

Harmonizing the Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection

According to the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity. If the resurrection never happened, Christianity crumbles. Do the gospel accounts of the resurrection match, or are there major contradictions that could hurt the historical reliability of the resurrection? Skeptics for a long time have said yes. Bart Ehrman, chair of the religious studies program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill says,

Nowhere are the differences among the Gospels more clear than in the accounts of Jesus' resurrection. I often have my first-year students do a simple comparison exercise in which they list everything said in each of the four Gospels about the events between the time Jesus was buried and the end of the Gospels...There are scads of differences among the four accounts, and some of these differences are discrepancies that cannot be (or ever) reconciled.¹

Skeptics feel so confident that the Gospel accounts cannot be reconciled, that atheist spokesman Dan Barker put out a public financial challenge on his website writing this:

I HAVE AN EASTER challenge for Christians. My challenge is simply this: tell me what happened on Easter. I am not asking for proof. My straightforward request is merely that Christians tell me exactly what happened on the day that their most important doctrine was born...

The conditions of the challenge are simple and reasonable. In each of the four Gospels, begin at Easter morning and read to the end of the book: Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20-21. Also read Acts 1:3-12 and Paul's tiny version of the story in I Corinthians 15:3-8. These 165 verses can be read in a few moments. Then, without omitting a single detail from these separate accounts, write a simple, chronological narrative of the events between the resurrection and the ascension: what happened first, second, and so on; who said what, when; and where these things happened.

Since the gospels do not always give precise times of day, it is permissible to make educated guesses. The narrative does not have to pretend to present a perfect picture--it only needs to give at least one plausible account of all of the facts.²

¹ Bart Ehrman *Jesus Interrupted* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 47.

² www.losingfaithinfaith.com

The goal of this research paper then is to show that Gospel accounts can be reconciled by providing a chronological narrative of the events between the resurrection and the ascension.

According to resurrection expert Gary Habermas, the best scholarly work on harmonizing the resurrection stories is by John Wenham called the *Easter Enigma*. Wenham is a biblical and Greek scholar who lived in Jerusalem specifically to piece together the resurrection accounts. It is his book by which this paper is based upon.

By way of introduction to the four gospel stories of the resurrection, each gospel should be read with the view that each gospel author picked which part of the resurrection story they wanted emphasize. John tells the resurrection from the perspective of Mary Magdalene. Luke gives a very condensed and grand overview from the resurrection to the ascension by-passing the appearances in Galilee. The gospels of Matthew and Mark highlight key events and should not be read as a minute by minute recounting of what happened within the forty days after the resurrection, but big chronological leaps from one major event to another within the forty days. This is why simply reading Matthew and Mark can seem confusing. This also why the resurrection accounts should not be read horizontally comparing the four gospels in a strict timeline as Ehrman asks his students to do. Knowing this background information makes the resurrection story fit together nicely.

Before Wenham's detailed chronological events are presented, Barker raises a question about a contradiction: "What time did the women visit the tomb?"

Matthew: "as it began to dawn" (28:1) Mark: "very early in the morning . . . at the rising of the sun" (16:2, KJV); "when the sun had risen" (NRSV); "just after sunrise" (NIV) Luke: "very early in the morning" (24:1, KJV) "at early dawn" (NRSV) John: "when it was yet dark" (20:1)

According to Wenham, darkness and light are relative terms. While one writer would say “early dawn”, another might say such as John “when it was yet dark.” Plus, it very well could be that it was dark when the women started out, and started to become light when they arrived at the tomb.³ One theory that Wenham has that solves the time issue is Mary Magdalene, Clopas, the other Mary are staying in Bethany Saturday evening. While it is still dark as John says, Clopas and the women set out for John’s house in Jerusalem. Clopas stays at John’s house while the two Marys join Salome from John’s house and leave for the tomb through the Gennath Gate. Joanna is only mentioned by Luke, and according to Wenham, Joanna was one of well-off women who helped finance Jesus’ ministry (Luke 8:3).⁴ Therefore, since Joanna is one of the women mentioned early Sunday morning, Joanna (along with Susanna, Luke 8:3) could have been staying at the Hasmonean palace in Jerusalem, not at John’s house. Having talked to the other women before early Sunday morning, Joanna and Susanna leave for the tomb “very early in morning” (and possible pick a few more women) through the Ephraim Gate since they did not have as far as a walk as did Mary Magdalene from Bethany. Very close in time then the two teams of women arrive at

