

Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 6

A number of things happened associated with the Cross.

The Veil

There were several repercussions from the Cross. The first was the tearing of the veil in the Temple. A veil or curtain separated the outer sanctuary of the Temple from the inner Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant resided. This veil or curtain was not like the ones you have over your windows at home; it was very thick and heavy, made of densely woven fabric. It is *said* that it took a hundred priests to hang it.

This veil had symbolic meaning. It was considered a barrier. No one but the high priest was allowed to go behind the veil and into the Holy of Holies and the presence of God, except once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and only after a blood sacrifice. Any violation of this rule resulted in death.

The veil symbolically separated man from God. And beautiful as it was, it represented something terribly ugly, namely the thing that separated fallen and depraved man from the perfect and holy God— SIN! That veil, as a symbolic barrier, stood between man and God throughout the Age of Israel, from the giving of the Law to Moses and the building of the Tabernacle until the day when the Lamb of God would be judged in our place for our sins.

When Jesus uttered from the Cross, "It is finished," signaling that the judgment of sin was complete (John 19:30), the veil in the Temple was torn in two (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

Matthew 27:51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Notice that it was ripped in two from top to bottom. God tore it, not man. This veil was an elaborately woven fabric of seventy-two twisted braids, each with twenty-four threads. It was sixty feet tall and thirty feet wide. It was impossible to tear with human hands. God himself split the veil to indicate that the barrier between man and God was removed by the work of Jesus Christ. The symbolic barrier between man and Holy God was torn

in two, signifying man's new access to God as a result of the judgment of sin. Believers are made righteous through faith and, with sin judged at last, have full access to God.

Hebrews 10:19-20 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh

Believers have “confidence” to enter the “holiest” because of what Christ did on the Cross. In this passage, the veil is likened to the flesh of Jesus, torn so that we might have direct access to God Himself.

1 Peter 2:5: You yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, **to be a holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (Emphasis added)

1 Peter 2:9 But **you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (Emphasis added)

Until sin was judged, we needed a priest who had undergone ritual cleansing from sin through an animal sacrifice to approach God on our behalf. But with sin judged, the veil was torn and the barrier removed, so a priest is no longer required to serve as an intermediary between the believer and God. God was showing that access to His presence was now available to every believer.

Earthquake

Not only was the veil in the Temple torn, but the second half of Matthew 27:51 says, “the earth shook, and the rocks were split.” An earthquake followed, splitting rocks in two.

Matthew 27:52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

Matthew is the only Gospel that mentions this event. As a result of the earthquake, graves were opened, and many dead saints came out of them. The term “saints” in Scripture always refers to believers, dead or

alive, not to a special class of believers venerated after their deaths. Any believer, dead or alive, is a saint. If you are a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, say your own name right now and preface it with "Saint." Sound strange?

The term "fallen asleep" refers to those who are dead. In the Bible, death is pictured as sleep for the body, but this does not include the soul or, in the case of believers, the human spirit. The body goes to sleep.

When the earth quaked, these believers (saints) came back to life and witnessed in Jerusalem. Some say they may have been raised with glorified bodies like the Lord's. In my opinion, this event was not a resurrection. Two different Greek words are used. In the case of Lazarus and those who came out of their tombs and witnessed in Jerusalem, the text says they were "raised." The word is *egeiro*, which means to arouse from sleep. It can refer to a resurrection, but that is unlikely here. The Greek word for resurrection is *anastasis*, which means "to rise" or "to rise from the dead." In the numerous passages in Scripture referring to a "resurrection," *anastasis* is used.

I believe this event here at the Cross was a *resuscitation*, like that of Lazarus, whom Jesus "raised" (*egeiro*) from the dead. Lazarus later died. Those "raised" who witnessed in Jerusalem also died physically again.

It is important to notice what is said. These are not called resurrections like the one Jesus experienced. They simply "appeared" to many who knew them in Jerusalem and, apparently, died again. There is no suggestion that they continued to live on in a genuine resurrection from the dead.

Besides the two different Greek words used, two other things suggest to me that this was not a resurrection. One is that it is not necessary for the grave to open in a resurrection. A perfect example of this is coming up, when we see the stone blocking the entrance to the tomb of Jesus rolled back not to let Him out but to reveal that He was gone.

Another reason I believe this was a resuscitation is that Scripture outlines a specific order for the resurrections. Jesus is to be the "first fruits" in the resurrection. Church Age believers are next to be resurrected. Old Testament believers are not resurrected until the Second Advent.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. (Emphasis added)

At the time of this event, we are still firmly in the Age of Israel, yet less than 50 days away from the Church Age, which began on Pentecost. Note that Matthew 27:53 says, “**After his resurrection** they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” The tombs broke open at Christ’s death, probably by the earthquake, thus heralding Christ’s triumph in death over sin, but the bodies did not come out of the graves until after Christ was raised.

