome and Joanna, um, Salome's, uh, name comes from peace. Uh, Joanna's name comes from the same root as John or Yohanan, which is the Lord is gracious.

So you have grace and peace and three Marys, three Miriams, right? So remember what the root of Miriam's name comes from? It's Naomi renamed herself this on her return from, uh, Moab. Do not call me Naomi. Call me Mara bitter.

Well, Mariam, Mariam is the people, Mari, the bitterness of the people. And when was Miriam born? When was Aaron born? When was Moses born for that matter in the bitterness of hard bondage, but the transformation, because she is the woman who is a part of the deliverance, a part of the Exodus, a part of the going from the lowest and meanest and most persecuted and oppressed situation to sister of Moses, the leader of Israel, leading the women in a victory song after Pharaoh and his army, uh, are defeated and the army is drowned in the sea and so on. Um, and so it was a popular name because it spoke of deliverance.

And in the day of Roman dominance, uh, Roman government, Roman oppression, in many cases, uh, ladies went back to naming their daughters, Miriam, Mary. So you've got bitter, bitter, bitter grace and peace. Those are the five ladies.

Then you have Simon Peter who goes from Shimon, which comes from Shamah, which is to hear you can hear, but do you listen, uh, hearing they, they hear and do not perceive, you know, seeing they see, uh, and do not perceive hearing they hear and do not understand. And so Jesus changes Shimon's name to Peter Petras rock, solid rock. So

Peter, and you have Yohanan.

So you've got Petras and you've got Yohanan Yahweh is gracious. So just in the names of the resurrection witnesses, the first seven, you have a wonderful reminder that grace and peace Fear not. Don't be afraid.

You saw this in our account in Matthew chapter 28, when the ladies are on their way to tell the disciples, Jesus appears and says, rejoice, do not be afraid. Rejoice, be joyful. Don't be afraid.

That is the, that is the comfort. That is the encouragement. Do not be faithless, but believing, do not be afraid, be joyful.

It is the same when it comes to, is there a God? Can the Bible be trusted? It is the same with I've got difficult circumstances. Here are the promises of God. I don't see them being fulfilled at the moment.

Is it fear or is it faith? Is it consternation and confusion? Am I hiding in a locked upper room or am I running to the tomb for affirmation of what God has said and running to the tomb? Who are the first ones to be assured? It's these ladies who see the empty tomb initially confusing and then see the risen Lord greatly encouraging. They already have the truth. They have grasped the resurrection when Jesus, 11 remaining disciples are still hiding in fear.

They have gotten marching orders, the instructions, go tell his disciples that he goes before them to Galilee, more on that next week. Because again, there are allegations of conflict. Didn't Jesus, don't I remember Jesus saying something about, you know, uh, you go to the end of John and he says, remain in Jerusalem until you receive power from on high.

Doesn't that ring a bell? Uh, well, is he telling them to go to Galilee or is he telling them to, uh, remain until Pentecost? Which is it? Oh, it's, it's a hopeless contradiction. You got to hear Bart Ehrman talking about, uh, some of these things. It's, it's, uh, really, uh, disappointing.

I'll put it that way that somebody with so much knowledge could, uh, both be led astray and lead others astray, uh, by these things. So, uh, we're, we're going to continue to compare the gospel accounts so that we can synthesize all of the events that happened. And also we'll quickly notice why Matthew includes what he includes relating to the theme and purpose of his account.

Why does Peter's gospel, Peter's account as recorded by John Mark, why does it emphasize and leave out the details that it includes and excludes? Again, you can figure this out for yourself. It's a very fruitful and, uh, encouraging and, and, and just very fascinating study. Uh, when you remember what is the purpose, what is the theme of

this account? Do you remember? We've reviewed it a number of times.

Matthew presents Jesus as the coming King, the conquering King, the Messiah of Israel, old Testament prophecy, fulfilled signs, manifest recognizable identity as the Messiah. This is Matthew. He is the, he is the, as you might say, once in future King in the, in the sense that he came and offered the kingdom.