Matthew 28:1-4

28:1 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. **2** And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. **4** And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men

Mark 16:1-3

16:1 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”

Luke 24:1-2

24:1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **2** And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

John 20:1-2

20:1 Now 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 **2** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” from the tomb.

³ John Wenham *Easter Enigma* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1992), 81.

⁴ The financial stability of these women to buy the spices is another reason why they were involved in going to the tomb early Sunday morning.

the tomb.⁵

With this background, here are the chronological events according to Wenham:

1. Mary Magdalene, the other Mary (mother of James), and Clopas (Mary's husband; John 19:25) leave from Bethany while it is still dark.
2. The Angels come and roll the stone away while the women are in route. The guards flew. Jesus walks out of the tomb.
3. The two Mary's now joined by Salome from John's house in Jerusalem leave for the tomb through the Gennath Gate.
4. The two Mary's and Salome arrive at the tomb and see the stone rolled away. The angels at this moment choose to stay invisible.
5. Mary Magdalene suddenly runs away back to John's house to report the stone rolled away from the entrance of the tomb.
6. Joanna and the other women (such as Susanna; Luke 8:3) arrive to the tomb from the Ephraim Gate to meet the other women

Both Ehrman and Barker at this point believe there are discrepancies in the texts about how many women were present Easter Sunday morning. If the gospels said only Mary Magdalene was present at the empty tomb, and Luke wrote that only Salome was present at the empty tomb, then there grounds for a real contradiction. John highlights Mary Magdalene, Matthew mentions two women, Mark mentions three women, and Luke names three women but says others were present. One example would be a multi-car accident seen by many witnesses. If one eyewitness said there was only one car, and another eyewitness said there were only eight cars, there would be contradiction. However if one eyewitness

⁵ Wenham, *Easter Enigma*, 39, 82-83.

talks about driver A, and one eyewitness talks about driver A, B, and C there is no contradiction in the story. Similarly, the four gospel writers writing about the resurrection event do likewise.

Also many have wondered why a group of women followers of Jesus would be so eager to visit the tomb Sunday morning. Both Luke and John record why. Jesus was crucified on a Friday morning and died early afternoon. The Jewish Sabbath started sundown Friday night. Preparing a body for burial was a long and tedious process. And according to Jewish Old Testament Law there could be no handling of dead bodies on the Sabbath. By the time Jesus was taken down from the cross and the body given to Joseph, the women disciples could only prepare some of the spices and quickly wrap the body before the Sabbath. Luke 23:56 says the women came home after laying Jesus in the tomb to prepare the other spices necessary for a proper burial. Therefore, once the Sabbath was over early Sunday morning, these devoted women set off to properly bury their Lord and friend. Led by devotion, they walked hurriedly to the tomb suddenly realizing once they would arrive the large stone would still be present in front of the entrance. Upon arrival seeing the stone rolled away, Mary Magdalene in shock of Jesus' body being stolen fled to Peter and John right away.

Matthew 28:5-6

5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

Mark 16:4-6

4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. **5** And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. **6** And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.

Luke 24:3-7

3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? **6** He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."

7. All the women go into the tomb except Mary Magdalene who left.
8. Two angels appear to the women inside the tomb and deliver their message.

