

Matthew 28:1-10

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[0:00] What a topic this morning. Heavenly Father, I am somewhat daunted by this topic, as well as being thrilled and overjoyed.

! And I just pray, Lord, that you will give me the right words! And that you will impress upon our minds yet again the importance of the resurrection and its effect.

And that over this session and the next, you will confirm in our hearts how we can defend the resurrection to those who doubt it. Father, be with us and be in our minds and cause us to receive your word.

I just ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So, Matthew 28. To study this, it fills me with huge excitement, as well as a sense of foreboding.

And the reason I say foreboding is, well, let's deal with the hope first, then the foreboding. In Ephesians 2, if you turn to Ephesians 2, it's going to be a while before we turn to Matthew 28.

[1:10] Ephesians chapter 2, and we're just going to read verses 4 to 6, which say this, If the resurrection is true, then we are raised with him.

He didn't only raise himself by his own power, but he has raised us. Now, we're not living in the fullness of that yet, but we are raised only because he is raised.

If he's not raised, then we're not raised. So, if he can raise himself, he can raise me. If he is able to carry out this fulfillment of all the prophetic promises to the Jews and the world, he can also fulfill those promises to me and in me.

If this is nothing more than a huge hoax perpetrated upon mankind by religion, in 1 Corinthians 15, 19, we read, We are among all men most to be pitied.

Because we have placed our heart and soul commitment and belief into something that is merely a hoax. And the difference is as stark as that.

[2:47] And that's what a lot of Christians don't get. And it's certainly what the world doesn't get. Which is, if he's not raised, we are stuffed. There's just no way for us.

We're believing in a hoax, a lie. We've been persuaded of something that's not true. But, according to the Bible, if you turn to Romans 10 and verse 9, book of Romans chapter 10, what it says there is, If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

So this incredible, almost unbelievable thing of a man under his own power raising himself from the dead is essential for a Christian to believe in order to be saved.

The most unbelievable thing is the thing we must believe. Now, I'm pleased to say that God has given us a huge amount of evidence that we can say, yes, we believe it.

You see, the reason I'm daunted by this as well as overjoyed by it is it's the one thing that everybody will ridicule us about. You believe in what? You believe in a resurrection? Come on.

[4:11] John Lennox, the professor of mathematics, was debating Richard Dawkins. And in the summing up, John Lennox expressed the necessity to believe in a resurrection.

And Richard Dawkins, the scientist, allegedly, responded by saying to the crowd, well, there you are.

He believes in a resurrection. And it was a point of total ridicule. This man, this man, this mathematic professor, come on, he believes in a resurrection.

Why would you side with him in this debate? If it's simply a strange belief with no evidential foundation, we have got nothing to offer the unbelieving world, and we should burn our Bibles today and go elsewhere.

And the only ingredient of the whole gospel message that sets Christianity apart from any other religion is the resurrection. Lots of people have died.

[5:11] You can go and you can go and you can go allegedly to the bread, to the grave of Muhammad. You can go allegedly to the grave of Buddha. All of the people down the years who've been kind of lauded as something special, like Confucius, they've all got a grave and the grave is still full.

And even the saints of the Old Testament, including David, has a grave and it's still got bones in it. There's only one that claims a resurrection.

And that should be, if you follow the world, it should be the one thing that says, not even worth bothering with. The Christian faith is not even worth bothering with because it talks about a resurrection.

And yet Jesus says, it's the one thing you must believe in in order to be saved. So you'll be glad to know, and you won't get to this part till next time, that he's given us loads of evidence that says you can safely believe this.

And the other thing the Bible says, and it's Peter that wrote it, he says you should be able to give an account for the hope that is within you to anyone who asks.

[6:20] And the only reason for a hope within us is the resurrection. So we are expected to be able to defend the resurrection as a doctrine.

Not just accept it. You see, we're accused of blind faith. We're accused of, well, you just believe it because the Bible says so. You don't have any evidence to back this up. We do.

You may not yet know it, but by the end of next week, I at least hope you will know enough to defend it and to give an account for the hope that is within you. So those who thought we were going to cover this subject in one week, you are going to be a little bit disappointed because it's going to go over two weeks.

So before we turn to this morning's passage, turn to 1 Corinthians 15, where the Apostle Paul, I'm probably going to read the first 28 verses or something like that.