It was not given because the people weren't ready. By the way, this is another thing we're going to look at, uh, this coming Wednesday night. If you're interested in the offer of the kingdom and the notion that, well, Israel lost the kingdom permanently because they rejected the Lord Jesus at his coming.

Uh, there is a direct scriptural, uh, refutation of that idea that will be going over Wednesday, but that is not true. Jesus came into his own and his own received. If not, therefore they get no kingdom.

The promises of God have fallen to the ground and are going to be fulfilled, you know, and they will quote the scripture. The kingdom will be taken from you and given to those bearing the fruits of it. Well, see, that's the church.

No, it's not. No, it's not. And, uh, we'll explain it on Wednesday.

If you're curious about that, that notion and people will notice the kingdom will be taken from you and given to those bearing its fruit. That's one verse taken out of its context. Um, he came into his own and his own received him, not therefore his own are never going to get the kingdom.

That's out of context. We'll see it Wednesday night, but there is a reason for these that what we're going to see also is that depending on which account you read in, uh, the approach to the tomb, uh, Bart Ehrman asks this question. Well, was the stone already rolled away when they arrived at the tomb, which is what Mark Luke and John say.

If you read Mark Luke or John, it appears that when the woman arrived, the stone is already gone. But Matthew seems to say that when they arrived, it was still there. And you have the earthquake and you have the descending angel and you have the fainting guards and the stone is rolled away and the guy sits on it and his face flashes like lightning that is not in any of the other accounts.

So this is a hopeless contradiction. Well, Mark says the ladies approach the tomb and on the way they say, who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. It was very large.

That's Mark 16 verses three and four. Luke 24, two says when the ladies arrived, they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They got there and found it rolled away.

Uh, in John on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Uh, I don't have to review our account in Matthew chapter 28, uh, except to point out something that I did not make explicit last week in verse two, behold, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord and so on. Doesn't this seem to be hopelessly contradictory because if Mary comes and the other women are with her, then is this not what they saw when they arrived and how can we reconcile these accounts? Well, let me give you a detail.

I did not mention last week, uh, from the Greek and that is that, uh, behold, and there was an earthquake that is an heiress tense. So there was an earthquake and it says for an angel, you have guard the explanatory post positive conjunctive particle for an angel on gloss having descended. This is an heiress participle.

What do you know for my frequent repetition of this rule about an heiress participle? The action of the heiress participle does what precedes the action of the main verb. The heiress participle precedes the action. So this is properly translated.

There was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord having descended, descended previously having descended. What is the main verb? There was a great earthquake for an angel having descended out of heaven and having come. That's also an heiress active participle.

I didn't mention that last week. Uh, should have, but didn't the angel having descended and having come rolled away the stone. There's an earthquake and there is the rolling way of the stone.

Those are your main verbs. The angel had already come in and already descended. You get the idea that his arrival triggers this earthquake and the earthquake is a part of the rolling away of the stone that had all taken place and he was sitting.

This is an imperfect. It's ongoing action in past time. So all of this had taken place and he was sitting upon the stone, sitting upon it.

Then you go on to his appearance and this is the imperfect. He was continuing to appear like lightning and his clothing continues to appear white as snow. Those are imperfects.

So the sitting, the flashing, the white garments, this is the ongoing action. You get the idea. This is the condition when the women arrive, it does not explicitly say that they saw the angel descend.

And I think I said that earlier, and it was a failure to pay attention to the Greek, this having taken place. So let's say the women were not present. How would we know that an angel descended and rolled away the stone? And when they arrived, he is sitting there flashing and wearing his white garments on that rolled stone.