John Walvoord suggests that this event was “a fulfillment of the Feast of the Firstfruits of harvest mentioned in Leviticus 23:10–14. On that occasion, as a token of the coming harvest, the people would bring a handful of grain to the priest. These saints coming out of the graves after Jesus Himself was raised is a token of the coming harvest when all the saints will be raised.” I disagree with Walvoord. I see Jesus as the Firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:23), not those “raised” who witnessed in Jerusalem.

The Bible is silent on this group after this passage, leaving us to speculate about what happened to them after they came out of the grave. It is presumed that they eventually died.

Matthew 27:54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

This was the third person saved on the hill that day: First was Simon of Cyrene, the Jew from North Africa who was compelled to carry the cross for Jesus. Simon went on to evangelize his family back home, and they became prominent leaders in the early Church in North Africa.

Following Simon was the thief who hung on his own cross beside Jesus.

Lastly, the centurion in charge of the crucifixion detail that day also came to a saving knowledge of Christ. This Roman centurion also became a leader in the early church.

Even in death, this Jesus has the power to move people. Has He moved you? Have you said to yourself, “Truly this was the Son of God”? Have you

acknowledged your inability to make yourself acceptable to a perfect God? Have you placed your trust in what this Jesus did on the Cross and rested in its sufficiency? If we can add anything to that perfect work, He died in vain. Truth is, you can add nothing! It is impossible for imperfect you or me to improve on what was done by perfect Christ. If you have not come to grips with that fact, the sooner you do, the better off you will be.

The Resurrection

The doctrine of the Resurrection of Christ is absolutely essential to our faith. Though an essential element of our faith, the Resurrection *did not play a role in the judgment of sin*. Sin was judged on the Cross, and “it was finished” at that time. What the Resurrection did three days later was prove that this Jesus was who He said He was and that He was fully capable of doing all He claimed He could do. The Cross solved the sin problem, and we might say, “the Resurrection certified the results.” Upon these two pillars, the Cross and the Resurrection, rests Christianity.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul defines the Gospel with these two great truths.

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Paul focuses on two points: First, that Christ died for our sins, meaning He took the punishment for us. Second, that Christ was buried and rose again on the third day, exactly “according to the Scriptures.” This refers to Old Testament prophecies in Psalm 118:17-18 and Hosea 6:2.

In Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter preached his first sermon, he challenged and convicted Israel by focusing on the Resurrection.

Acts 2:23 This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

When Peter and John were brought to trial before the Sanhedrin, this august body of Jewish religious leaders, they turned their own trial into a

trial of apostate Israel and emphasized the Resurrection as a central element of our faith.

Acts 3:15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

Luke, the author of Acts, emphasizes the Resurrection in one of his summaries of the early Church's condition.

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

The Resurrection is a central theme that recurs throughout the New Testament. If Christ did not rise, we do not have a God. If Jesus is dust in a grave somewhere, He was only a man, like Mohammed or Buddha, and everything He said was a lie. If He is dead, we have no hope of eternal life or salvation. But Jesus did not remain in the grave.

Let's look at what happened on the first Easter almost 2,000 years ago.

When Jesus was taken down from the Cross near sundown, His body was quickly bathed and anointed as best the time allowed. Nicodemus, the Pharisee who had approached Jesus in John 3:1-10, brought the mixture of myrrh and aloes used to prepare the body for burial (John 19:39). It was necessary to get the body into the grave before sundown of the fast-approaching Sabbath. Jesus' body was wrapped in a burial shroud, with a separate face cloth covering His face, and placed in the donated tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, another Pharisee who was also a believer (John 19:38). This was done just before sundown on Wednesday.

The sepulcher was a small cave carved from soft stone. There would have been a low shelf cut into the back wall to hold the body. As was the custom, a very large stone, shaped like a wheel, was rolled into place over the entrance and secured with a smaller stone to prevent movement (Matthew 27:57-60). This would keep animals out and allow entry to the sepulcher for tending the body and later for collecting the bones for burial.

Concerned about Jesus' promise of resurrection, the chief priests and Pharisees petitioned Pilate to secure the tomb. A seal was placed over the

rock door, and guards were stationed to prevent the body from being removed (Matthew 27:62-66).