The Apostle Paul expresses exactly the view that I've just expressed. And because he's expressed it in the Bible, it qualifies as a much more thorough treatise on the matter than I can give you.

[7:32] So he says this, Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, by which you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, which is a name for Peter, then to the Twelve, after that he appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.

Then he appeared to James, then to all the Apostles, and last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the Apostles, and not fit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me did not prove vain, but I laboured even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Whether then it was I or they, so we preach, and so you all believed. Now if Christ is preached, that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say, that there is no resurrection of the dead?

[9:05] And he's calling into question, their state of being. You're saying, you don't believe in the resurrection, and yet we preach that there is a resurrection. So he's dealing with the same, it's not a dilemma for us, because we believe in the resurrection, but it's the same question that we're asking.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. Now the crowd was full of Sadducees, as well as Pharisees, and the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection. So for their benefit, you're saying, if there isn't a resurrection, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain.

Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God, in other words, liars.

Because we testified against God, that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. So he's basically saying, everybody that's gone before you, if Christ hasn't been raised, they won't be raised.

[10:22] So they've all perished. There's no eternal future for them. If we have hoped in Christ in this life, only we are of all men most to be pitied.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. Now, when we do the Jewish feast, we'll get to this, but I'm just briefly mentioning here, the feast of the first fruits, was a feast in which, they would take the harvest of sheaves, and they would take one sheaf out of the harvest, and they would wave it before the Lord, as an act of thanksgiving, and God would bless them, and bless their harvest.

And whatever was true of the waved sheaf, was true of the whole harvest. And the same is true of the harvest of souls. He is our first fruits. So when he stood before the Lord as the first sheaf, he was standing there on our behalf.

If he wasn't raised, he never stood there, and he never was waved, and therefore he was never our first fruits. Do you see? This is, what I'm trying to get to, is just how important the resurrection is.

And I'm sure many of you already know this, but it bears repeating. Verse 21, For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

[11:44] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order, Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ at his coming.

Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom of God, hands, sorry, hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he has abolished all rule, and all authority and power.

For he must reign, until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished, is death. I'm going to stop there, because otherwise I'll get off into another Bible study entirely.

But the point of the resurrection is, it's the only thing that puts death under his, and therefore our, feet. There was a family that's just lost a dear daughter-in-law.

I am so blessed, because she's gone to a great place, and it's not ended for her. In fact, you could say it's only just beginning for her.

[12:50] So it's a source of, whilst we're sad she's not around, my goodness, she's going to have a great time with the Lord. And so we have cause to not only be sad for her loss, but rejoice at what she has gained, and the fact that we will see her again.

So I always like to boil things down to a simple statement, if we can. So effectively, if he did not rise, he's just another corpse.

And yet over the next week, this week and next, we will see that he prophesied almost every detail of this. In other words, he heralded his own death.

He marshaled his own death. A marshal is someone who directs traffic, someone who puts everything in the right place. He marshaled it. And he marshaled his own resurrection.

And again, the unbelievers would say, but you can't possibly believe this. Well, we can. And over this week and next, we will get to grips with just how believable this is, though incredible. It was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that said, once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.

[14:04] And we're in that realm here. We have something that is improbable, but it must be the truth. And we'll look more about that side of it next time.

If he was resurrected, he can only have been the Jewish Messiah. Was the only one that was prophesied to be resurrected. So he must have been the Messiah if he rose from the dead.

And God is very, very accomplished at placing us in a corner where we have to accept or reject his word at face value. He affords us no middle ground.

You will come across people who say, wow, Jesus, he was a nice guy. You know, he had some lovely values. He doesn't give us that option. He was either Messiah or he was a liar or perhaps a madman.

He had nothing to recommend him and certainly wouldn't be savior. So he had to be one or the other. And we are placed right in that corner where we have to decide, was he who he said he was or was he just a liar or a madman?

[15:14] And again, John Lennox, I do love the man, even though I disagree with him on two things. But he was being interviewed alongside an Anglican bishop. And the Anglican bishop said, you know, it's never really occurred to me why it's important for the resurrection to be literal.

I just feel that when I got, when I turned to Christ, I was resurrected in my spirit. And it never really occurred to me.

This is a high up bod in the church of England. You know, it's never occurred to me that this had to be literal. And you can imagine that John Lennox had a, had a quick response.