Who would be the witnesses? If the women didn't see the angel descend and roll away the stone, how do we know that that's what happened? Who was there absolutely indubitably and without question when those events took place? Those guards who trembled, stiffened and fell over like dead men. What else do we know that only the guards could have known? Remember in Matthew 28 verse 11, while they were going, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests, all the things that had happened. 28, 12 of Matthew, when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers saying, tell them his disciples came at night and stole him away while we slept.

If this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure. So they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

So how could Matthew have come by this information? Who is among the group of elders? These elders are your scribes and Pharisees, chief priests, Sadducees, the elders. These are members of the Sanhedrin. Who's going to find this out? Who is a member of the Sanhedrin that you manifestly know? Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea moves in these circles.

He's a wealthy man. He's got the rock cut tomb. He has the status to go to Pilate and request the body.

John knows people who work for the elders and work for the priests. And this private conversation by some of those elders who had believed in Jesus, but did so secretly for fear of consequences, would have heard the interview with the soldiers. What would the soldiers say? Well, there we were by the fire.

And I know you're not going to believe this, but an angel descended out of heaven. There was an earthquake and we were knocked out. We literally passed out.

And they're worried about this because as Roman soldiers, they can be executed for going unconscious, i.e. falling asleep on duty. And they can say, well, this was a supernatural knockout. We didn't fall asleep.

We were wide awake. We stand watches all the time. We don't sleep.

We know it's a death penalty if you fall asleep on watch. If you lose your charge for whatever reason, you can be executed and you find the record of this in Acts later on when some of the apostles are released, the guards will be executed for failing to keep the prisoners secure. These guys are paid and sent out with the story and they're worried about being executed.

And the elders say, we'll take care of that. We'll make you secure. But this story leaks out.

So who would have seen the angels and the earthquake and the rolling away of the stone for certain? The soldiers. It isn't necessary that the women saw it. And I'm leaning toward the view that that is what happened.

When the women arrived, they found the stone rolled away as it is explicitly said in the other three gospels. And these things having happened due to these heiross participles in Matthew, that is another way to reconcile the accounts. But what is important? You can quibble over minor details who saw what, when, what are the essentials that are not in dispute amongst all four accounts? You can't find a contradiction.

Jesus died. He was really dead. His dead body was prepared for burial and put into the tomb at the end of crucifixion day.

It rested in the tomb three days and three nights. And early in the morning on the first day of the week, the tomb was found to be open. The body was manifestly gone.

These ladies were witnesses and were instructed to go and tell the disciples what they had found. Peter and John go and find it as the women had described. By the way, there's another funny explanation that it was so dark that when the ladies went to visit the tomb, they got the tomb wrong.

They went to the wrong tomb. They went to an empty tomb instead of the tomb where Jesus was actually buried. There are so many problems with that.

I'm not even going to dignify it with a response. Among which, if reports of Jesus' resurrection start circulating, the real tomb guarded by real Roman soldiers, all the Jews or the Romans have to do is crack it open and say, you smell that? That's your Jesus right there. Going to the wrong tomb, please.

And remember, these ladies are explicitly said to be witnesses to the taking down of the body, the preparation of the body, and the sealing up of the tomb by Joseph himself. Joseph knows where his own tomb is. These ladies know where it is.

You don't think they're going to be able to find it again on Sunday morning? Oh, they went to the wrong tomb. That's how this whole legend and myth and rumor got started. They just made a mistake.

These flibbertigibbet, they're too much levity and boldness. This is why we don't use them for witnesses in court. They don't know what they're doing.

They don't know what they're saying. Not so. Well, what conclusion do we draw when we examine these scriptures which are written for our instruction, which are profitable for reproof, correction, doctrine, instruction? What do we conclude? My faith assures me that the central facts, could there be a bug or two on the windshield? If you remember when we did 1 Samuel, how many textual problems did we see in that book? It is the

most poorly preserved book of the entire Old Testament.

And yet, we've done 1 Samuel together twice. And it fits together. It's such an inspiring, interesting, uh, indispensable book.