For three days and three nights, the body of Jesus lay in the grave. Sometime between sunset and midnight on Saturday, Jesus rose from the dead. This time period satisfied both predictions regarding the duration of His time in the grave, as we previously detailed in this series. His corruptible human body “put on incorruption,” and His soul and spirit were reunited with it. He walked through the rock wall of that cave. There was no need to break the seal or roll away the stone.

In His resurrection body, Jesus later walked through the closed door of the upper room and showed His disciples His wounds. In a later appearance to Thomas, He invited Thomas to touch His wounds. While the resurrection body has form and substance, it can move easily through solid objects. It can also travel through space, probably at the speed of thought. In Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:2; and 12:2, we see Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father.

Because of the rush to bury the body before sundown on Wednesday and the several Sabbaths after Jesus's burial, it was Sunday morning before the women could come and properly attend to the body.

At the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulcher (Matthew 28:1). Matthew says both Marys came, but Mark and John mention only Mary Magdalene. Luke says, “they came.”

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. They entered, and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 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?”

The stone was rolled back by the two angels we see in the Luke passage above to reveal that the tomb was empty, not to let Jesus out. The two angels sent them to summon the men (Matthew 28:7).

John 20:6 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.

Peter and John found the grave empty. Peter went inside immediately and found the burial shroud and the "face cloth" ("napkin" in some translations) used to cover the deceased's face. It was left there neatly folded and set aside.

Ancient tradition holds that when one has finished his meal, he signals to his servants that he is done by *folding his napkin* and setting it aside. Applied here, the folded napkin suggests the completion of all that was necessary for the judgment of sin and for proving who Jesus was and what He had accomplished.

"It is finished."

Jesus had risen from the grave, fulfilling His promise. We do not worship a god who is dead, with His body rotted in the grave. We worship a risen God, perfectly capable of raising us when we are called from our "sleep" at the rapture, so that our corruptible bodies put on incorruption and "there shall we ever be with the Lord."

We worship a God about whom there were hundreds of prophecies, most of which have been fulfilled, and the rest will be fulfilled in the future Second Advent and the Kingdom Age. No other faith makes such claims because no other faith can make such claims.

We have seen that on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, the tomb was found empty. It would be another forty days before Christ would ascend to Heaven, and a year or more before His First Advent ministry would be complete with the selection of Saul of Tarsus as the twelfth apostle to replace Judas. During the forty days after the Resurrection, Jesus, in His resurrection body, appeared to numerous people, providing eyewitness testimony that authenticated His resurrection.

Reading the four Gospels can be confusing, as each recounts specific events from its own perspective and omits some details from the first Easter morning. By compiling the accounts of the events across all four Gospels, we can gain a complete picture of what happened that Sunday morning. We will attempt to determine the order of these first appearances.

Jesus appeared to Mary while she was alone at the sepulcher (John 20:14-18). According to Mark 16:9, He appeared to Mary Magdalene first. Mary then went to tell the disciples that she had seen Him, but they did not fully believe her (John 20:18; Mark 16:10,11).

Afterward, Jesus appeared to the other Mary (Matthew 28:9). "As they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Greetings.'" This would seem, in Matthew, to be immediately after they left the sepulcher the first time.

The two Marys would return to the garden after informing the disciples and linger there to ascertain what had become of Him or whether He had been seen by anyone.

Below is a list of the appearances after the Resurrection.

- To Mary Magdalene, John 20:14; Mark 16:9.
- To the other women: Matthew 28:9.
- To Peter: 1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34.
- To two disciples as they were going to Emmaus: Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32.
- The same day at evening, to the apostles, in the absence of Thomas: 1 Corinthians 15:5; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36; John 20:19,24.
- To the apostles when Thomas was present: John 20:24-29.
- In Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, to Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John, and two others: John 21:1-14.
- This is said to be the third time he showed himself to the disciples—when they were assembled together: John 21:14.
- To the disciples on a mountain in Galilee: Matthew 28:16.
- To more than five hundred brethren at once: 1 Corinthians 15:6.
- To James, one of the apostles: 1 Corinthians 15:7.

- To all the apostles assembled together: 1 Corinthians 15:7. He was seen by them forty days after He rose—probably conversing with them familiarly.
- To the apostles at his ascension: Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9,10.
- To Paul: 1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3,4,5; 22:6-10.

The Resurrection Body

Now is a good time to make a few comments about resurrection bodies. We know from Scripture that Jesus' physical body was very different after His resurrection. We also know from Scripture that believers will receive a body like the one Jesus has.