And he just pointed out that the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus was essential for the Christian faith. And for us, it's a belief in that that counts.

We're not, we weren't there to witness it, but we have to believe it in order to walk in salvation. And to believe it properly, faithfully, not just believe it like people believe if you hang a crystal in the corner, it will affect your house or, you know, but to believe it because of evidence.

[16:25] So there is a duty upon us to examine the evidence. And today we're going to look at what actually happened. And next week we'll look more at the evidence that it did happen. And it's all very well to claim something happened, but we need to get to how do we really know that it happened?

What's the evidence that it happened? And we're not going to touch on much of that side of it today. So we ended our last study in Matthew with Jesus having been killed by the Jews and the Romans. The trial process provided the religious leaders with many opportunities to recognize him as Messiah. He proved who he was by fulfilling so many prophecies, made centuries and in some cases millennia previously.

The sign above his cross testified that he had committed no crime. It simply said, Jesus, King of the Jews. There was normally, there would be a charge, thief or murderer, or above Jesus cross. There was no criminal charge. Both Pilate and Herod had found no fault in him. No evidence had been brought against him. And right at the point of his death, if you remember, four things happened simultaneously.

[17:38] At the point where he gave up the ghosts, immediately before he gave up the ghost, he cried out with a loud voice, Tetelestai, paid in full. It is finished.

That was number one. Number two, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, providing access for people to God for the first time.

Anyone can approach God. You don't need a priest anymore. The third thing that happened was the earth shook. There was an earthquake that shook the ground and the rocks split.

So everybody's got to remember there were three hours of darkness up to this point. So suddenly the lights have come on. He's cried out. The temple veil is torn.

The earth is shaking. The rocks are splitting. Everybody must have gone, what on earth is going on? And then we have the subject of where we're going to begin this morning, which is many of those who had died were seen walking in the streets of the city.

[18:42] And I'm starting there because it shows us, if we turn to Matthew now, and turn to 27 to begin with, and verse 52.

So start with verse 51. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming out of the tombs, after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. So people began to rise from the dead and were seen wandering the streets.

And it seems from reading this, we're not sure of the precise timeline, but between this point and his resurrection, so over the three-day period, people are kind of, oh, what are you doing here? I thought you were dead. And so by doing this, whatever the timing was, and people get into all sorts of arguments about the timing of things around the resurrection.

[19:46] I'm not going to deal hugely with that. If we want an in-depth study on that, we'll probably do it one Thursday night. But God showed that he was into resurrection, that the destiny of men who have died is to be resurrected.

Now, the Jews always believed in a final resurrection, and it was referred to as the resurrection with the definite article, as in when the Greeks use the definite article, it kind of means the one and only resurrection.

And so they all had this belief that everybody would be resurrected at the end. And it comes from Daniel chapter 12. If you want to quickly look there, you find Ezekiel.

Daniel's the next book to the right. So the Jewish prophet Daniel speaks of, in chapter 12, verse 2, many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life.

I kind of imagine him gesticulating, you know. These to everlasting life, and these, what's the word that he uses? To disgrace and everlasting contempt.

[21:06] And the key words in that, whether you are, whichever side of that you are on is the word everlasting. It's everlasting life, or it's everlasting contempt.

And so no one is spared this resurrection, and the Jews knew this. It doesn't matter whether you're a sinner or a saint, you're going to get resurrected, and you're going to face your judge, who will either say, well done, my good and faithful servant, here's a Stephanos crown for you, or you'll be saying, sorry, but you didn't make it.

You're a sinner, and you're an unforgiven sinner, because you rejected my son. So these people started wandering about, and so towards the end of his ministry, he'd raised Lazarus from the dead. So there's a resurrection for you. He'd been in the tomb four days, and God raised him from the dead. And then you've got these people wandering the streets, and what we don't know, I mean, so many things we don't know.

How many of them were there? Was it one or two? Was it a hundred? Was it a thousand? We have no idea. How old were they? Were they all the same age as when they died, or were they resurrected looking much younger?

[22:22] Adrian always expresses a desire to be six foot when he's resurrected. Were they just the same as when they died?

Were they all Jews? Probably were, but we don't know. Did they die again, or were they raptured? Don't know. Did they preach? Did any of them testify as to what it was like being dead?

