

# Law & Order, XVI


## Forty Days Later

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Welcome to where we're coming to know and grow in God's Word!

**An Easter Challenge For Christians**  
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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.

Believers should eagerly take up this challenge, since without the resurrection, there is no Christianity.

Paul wrote, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

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 books: 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 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. These 115 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 present a perfect picture—it only needs to give at least one plausible account of all of the facts. Additional explanation of the narrative may be set apart in parentheses. The important condition to the challenge, however, is that not one single biblical detail be omitted. Fair enough?



### Are you running the course the Lord has laid out for you?

Today, we're completing famous atheist and former pastor, Dan Barker's, Easter Challenge: **to assemble 165 resurrection verses<sup>1</sup> into a simple, chronological, non-contradictory, narrative.** So far, we've assembled 160. So, let's get to it and fit in those *final five!*

According to Mark (16:9-19) and Luke, (24:36-51) Jesus ascends into Heaven, and "sits at the right hand of God," on the night of His resurrection. **Jesus dies on Friday, rises Sunday morning, and ascends Sunday night. And, one week later, appears, for the first time to all Twelve, and breathes His Spirit into them.** (John 20:21-26) Just as God had once breathed into Adam. (Gen 2:7)

And, Jesus had said, **He couldn't offer this to them until after ascending to the Father.** (John 16:5-17)

His third appearance was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, (John 21:14) where He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers. (Mat 28:10; 1 Cor 15:5-7) And, just before He ascended, a week before He filled 'em with His Spirit, He said to them ...

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; [one week later] and [then, at that time] you will be my witnesses [proclaiming that I'm alive and will appear in Galilee (Mat 28:10)] in Jerusalem, [where they set out from on their 80-mile journey] and in all Judea [spreading the Word and gathering the brothers as they go] and Samaria, [the last region on route to the Sea: they go from Jerusalem throughout Judea, and then through Samaria, to the Sea of Galilee] and [after that it'll be] to the ends of the earth." – Acts 1:8 NIV

First, they need to complete their 40-day Kingdom training.

He appeared to them ["the Apostles He had chosen" (Acts 1:2)] over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. – Acts 1:3b NIV

**Which ends on the shore when He sends 'em out to go to the nations.**

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1:3-12; and, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

When we left off, they'd finished breakfast, and Jesus had a final walk and talk with Peter.

Let's read **Matthew 28:18-20** (purple), **Mark 16:20** (BLUE), and **John 21:25** (BROWN).



Then Jesus came to them and **said**, **[As you now fully understand]** **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** [When? When He sat down at the right hand of God. (Heb 1:3-4) Matthew may not describe the ascension, but here he makes reference to it having already taken place] **Therefore** **[you're ready ... so]** **go** **[“to the ends of the earth”]** and **make disciples of all nations,**

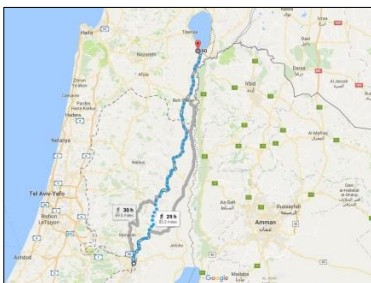
**“Okay. But, uh ... where do we start?”** On the night of His resurrection, when He ate with eleven of the Twelve ...

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” – Luke 24:46-47 NIV

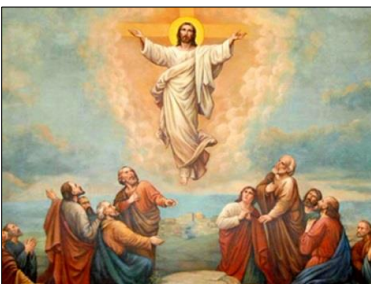
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36	37	38	39	🐟	✈	

Why? **Because, all the nations were gathered in Jerusalem.**

Look at that calendar again. He dies on Friday. **Seven weeks later is Pentecost, the celebration of God's First Covenant, through Moses, given seven weeks after the first Passover.** Now, **Jesus is preparing to inaugurate the Last Covenant, seven weeks after the last Passover,** when pilgrims from all nations are in Jerusalem to celebrate from Passover to Pentecost.



He rose on Sunday morning, and ascended Sunday night. Then, the following Sunday, He first appears to His chosen Twelve. And, forty days later lands us on the beach on Thursday morning. **They've got 48 hours, and 80 miles to cover!** But, they're young. Folks averaged 20 miles per day on foot; Roman couriers, 50. And, Google says it'd only take *us modern folk* 29 walking hours. **How are you doing on the course He's laid out for you?** Would you have made it in time ... *I mean, if you were their age?*



Therefore go **[to Jerusalem]** and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**The resurrection story doesn't end with Jesus floating away, leaving His gawking disciples to figure things out on our own.**

**It ends with a race against the clock, a sense of urgency to leave the nest, spread our wings, spread His Word, and fly! Are you flyin'? Do you feel an appropriate sense of urgency?**