We are told in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4 that “if our earthly house ... were dissolved, we have a building of God.” This “building” is not made with hands and is “eternal in the heavens.” Verse 3 indicates that our soul and spirit require a dwelling so that “we shall not be found naked.” Verses 2 and 4 speak of us “groaning” in this house as we desire to be rid of its limitations. Those “limitations” are that this physical body ages (and don't we know it!). The process of decay begins the very moment we are born. It will eventually progress to the point that the body becomes a useless burden and dies. But only the physical body dies. This decay and eventual death result from Adam's rebellion. The penalty of sin is death. Adam could have lived forever in the body he had in the garden, but his sin introduced death into the world, first spiritual death (separation and alienation from our Creator) and ultimately physical death.

1 Corinthians 15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

First John 3:2 says, “When He shall appear, we will be like Him.” Furthermore, He will be visible to us. This verse says we will appear exactly as Jesus appears, and this will happen at His coming. For us in this Church Age, “His coming” will be the rapture of the Church, when Jesus comes to take His Bride home.

First Corinthians 15:35-54 gives us a clear picture of this. Verse 35 asks what body we will have when raised. Verse 36 reminds us rather pointedly about that body, “What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.” Our

human bodies are products of human generation and are destined to die. Verse 37 says this body is not the one we will eventually have.

Verse 42 says what is sown in corruption (the human body) is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor (the sin nature/Adam's sin) and raised in glory. Verse 44 says, "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable." Verse 45 reminds us that "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." Verse 45 also says all was lost through Adam, but the "Last Adam" (Christ) is a "quickening spirit." "Quicken" is translated "life-giving" in some versions and means to give life.

Verse 50 says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither does corruption inherit incorruption." Our mortal bodies are not suited for eternity. As verse 51 says, "we shall all be changed." This change occurs "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." "This corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality" (verse 54). This passage describes what happens to believers at the rapture of the Church. Those who do not "sleep" are still alive at the time. Those who "sleep" shall rise incorruptible.

To be technically correct, only the dead are resurrected. Those who are alive are said to be "translated" directly from a living mortal body to a resurrection body. In both cases, we begin with a corruptible body, whether dead or alive, and end with an incorruptible resurrection body.

What does this incorruptible resurrection body look like? Since it will be like the one Jesus has, we need only look at what the Scriptures say about His to find out.

- In John 20:17, Jesus warns Mary not to "touch Him." A more accurate translation is "do not hold onto me," implying that she had embraced Him and that He is tangible, with substance and form.
- Later, in John 20:27, Thomas touches the wounds of the risen Jesus.
- In Luke 24:36-40, Jesus, appearing to His disciples, tells them to touch Him: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (v. 39).

- In John 20:19, the disciples are hiding in a room with the doors shut, and Jesus appears in their midst, implying that He could pass through solid objects. This is also suggested by the tomb's closure and sealing.
- This body has form and substance, can be seen and felt, yet can move through solid objects.
- In Mark 16:12, two of Jesus' disciples saw Him, and He appeared to them in "another form." This most likely means He appeared to them in a form different from the one in which they had previously recognized Him.
- Luke 24:13-32 provides a longer account of this event. Verse 16 says they did not recognize Him at first.
- In verse 30, Jesus sups with the two travelers.
- In John 21:4, Jesus appears to His disciples, but they do not initially recognize Him.
- In John 21:15, Jesus eats with His disciples.
- In Luke 24:42-43 (KJV), the risen Jesus eats broiled fish and honeycomb. The NIV, ESV, and NASB mention only the fish.
- Clearly, one can enjoy food and fellowship with others.

There is something about this resurrection body that makes the person not easily recognizable. In the case of Jesus, the disciples may have remembered Him as they last saw Him, bloody, beaten, and dead. Lacking faith, they did not at first even consider the possibility that they were seeing Jesus, so very much alive and looking very healthy.

Though Scripture does not elaborate, some believe that in the resurrection body one may appear to be 33 years old, the age of Jesus at death. Obviously, that would make identification somewhat difficult if the person was last known to be much younger or much older. Alternatively, the reason may simply be because of the resurrection body's physical perfection.

In the end, it may not be wise to place too much emphasis on the fact that Jesus was not initially recognized. I believe it is safe to say the resurrection body is beautiful; after all, God made it, and that may also account for some of the difficulty Jesus' disciples had in recognizing Him.

We can also note that in the resurrection body, food can be consumed, though it is safe to assume that food or drink is not necessary to sustain

life—this is an eternal life that cannot die—but food becomes a blessing to enjoy in the fellowship of others.

What we can say fairly dogmatically:

- This resurrection body has physical form and mass and can be felt, yet it can pass through solid objects.
- Scripture also indicates that it is possible to eat while in a resurrection body, though that is not required for good health or to sustain life.
- We are recognizable in this resurrected state, though initial recognition may be somewhat difficult.
- Since this body is made by God, it is obviously perfect—no more aches, pains, or crippling disabilities.