Skeptics of the New Testament for a long time have pointed out the contradictions in story of the angels at the tomb. Were there two angels or one? Were they dazzling angels or a man? Was the angel sitting or standing? Both Ehrman and Barker see this as a major problem for Christians. Like the amount of women at the tomb, there is a difference between a contradiction and an apparent contradiction. It appears to be a contradiction, but the texts do not say there was *only* one angel, or *only* two angels. Matthew and Mark emphasize the one angel's message, but Luke chooses to give the full picture as there were actually two angels involved with the women. Wenham makes a good point here:

It needs to be remembered that we are dealing with two descriptions of an event, and not with two witnesses replying to cross-examination. If witnesses, who had been in the tomb at the same time, had been asked independently, "Precisely how many men did you see?" and had given different answers, that would have shown one or other to be unreliable. But these witnesses are not answering the question "How many?", they are giving (as all descriptions must be) incomplete descriptions of a complex event.⁶

Though Wenham's commentary is probably correct that the writers were only giving an incomplete description of a complex event, here is a possible solution to harmonize the angelic gospel accounts. According to Matthew, the first angel appeared in all his blazing glory to frighten the soldiers, rolled back the stone, sat on it, and then disappeared as the women were coming. When the women entered the tomb, it appeared empty but then the second angel involved appeared as a man sitting down with bright or amazing clothes to reveal he was an angel, but his face was as a man to come across as peaceful. Once the human looking angel got their attention and were amazed, the other

⁶ Ibid., 87.

angel who rolled back the stone appeared alongside the more human looking angel. Both angels became dazzling in their appearance and the more human looking angel stood up next to angel who moved away the stone and gave the message to go back and tell the disciples the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Matthew 28:7-8

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Mark 16:7-8

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Luke 24:8

8 And they remembered his words

9. The women leave the tomb and go back through the Ephraim Gate to tell the disciples at John's house that Jesus has risen from the dead through the Ephraim Gate (This would take about 10 minutes).

At this point in the narrative, Ehrman makes a bold claim that Mark's point about the women being afraid and saying nothing to anyone is irreconcilable. Wenham's answer to this problem is as simple as the women said nothing to anyone on the way, or they said nothing to themselves as they walked to John's house. Once they arrived they couldn't keep it in and told the news.⁷ Or, as John Haley writes upon coming back and seeing the depression and gloom of the disciples, they feared rejection and waited a moment before telling them.⁸ Either way, to say the statement by Mark is irreconcilable is unwarranted.

10. Mary Magdalene has already arrived at John's house telling the disciples the tomb is empty and someone could of stolen Jesus' body.

⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁸ John W. Haley *Alleged Discrepancies* (Springdale, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House), 329.

John 20:2-10

2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” **3** So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. **4** Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, **7** and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes.

11. Peter, John, and Mary run to the tomb through the Gennath Gate and see the grave clothes. The angels are invisible.

12. Peter and John go back home (John 20:10).

John 20:11-18

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” **14** Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

13. Mary Magdalene stays back by the tomb. The two angels appear and tell her the good news that Jesus has risen.

14. Mary Magdalene leaves the tomb and meets the resurrected Christ (**THE FIRST APPEARANCE**).

15. While Mary Magdalene is encountering Jesus by the empty tomb, the team of women have arrived at John’s house sharing the angelic good news.

16. Mary Magdalene obeys Jesus and runs back to John’s house telling everyone, both the disciples and the women, “I have seen the Lord!” (John 20:18).

Luke 24:9-12

9 and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. **10** Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, **11** but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. **12** But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

17. Upon hearing the news from Mary Magdalene, Peter got up and ran to the tomb a second time.⁹ Peter begins wondering or marveling of what this all could mean.

Mark 16:9-11

9 Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. **10** She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. **11** But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

18. Peter still a doubter, and the rest of the disciples such as Clopas still do not believe the women's testimony.

19. Still Sunday morning, some of the women (possibly Mary and Salome) leave for Bethany to tell the good news to the other nine disciples staying in Bethany

Matthew 28:9-10

9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

20. Jesus appears to the women on the road going to Bethany outside of Jerusalem
(**SECOND APPEARANCE**, first group appearance).