When the day of Pentecost came, **[they made it!] they were all together in one place** [in the Temple courts]. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a **violent [biaios: mighty] wind [pnoē: breath; breath of life]** came from heaven and filled the whole **house [oikos: House of God; as in: "... my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49)] where they were sitting.** [God's breath of Life enters this world to resuscitate any who'll receive it] They saw what seemed to be **tongues [glōssa: tongue; language]** of fire that separated **[diamerizō: divided] and came to rest on each of them.** [Why divided tongues/languages? He's undoing the *second curse*: when God divided the tongues of the nations, at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:6-9)] **All of them were filled** [in a miraculous way] **with the Holy Spirit and began to speak** [then and there, in the Temple, "*declaring the wonders of God*" (2:11)] **in other tongues** [i.e. languages] **as the Spirit enabled them.** [Jesus had told 'em not to worry about "what you will say" when they speak before assemblies and rulers and authorities; "for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time," (Luke 12:11-12) but, *c'mon!*] **Now** [let's back up] there were staying in Jerusalem **[since Passover] God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.** [Genesis 10 lists the scattered nations of the Jews, as a setup for the Tower of Babel] **When they** [these international religious pilgrims who were wealthy and/or influential enough to provide a caravan, for protection, and two months of lodging] **heard this sound,** [of young, excited, Galilean men, declaring the wonders of God in Persian, Syriac, Chaldee, Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and whatever other tongue was present!] a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: **"Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?** [They wouldn't know to be amazed if God hadn't left their thick Galilean accents! When Peter denied Jesus, they said, "*Your accent gives you away.*" (Mat 26:73) Picture 'em speaking perfect Spanish with a southern drawl; or French, with a Texas twang] Then how is it that each of us hears them in **his own native language?** [Now, here are the nations from where these Jews have come, and are soon returning] Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—**we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!**" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" – Acts 2:1-12 NIV

And, that's when Peter, after his pep talk, begins to preach.

[And, when he concludes, he says] "Therefore let **all Israel** [in all nations] be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When **the people** [*"the God-fearing Jews from every nation under Heaven,"* who'd waved palm branches at His triumphal entry, only to later learn of His crucifixion, and rumors of His resurrection; and, having seen the mysterious, glorious, light of His ascension (Mat 27:52-53; Mark 14:61-62). When **they**] heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter **and the other apostles,** [who could miraculously speak and understand their native tongue] "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, **"Repent and be baptized,** every one of you, [from every nation] **in the name of Jesus Christ** for the **forgiveness of your sins.** [Thus meeting Jesus' prediction, that "*repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations*" (Luke 24:47)] And **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** [And, since they're already "*God-fearing*", this'll meet Jesus' command to baptize the nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mat 28:19)] The promise is for you **and your children** [who are not with you] **and for all who are far off** [back home in your nations] — **for all whom the Lord our God will call."**

["But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the (swollen, blistered) feet of those who preach the good news!'" (Rom 10:14-15)] With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and **about three thousand were added to their number** [of disciples] that day. [Meeting Jesus' commands to "go and make disciples of all nations," (Mat 28:19) "beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47)] – Acts 2:36-41 NIV



Ever wonder why most of the Apostles aren't mentioned again in scripture after this event? Where'd they go? **This was God's Grand Central Station.** Those who heard 'em in their own tongue would've invited them to join their caravan, and would've introduced them in their homeland. And, most were leaving the following day. And, all those at the shore, who were closest to the Apostles, and might've tried to keep them from going, weren't given enough time to get there.

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and Jesus did many other things as well. the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. If every one of them were **written down**, [including what He accomplished through His Apostles in all the nations of the world] I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Traditions, legends, and historical reports only tease us with mentions of the exploits of the unrecorded Apostles in Egypt and Africa, Arabia and India, and Romania, Turkey, and Greece. But, the Wedding Psalm of the Lord and His bride will suffice.

In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; **let your right hand display awesome deeds ... let the nations fall beneath your feet.** [Which they do, willingly, at Pentecost] ... **at your right hand is the royal bride** [His church, redeemed, "display(ing) awesome deeds"] ... Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: **Forget your people** [For, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28)] **and your father's house.** ["You yourselves are God's temple" and "God's Spirit dwells in your midst" (1 Cor 3:16)] ... **men of wealth** [like those from the nations that could afford a caravan to Jerusalem for the Passover to Pentecost] **will seek your favor.** [paniym: face; presence; person] All glorious is the princess within her **chamber;** [pəniymah: inner part; "a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27)] ... **Your sons** [Jesus' young apprentices turned Apostles] **will take the place of your fathers;** [just as the New Covenant body of Christ takes the place of the Old Covenant body of Moses] **you will make them princes throughout the land.** [When the wealthy not only provide the manner and means, but excitedly entreats whichever one miraculously speaks their native tongue, to come to their land. And, by this and the Gospels and letters they'll write] I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever. – Psalm 45:4-17 NIV

And, so ends the epic account of the empty tomb. **To whom have you been called? And, how far will you go to fulfill your created purpose?**