You don't understand the title of the Lord Jesus, Son of David, if you don't understand 1 Samuel. Everything about David is in 1 Samuel, along with Chronicles and so on. But bugs on the windshield, chips and cracks, we say, well, but there seems to be a little imperfection here.

What are you looking at through the windshield? Stop looking at the bugs on the windshield. You're sure enough going to run into the ditch. Look through and past the windshield.

What is the essential information that all four Gospels unanimously, indisputably tell us? The song he lives that we hear so often on Resurrection Sunday starts out, I serve a risen Savior. He's in the world today. I know that he is living, whatever men may say.

I see his hand of mercy. I hear his voice of cheer, rejoice. And just the time I need him, he's always near the truth of the resurrection.

This is what Paul focuses on. He doesn't say, you know, I need to go around and make sure all of the details are correct. Paul says, Christ is indeed risen from the dead Christ, the first fruits.

And guess what? Because of his resurrection being sure and certain, our resurrection is sure and certain Christ, the first fruits. And then those who are Christ's at his coming, then comes the end. All power and authority is going to be delivered over.

And the Lord Jesus is going to rule and reign. And if we qualify, we will be with him in that time. Whatever the challenges, whatever the tests, the joys and the sorrows of this life, this is our sure and certain foundation.

Our house is built on the rock of a living Lord, a risen Savior who has ascended and is seated at our Father's right hand, representing us, interceding for us, arguing on our behalf, advocating for us. We have an advocate with the Father. How much visible physical proof do we have for those truths? I don't have it and I don't need it because I have seen the validity.

Paul says in Romans, what may be known of God, his eternal power and Godhood is manifest in creation. If you don't see the event itself, and I'll close with this thought, who saw the actual event of the resurrection? Jesus awakened from the dead, sit up, set aside the wrappings and the face covering and leave the tomb. Who saw it? Not the ladies, not the guards.

Nobody saw that. You know why the guards didn't see it? When he left, the tomb was still closed. The angel and the earthquake come to reveal the now empty for a good while tomb.

Who saw the resurrection? Nobody. How do we know the resurrection is an actual event? In the same way we know about the invisible God, the effects are visible and that is what motivates our faith. I know that he is living, whatever men may say, because I see the effects.

I look around in creation and I see the power and the beauty and the symmetry and the wisdom and the design of a perfect and loving God, balancing nature, making all things good, rain that falls on the just and the unjust, the seasons, everything fruitful in its season and in its time. I see the effects. Is the resurrection a fact? Look at the effects.

Do you think the disciples would have gone to martyrs' deaths? Do you think the early church would have maintained their faith under persecution unto death for a myth, a legend, something that could easily be disproved within their own lifetime? Plenty of eyewitnesses. Jesus, the risen Lord, was seen of upwards of 500 people. Well, can their testimony be trusted? Was it a mass hallucination? Look at the effect of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus for the last 2,000 years.

Look at the effect of God in creation. You can place your faith and confidence because you are a person of faith, because you love God in the veracity of the account, in the truth of these events. And because of that, I can trust God today and tomorrow and every day until we come face-to-face with the Lord Jesus and hopefully, if we qualify, are presented faultless before the throne of grace.

Something to look forward to. We'll close here in a word of prayer and resume our study next week. Father, thank you for the power of your word to give us grace and peace.

As the Apostle Paul so often opened his letters, we receive grace and peace from you and from the Lord Jesus Christ. And it gives us confidence. It brings us joy.

And it is a joy, a peace, a confidence that does not rest on logical deduction or the kinds of arguments that the world has to rely on to bolster their beliefs. We have your presence. We have your power.

We have your spirit. And we have that wonderful privilege and opportunity of having the indwelling presence of yourself, your son, and your spirit. We pray that reflecting on these truths will motivate us and encourage us and bring us that joy in the hours and days ahead.

And we ask your blessing on each one in this fellowship and the intervening time until we meet again. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.