Skeptics have questioned the commission and timing of seeing Jesus in Galilee. Since the empty tomb and first appearances have been in and outside Jerusalem, the other nine disciples decide to come to Jerusalem to hear first-hand reports. Also as Wenham says the statement by Jesus to go to Galilee and "there the disciples will see him" should be viewed as a promise, not a precise command. Plus, it was the feast of unleavened bread for six days following the Passover by which Jews would be coming and staying in Jerusalem.¹⁰

21. Roman soldiers report to the Chief Priests what happened (Matthew 28:11-15).

22. Clopas and an unnamed disciple (possibly Luke) decide to leave for Emmaus.

⁹ This interpretation is a break from Wenham's story which does not include a second trip to the tomb by Peter.

¹⁰ Wenham, *Easter Enigma*, p. 98-99..

Mark 16:12-13

12 After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Luke 24:13-31

13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, **Jesus himself drew near and went with them.** 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 **And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.**

23. Jesus appears to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (**THIRD APPEARANCE**)

Luke 24:32-35

32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

24. The two disciples decide to go back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples (It is late afternoon now).

25. Jesus appears to the Apostle Peter privately (1 Corinthians 15:5 "...he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve." Also, Luke 24:34). (**FOURTH APPEARANCE**).

26. The Disciples are now all gathered together in Jerusalem Sunday night.

Luke 24:36-43

36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why

John 20:19-23

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with

27. Jesus appears to the disciples in the upper room Sunday night and eats fish in front of them. (**FIFTH APPEARANCE**, second group appearance).

28. The disciples stay in Jerusalem for a week during the feast of unleavened bread.

Thomas is now with the disciples.

John 20:24-29

24 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "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."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." **28** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

29. Jesus appears to the disciples again in Jerusalem with Thomas present. Jesus allows Thomas to touch him (**SIXTH APPEARANCE**, second group appearance).

30. Inference: Jesus dismisses the disciples and tells them to go to Galilee. The disciples settled in by Wednesday and start to fish again.

John 20:30-31

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so 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

21:1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. **2** Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. **3** Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. **4** Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." **6** He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. **7** That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. **8** The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. **9** When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. **10** Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." **11** So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. **14** This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. (Verses 15-25 omitted)

31. Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias and cooks breakfast for the disciples (**SEVENTH APPEARANCE**, third group appearance John 21:14).

32. Inference: Jesus tells the disciples to gather the believers from Galilee and meet altogether on a specific hillside by Galilee large enough for a big crowd (Matthew 28:16 – “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go”).

In 1 Corinthians 15:6 is the statement by Paul of Jesus appearing to 500 believers. The Bible is silent on the thought of Jesus appearing to 500 isolated believers scattered throughout Judea. Instead Wenham makes a thoughtful interpretation of Matthew 28:16-20 as not the “Great Commission” to his disciples before He leaves, but “The Great Recommissioning” to the eleven disciples and all the faithful 500 followers of Jesus’ ministry in the Galilee region.

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **17** And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. **18** And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in [2] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Wenham writes...

When the great day came they quietly gathered in their hundreds on a remote mountainside to await their risen Lord. As in the case of the appearance to the women, Jesus seems to have approached them from a distance. The eleven evidently recognize him at once and prostrated themselves in worship. Some of the others, though fully aware that Jesus had risen, were slower to let themselves believe that the approaching figure was really he. The reference to doubts provides a background for the great words of encouragement which are to follow.¹¹

33. Here then on this mountain in Galilee Jesus reforms his army and commissions them to scatter and reach the nations in His name (**EIGHTH APPEARANCE**, fourth group appearance).

¹¹ Ibid., 115.

34. Jesus appears and talks with his half brother James personally (1 Corinthians 15:7 **NINTH APPEARANCE**).

Some time later on Day 39 / 40...