I don't know about you, but this believer does indeed “groan” in this present body and eagerly awaits getting rid of its associated aches and pains and receiving a whole new body just like the one Jesus has.

The Ascension

Acts 1:3 He (Jesus) presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

The word translated “proofs” is *tekmerion*, meaning a token that establishes a fact, an infallible proof. This is demonstrable evidence, distinct from witness testimony. The resurrection was proven by touch, hearing, and sight (Luke 24:39-40; 1 John 1:1).

The Kingdom, which most Christians call the Millennium, is a distinctly Jewish period when Israel will be restored to its promised prominence in the world and Jesus will reign as the “Son of David,” a time Israel has long longed for. Though the Kingdom Age is delayed because Israel rejected the King, the Messiah was given to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 10:19; 11:11; Deuteronomy 32:21). We believers (Gentile and Jew) during this intercalation period called the Church Age are experiencing the Kingdom's spiritual aspects, namely the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the potential for enablement by the Spirit.

In verse four, Jesus commands His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for “what the Father had promised.” Verse five explains that they will be baptized with the Spirit, which would take place ten days later on the Jewish Feast

day of Pentecost. Jesus goes on to tell them they have heard of this from Him (John 1:33).

The concept of baptism is the identification of someone or something with another. Greek soldiers baptize their spears in pig's blood to mark them as belonging to death. Christ identifies His followers with Himself through the Holy Spirit, who unites the new believer with Christ forever. The believer is forever identified with Christ, is part of the "body of Christ," and is said to be "in Christ" (Ephesians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 8:1; 1 Peter 5:14)

In verse six, the disciples ask if this is the time of the restoration of the Kingdom. This may seem like a stupid question, but Jesus has just told them that something associated with the Kingdom will happen (Isaiah 32:15-20; 44:3-5; Ezekiel 39:28-29; Joel 2:28-3:1; Zechariah 12:8-10), and they think, "Oh boy, the Kingdom is coming at last!"

The word "restore" parallels regeneration when used in the context of the Kingdom. The idea of restoration in connection with the Kingdom is that Israel comes to national repentance and salvation.

But in verse seven, Jesus tells them this is not something for them to know. Then He tells them they will receive the Holy Spirit and be His witnesses in "all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." This order is significant. First, they are to preach the Gospel in Judea. After the death of Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The Southern Kingdom was called Judea, with its capital in Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel, with its capital in Samaria. To make this more confusing, we commonly refer to any part of Israel, northern or southern, as Israel.

God will offer Israel one last chance at the Kingdom if they repent. We see this in the early chapters of Acts, but Israel (Judea) rejects this final plea to repent.

The Gospel is to be taken to the Jews in the Northern Kingdom next (Samaria). The Assyrians had brought in Gentile settlers after they took the Northern Kingdom into captivity some 850 years before. These outsiders intermarried with the Jews that remained. As a result, the Jews of this area were considered a mongrel race by the "purebred" Jews down south. This

is the reason for the animosity toward the Samaritans that is so often seen in the Gospels.

First, the pure Jews, then the mixed-race Jews, would be offered the Kingdom one last time. After this, the Gospel was to be offered to the Gentiles “even to the remotest part of the earth.” Israel was to be given every chance to repent before it was given to the Gentiles.

Verse nine tells us that after He said these things, “He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” This is the ascension. Jesus had left them a second time, which must have left them slack-jawed and not a little afraid. The continuing work of Christ was now placed in the hands of the twelve (eleven now, but twelve later).

While they looked toward the heavens, two men (angels) came and stood beside them (v10) and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way you have watched Him go into heaven” (v11).

To whom were the two angels speaking? Answer: Jews. In what dispensational period does this occur? Answer: The Age of Israel. The Church Age has not yet begun. Who is the message for? Answer: Israel. Not the Church!

What will Israel see? Jesus “will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” This is a prediction of the Second Advent, *not the Rapture*. At the Second Advent, “every eye” will see Him coming in a cloud (Luke 21:27; Mark 13:26; Matthew 24:30; 26:24; Daniel 7:13; Revelation 19:11-16). Furthermore, the “mystery” of the Church Age and the Rapture had not yet been revealed to Israel (Ephesians 3:3-5; Romans 16:25; Colossians 1:26). The Second Advent is the event they would expect from this description.

There you have it. Jesus, in His resurrection body, appeared for forty days as proof of the Resurrection. At the end of that period, He ascended into a cloud, exactly as He will return. Until that day, He sits at the right hand of the Father while His enemies are made a footstool for Him (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:13).