You've come across one or two people over the years who've died and gone to heaven and been restored to the earth. Some of those accounts, I would say the majority of those accounts are highly questionable, but you come across the odd one that really isn't questionable, and it's quite interesting how they all have a very similar story about what it was like.

Did any of these share? You know, yeah, I was dead, and this is what it was like, and now I'm back. I wonder if any of them said, fancy bringing me back here. It was brilliant in heaven.

So many things we don't know. There are many writers who suggest when the Bible says in one point that he appeared to 500 people at one time, that maybe those 500 people were the resurrected souls.

[23:35] That's conjecture. We don't know. It might have been, or some of them might have been. We don't know, but it's possible. What we can infer from all of this is that Jesus showed at the time of his death that he was Lord of life and death, that he had life and death under his hand, and it was in his gift to give eternal life or to give eternal condemnation, that he had absolute power.

Another little thing I'll introduce at this time, and we'll look at it again later, is they apparently rose out of these tombs without the tombs being, there wasn't a labor squad going around rolling stones off tombs and digging up bodies.

They simply appeared. And that, if I'm not off on a jolly here, and if you need to do with this, whatever you see fit, but they appeared in recognizable bodily form, having risen through the ground, the gravestone, whatever.

And that simply tells us that their resurrected bodies had the same properties as the body of Jesus when he turned up to talk to his disciples and just appeared in the room.

Nobody unlocked the door. They were behind a locked door and Jesus appeared amongst them. But when he appeared amongst them, they could touch him, they could hug him, they could put their hands in his wounds, they could do all sorts of things.

[25:16] He was tangible and real, but it had this quality that enabled him not to be constrained by a wall or a door. So these souls that were raised, nobody dug them up.

They were raised despite being in a grave and appeared. No wonder the unsaved question our sanity for believing this.

And yet, if it hadn't happened, they would not have got away with lying about it because people in the city would have said, no, no, no, we didn't see people who'd been dead walking about.

Especially if there were loads of them. So, they believed in this resurrection to come and suddenly they've got resurrected people among them and they must have been saying to themselves, whoa, this kind of reorders my thinking and reorders my theology.

I thought there was one resurrection at the end. Now that I've seen these resurrected souls, have I missed the one that happens at the end? Who knows? But the truth is, this was led by the one who was resurrected who was our first fruit.

[26:31] First fruit being the one who came first. The rest were other sheaves. So, seeing all these saints raised, not just Jesus, but other saints, and we know they were believers because the Bible says it was saints that were raised.

this means, this confirms to all those who saw them that when Jesus promised, turn to John 6, chapter 39, sorry, verse 39.

You'll struggle to find chapter 39 in John. Jesus is speaking to the people and he says, this is the will of him who sent me, that of all he has given me, I lose nothing but raise it up on the last day.

So Jesus had said, I'm going to raise you up on the last day. Says it again in verse 40, I think. Verse 40 says, for this is the will of my Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him will have eternal life and I myself will raise him up on the last day.

So I think we can infer from this that when Jesus was entombed and then rose from the grave, that these souls that were wandering the streets were souls that he raised. I'm still questioning, you know, did they then die again?

[27:51] Were they just raptured? I have no idea. But we're destined to meet them on the last day when we're raised. So let's turn finally to Matthew 28.

That's the longest introduction I think I've ever done. So as we start this chapter, we begin on the morning of day three and we're going to read through to verse 15 and then we'll quite quickly go through it but there'll be more meat put on the bones next week.

It says, now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave and behold, a severe earthquake had occurred for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it and his appearance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow.

The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the woman, do not be afraid for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

He is not here for he is risen just as he said. Come see the place where he was lying. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and behold, he is going ahead of you into Galilee where you will see him.

[29:10] Behold, I have told you. And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them and they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him.

And Jesus said to them, do not be afraid. Go and take the word to my brethren to leave for Galilee and there they will see me. Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.

And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, you are to say his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble. And they took the money and did as they had been instructed. And this story was widely spread among the Jews and is to this day.

Now that latter part that I've just read, we'll deal with more next time. But up to verse 10 is the major part of what we'll deal with now. So there's a guard around the tomb and this rock is sealed across the entrance with the big Roman seal.

[30:27] I think you remember the slides from last time, crisscross with ropes with the Roman seal in the middle. and in Matthew 27, verse 63, if you just look to the left a bit, they said this, Sir, we remember that when he was still alive, that deceiver said, after three days, I'm going to rise again.