35. Jesus appears to His Disciples for a fifth and last time probably in the upper room (**TENTH APPEARANCE**, fifth group appearance.)

Mark 16:14-18

14 Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. **15** And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. **16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. **17** And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; **18** they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Luke 24:44-49

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Wenham writes...

After Jesus had appeared once more in the upper room the fleeting hours that followed must have been bathed in the bliss of love and trust, the eleven learning yet more of the wonderful purposes of God, and encouraged by the promise of miraculous powers to aid them in their preaching. As dawn began to break...they left the house and once more followed the fateful route which they had taken on the night of the Last Supper. Jesus led them out of the city gate, down into the Kidron valley, past the Garden of Gethsemane, up the Mount of Olives, and finally out as far as Bethany...The region of the traditional site on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city seems to fit the gospel data.¹²

36. Jesus leads out His disciples to the Mount of Olives and commissions them one last time.

¹² Ibid., 123.

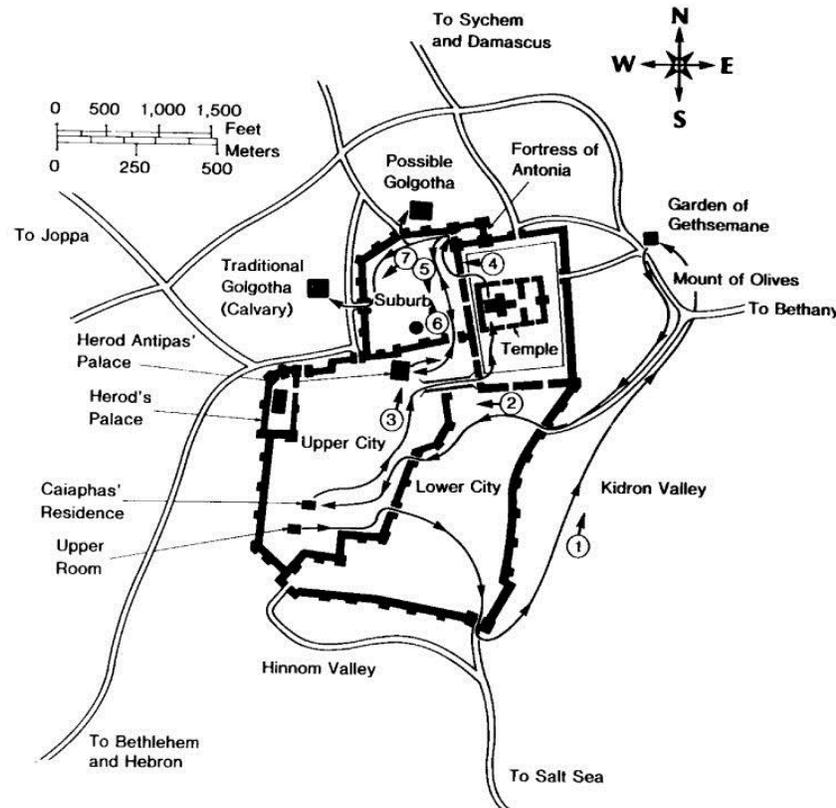
Luke 24:50-54 The Ascension

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.
51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.
52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God

The Ascension Acts 1:12

37. Jesus Christ Ascends into Heaven in front of His disciples on the Mount of Olives.
38. Two years later, Jesus appears to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9, 1 Corinthians 15:8, **ELEVENTH APPEARANCE**).

In Conclusion, Wenham's outline does take some interpretation of the events, but it does flow well and uses all the 165 verses Barker asks for without stretching or changing the text. It also can be shown that resurrection difficulties can be solved and Ehrman's challenge of certain texts can be reconciled.¹³



¹³ Wenham's book tells his story of the resurrection accounts. This research paper takes the Bible, Wenham's book, and my own interpretation and created a 38 point outline.