

The Resurrection Tour

Overview

After his resurrection, our Lord appears to his disciples in different places: Galilee in Matthew, Jerusalem in Mark, Luke, and Acts, both in John. The visit to Galilee comes between two sets of appearances in Jerusalem (Table 1, chart). Why these different venues?

	Region	Matt 28	Mark 16	Luke 24	John	Acts	1 Cor 15
1. At the tomb	Judea	1-10	9-11		20:11-18	1:3	(4)
2. Emmaus			12-13	13-22			
(Peter)				34			5a
3. Upper Room (Day 1)			14	36-46	20:19-25		5b
4. Upper Room (Day 8)					20:26		
5. Sea of Galilee	Galilee				21:1-22		
6. Mountain in Galilee		16-20	15-18	47-48			6
(James)							7a
7. Jerusalem & Bethany	Judea		19	49-53		1:4-11	7b
(Paul)						9:1-6	8

Table 1: The Resurrection Appearances

- Partly, no doubt, to demonstrate his promise of Matt 28:20, “I am with you”; in the places where they had followed him during the three years, there he appears to assure them of his continued presence “always, even unto the end of the age.”
- In addition, the setting often contributes to the message.

Our main purpose here is to reflect on the main theme of what he taught them in each place and understand how the venue emphasizes and reinforces the message.

Initial Appearances in Jerusalem: “Fear Not”

Each venue reflects a different object of fear (Table 2, chart)

At the Tomb, Matt 28:1-10: The Supernatural

Matthew’s account emphasizes “fear” (vv. 4, 5, 8, 10)

Place	Reference	Object
Tomb	Matt 28:4 for fear of [the angel]	The supernatural (our sin)
Emmaus	Luk 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:	Failure of God’s promises
Upper Room	John 20:19 for fear of the Jews	Opposition

Table 2: Objects of Fear in Judea

Fear at seeing an angel is a common theme throughout the OT :

Jdg 6:22 And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

Jdg 13:21-22 Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD. 22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

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It is fundamentally the fear of fallen Adam, hiding himself in the garden after his sin (the very first reference to “fear” in the Bible) :

Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

The angel’s response to this fear is the fact of the resurrection.

Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

The resurrection shows that our sin is gone, and because of this, we need not fear before God or his representatives.

On the Road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-32: Failure of God’s Promises

Note his initial salutation to them, v.17: “What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”

Their fear is expressed in 20-21. Peter had spoken for them all when he confessed Jesus as “the Christ,” the Messiah. They had fervently embraced this fundamental hope of Israel, founded on OT promises. What are they now to conclude about God’s faithfulness?

The Lord’s response (25-27) is to show that his death, rather than invalidating God’s promises, is part of the plan foretold by the prophets.

In the Upper Room, John 20:19-20, 26-27: Persecution

Twice; on Easter Sunday (John 20:19-20), and again a week later (John 20:26-27).

Note their fear, John 20:19, “for fear of the Jews,” shown by the locked door (both times). The disciples are held in Jerusalem by the Law, which commands a seven-day feast after Passover (Lev 23:5-8; Deut 16:16), including holy convocations in the temple, where they will be exposed to the Jewish priests. He reassures them twice (19, 21), “Peace be unto you.”

His response to this fear is to show that he is risen. Since the power of God is able to bring him back from the dead, the most powerful enemy of all, they should have no fear of any earthly foe.

Importance

The first lesson of the Resurrection is that we need not fear. We are prone to being a fearful people: fearful of our own sin, fearful that God’s promises will fail, fearful of human persecution. In all three cases, the resurrection of Jesus Christ should calm our fears and give us strength and courage.

Appearances in Galilee: “Serve”

Background

Before the passion, the Lord told them that he would meet them again in Galilee (Matt 26:32), and Matthew emphasizes this in his account of the resurrection (28:7,10). He met them twice in Galilee. Both appearances remind them of their call to serve him (Table 3, chart).

By the Sea, John 21:2-6, 15-17

John describes this as the third appearance of the Lord to the eleven (v.14), after the two in Jerusalem, so this appearance must come before that recorded in Matthew.

They have returned to Galilee, but there is no sign of the Lord, and so they turn their hand to their old craft. There the

Lord appears to them after a fruitless night of toil. The episode recalls the incident when he had first called them to be “fishers of men” (Luke 5:1-11). This call is still incumbent on them. In particular, he calls Peter to feed his sheep (vv. 15-17).

Original	After Resurrection
Luk 5:4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ... 10 ... And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.	Joh 21:3 They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. ... 15 Jesus saith to Simon Peter, ... Feed my lambs.
Mat 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ... 10:1 And when he had called unto <i>him</i> his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. ... 5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, ... 7 ... as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.	Mat 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. ... 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ...

Table 3: Reminders of their Call in Galilee

On the Mountain, Matt 28:16-20

Again, there is an echo of his earlier ministry, the sermon on the mount. Matthew places this right after the calling of the disciples by the sea of Galilee (Matt 4), where he again gave them a supernatural catch of fish. That sermon appears to have been intended to prepare them for their ministry, and so once more he gathers them into a mountain that he might send them out. Then, when he sends them out to preach in Matthew 10, he assures them of power and commands them to go and preach, as he does here.

Importance

Galilee was the origin of the Lord’s ministry, the place where he did most of his mighty works, and where his popularity grew. It was there he ministered with the disciples to teach, heal, and feed; and from there that he sent them out two by two into the villages. The importance of commissioning them now in this place is to emphasize that his work is to continue, through them. They are not to go back to what they were before. Now they are called to serve him.

This commission from the risen Lord has never been withdrawn. If he had stayed in the grave, one might think his message was over. But he is risen, and we must now carry on.

Final Appearances in Judea, Luke 24:49-53: “Live in the Spirit”

The final appearances find the Lord with the Eleven back in Jerusalem. Luke’s record merges the intermediate appearances (including the recommissioning in Galilee) into a single narrative, but it is clear that the Lord ascends to heaven from a spot near Bethany (24:50), after urging them to wait for the promise of the Father.

Luk 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued with power** from on high. 50 And he led them out as far as to

Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and **carried up into heaven**.

Acts begins with the same exhortation, to wait for the Spirit (1:4-5, 8) before beginning the service to which they are committed in Matt 28.

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with *them*, [he] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. ... 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The point of this appearance is thus that the ministry committed to us is not to be in the strength of the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit, whose power was demonstrated in the resurrection:

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of him **that raised up Jesus from the dead** dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Summary

The Lord has promised, “Lo, I am with you.” His presence is inescapable, and he demonstrated that after his resurrection by showing up repeatedly, not only in and around Jerusalem, but in Galilee, to encourage his disciples. As these appearances took place, he gave them three lessons that are precious to us.

In his first appearances in and around Jerusalem, he taught them, “Fear not.” His resurrection means that our sin is gone. God’s holy presence is no longer something for us to dread. We can come boldly before the throne of grace. And assured of his favor, we certainly need not fear men.

In his appearances in Galilee, he reminded them of his original call to them: “Serve.” By the sea, he urges Peter to care for the believers, reflecting the internal service that we owe to the body of Christ. On the mountain, he directs their attention outward to “all nations.”

When he meets them again in Judaea, he instructs them in the resource that will enable them to carry out this mission, the Holy Spirit. The service that he requires of us is not to be carried out in the strength of the flesh, but by the power of the Spirit, the same power that raised our Savior from the dead.

Because he is risen, we need not fear, but should serve him, in the power of the Holy Spirit.