So they had named Jesus, who was truth personified, that great deceiver. The Romans actually referred a lot in their documents to the resurrection.

And they called it, what did they call it? A heinous, I've forgotten the word because it's not in the note, something like a heinous lie or a heinous rumor or something like that.

They said, anybody who believes this believes the heinous lie. So they referred to Jesus as that deceiver and he had said, he's going to rise on the third day.

And so, they put the guard around the tomb, they put a seal on the tomb, they made it impossible for anybody to come out of that tomb by normal means. What we're going to learn is when the stone was rolled away, it wasn't to let Jesus out, it was to let the witnesses in.

[31:44] Because when he rose from the dead, he didn't come out through the entrance. It says they saw the grave, they saw the burial cloth lying there, but the way in which it's written means that they were lying there just as if they were still wrapped around a body, it's just there was no body inside them, so they'd all kind of gone flat, with the exception of the head cloth which was folded up neatly and put to one side, which is their clue that this is a proper resurrection because he rose through the cloth and then he folded up the head cloth, put it to one side almost like he's going no, no, no, no, no.

And we read that this happened at dawn. Psalm 22 in its title, depending on which version you've got, the title of the psalm says it's the hind of the morning or the deer of the dawn.

And it was called that because when the sun rises, the first thing you see of the sunrise are two shafts of sunlight that look like the horns of a deer. Now the latter part of Psalm 22 deals with the resurrection.

The first part deals with the crucifixion, but it kind of pins this whole string of events to this moment of dawn. Hence, this gospel says early in the morning, I think it's Mark's gospel that says that whilst it was, no, or John's gospel, whilst it was still dark.

So we're at that moment. And I find this fascinating because you think of somebody who's been butchered like Jesus was in a grave. There'd be this time of recovery, you know, getting better by stages and slowly struggling back to life and coming out of the tomb.

[33:36] This was instantaneous. He went from being dead to being resurrected at the moment of the hind of the dawn, at the moment of daybreak.

And he didn't come marching out of the tomb. They rolled away the stone from the tomb so that the ladies could get in and see the grave cloths. He had risen some other way and one day we'll find out how.

Matthew is the only one that mentions that there was a severe earthquake at the time the stone was rolled away. The others just don't mention that. And this would have been, according to Jewish timing, I guess about 6am because the day started on the evening before.

It was always there was evening and then there was morning the next day. So the Jewish day starts with evening and I believe it's when they see the first three stars in the sky.

When you can see three stars you call it, right, we're now in the next day. So the Jewish day had been going for 12 hours at this point when the sun rises, approximately, when the sun rises and bang, he's resurrected.

[34:50] Why is it important for us to have that level of detail? Well, in 1 Corinthians 15 and I think it's in the passage from verse 50 to the end, it says, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye we will be raised and made incorruptible and immortal.

It'll be the same for us. It won't be a drawn out process. We won't grow into it. We'll be corruptible and mortal one minute and incorruptible and immortal the next.

Well, I say minute. Second, split second, I don't know. So what happened to the first sheaf is destined to happen to us. So it's, I say it's important.

People don't get saved or not saved by that piece of information but it encourages me to know that my destiny is the same as his. The next thing is the first witnesses were the women, weren't they? Back in chapter 28, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. When you read, if you conflate all the gospel accounts, you'll find that there was also another woman there.

[35:57] I'm not really going to unpack that this morning simply for the sake of time. There is no contradiction in the gospel accounts. You need to conflate them, not treat them separately because there are bits of information in some accounts that don't appear in others but they're all part of the overall account.

So our first clue as to why we can believe this actually happened is that the first witnesses were women. Women were not even allowed to give testimony in court.

If you wanted to, if you wanted to invent a story and give it some credibility, you'd have had some local dignitary giving testimony as to what happened and at the very least, you'd have had a man, not a woman.

The fact that women were the first witnesses kind of tells us it must have been true and I'm very sorry for the dreadful way they used to treat women. And so in Matthew's account, we read that an angel of the Lord removed the stone and then sat upon it.

I love that. We'll make sure he doesn't get out. We'll put this big rock on all these ropes and seals and guards and the angel comes along and goes, and sits on it and it became the resting place for an angel's bottom and I really think that just shows the Lord's superiority.

[37:23] A real insult to the security Rome was able to provide just brushed aside. He had dazzling clothing, it said. And in Luke's account, what you read is there were two such men.

It's not a contradiction, this. Matthew only mentions one of them but there were two. And Matthew says the guards were terrified and were prostrate like dead men.

Which leads me to think, so did the women have to step over them to get to the grave? Oh look, they're all sleeping. We must realise that to sleep on duty was a capital offence.

So the strategies they went through to explain away the missing body. Oh, they came away and stole the body while we were asleep.

It's really interesting that the very thing they tried to do to divert people from believing in this event made it certain that it happened.

[38:21] Because everybody who had any knowledge would have thought, yeah, right, falling asleep. They wouldn't have dared. the angel says, you're looking for Jesus and he's not here.

He is risen. Go and tell his disciples. He'll be waiting for you in Galilee just as he said. So in Matthew 26 verse 32 and Mark 14 verse 28, he'd said to them, when I'm risen from the dead, I will meet you in Galilee.

I'll be waiting for you on the beach. As it happened, he already had the barbecue working. But their response to finding the empty tomb because initially they didn't believe the women and then when they did eventually go and look in the tomb, they didn't think, oh, so everything he said was correct then.

We better rush to Galilee straight away. No, no, no. They went home. It doesn't say it in Matthew. It's in the other Gospels. It's in John's account we read that the women ran to tell Peter and John. They ran to the tomb. I thought it was quite funny that John is, by the way, the disciple whom Jesus loved. So when you, you don't see John's name in there because he didn't include his own name. John got there first and looked in.

[39:32] The word look, the word there for, it says he looked in and saw and the word saw is the word blepo, which is a superficial look.

He looked in and he saw that the grave cloths were there and there was no body. So that was John. John overtook Peter, looked in cursory glance, superficial look.

Peter catches up with him and goes in and sees and the word for sees there is theoreo, which is the word from which we get our word theater, which means that he gave a more searching look.

It was like, is there really nobody? I better have a proper look. And then John goes back in and this time enters this tomb and saw and the word used there is aidos, which means he looked and gained understanding and it says he then believed.

So they went through this process of examining what had happened and came to a conclusion that he is alive, that he has been risen, been raised, resurrected, however you care to express it.

[40:46] And it occurred to me we are in the same process right now. We are examining the resurrection to decide whether Jesus, his word was fulfilled or not. I'm slightly over time but I've got one more slide to get through.

It says they didn't understand the scriptures that tell us he must rise again on the third day and that's why they went off to their homes. Now, scriptures that tell us A, that he had to rise again and B, particularly that he had to rise on the third day.

That takes a bit of a deeper look and we'll do that next time because they're not on the surface of scripture but they are there. But clearly the Lord expected them to know it.

Then in John's account we read that Mary returned and stood outside the tomb and was weeping confused as to what they'd done with Jesus' body and the angel said why are you weeping? Well, I'm looking for Jesus' body and I don't know where they've laid him.

And Jesus appears to her and she doesn't recognise him. Now, why she didn't recognise him I do not know but it could have been several things. He might have still been disfigured from the crucifixion or it could simply be that he kept his identity from her and he's very capable of doing that.

[42:03] And as soon as he says her name she recognises him immediately and says Rabboni teacher So we're going to look at a lot more detail about this to explore why we should believe all this that we've just talked about this morning and I kind of feel I've left us on a precipice but the aim is not just to explore the resurrection narrative but to equip us to defend it when questioned or debated and in doing so it will affirm and confirm in our own hearts that this doctrine deserves to be interpreted literally and embraced fully without equivocation when you get the notes the last page of the notes gives a timeline of how things unfolded and I put that there so that if I had any time left I would go through it I don't have any time left but you can go through it and I've simply put 12 points as to the chronological order of things happening because sometimes people get confused trying to get all the bits out of all four gospels to work it out

Father thank you for this word I am so excited that you rose from the grave and it might be selfish but one of the reasons I'm so excited is because it means I will too and bless you Lord I know that when I come back to life after the grave that I will be among those who go to eternal life and I do pray that anyone present who's unsure of that will share that with us and enable us to pray with them so that they can make sure they too are among those who go to eternal life Lord we thank you for this wonderful word in Jesus name Amen