

Easter

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 65:17-25

New Heavens and a New Earth

17 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. 20 No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. 24 Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

65:17-25 The future restoration of the Lord’s people and all creation. This vision further defines the new things mentioned earlier (42:9; 48:6). With earthly imagery, the prophet is trying to help his generation understand the blessings of eternal life. Luther emphasized that the blessings of God’s new creation begin now for believers. Luther: “He is not speaking only of the spiritual heaven, but He makes all things new, spiritual and physical, although I do not see a new heaven and a new body in us, but only the one born of our parents. Yet we believe it. We must turn the sack inside out, and then they will appear.... The promise is everlasting. Rejoice in it. Peter says (1 Peter 1:9), ‘As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.’ This salvation is already prepared. Peter is as certain as if it were already there. Then he says, ‘But the revelation is awaited.’ Then we shall see what we cannot now receive with the mind.... Therefore whoever is tormented in his feeling by sin and death, let him rise again in the Word and kingdom of Christ and say, ‘My Christ lives’ ” (AE 17:388). (TLSB)

65:17 *for behold* – Behold always calls attention to something unexpected. Here the Lord informed His people of the wonders He would still perform for them in the future. (PBC)

I create – Hebrew word denotes divine action (cf Gn 1:1); it expresses great and new acts that require a divine agent. It occurs nine times in the early chapters of Gn and 19 times in Is 40–66 (three times in Is 65:17–18). (TLSB)

This always has God as the one creating, and it always refers to creation *ex nihilo*, rather than to forming something out of previously existing matter. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

“I will bring it about and do it.” He is not speaking only of the spiritual heaven, but He makes all things new, spiritual and physical, although I do not see a new heaven and a new body in us, but only the one born of our parents. Yet we believe it. We must turn the sack inside out, and then they will appear. (Luther)

new heavens and a new earth. † The climax of the “new things” Isaiah has been promising, including the final consummation of Christ’s kingdom in heaven (Rev. 21:1). (CSB)

This would seem to represent the totality of things, as expressed in Gen 1:1. The new heaven and earth will so fully show forth the glory of God their Creator, and so completely fulfill every need and desire of his creatures, that the former heavens and earth will no longer be remembered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

Former things. The “old order of things” (Rev 21:4), including pain and sorrow. (CSB)

The old creation and the sins of God’s people, which have now been forgiven. Cf Ps 103:12. (TLSB)

Psalm 103:12: “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

That is, “they shall not be praised,” as if we were to say on Judgment Day, “What a dark sun and what small stars we had!” Away with those who apply the ceremonies to the coming kingdom! They are thread and seam for the outward bag and sack. God will not be concerned about them, and He will not honor them. So it is with us. We do not observe the ceremonies of the Jews. (Luther)

65:18-19 The center of the new creation is the new Jerusalem and its temple (Ezk 48:30–35; Zec 14:10–21; Rv 21:2–22:5). (TLSB)

65:18 *be glad and rejoice.* The promise is everlasting. Rejoice in it. Peter says (1 Peter 1:9), “As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.” This salvation is already prepared. Peter is as certain as if it were already there. Then he says, “But the revelation is awaited.” Then we shall see what we cannot now receive with the mind. Now, while we are in the sack and skin, we cannot do it. The kingdom of Christ is not to be found there, but it rises to another place, where sense is not, but where faith is. So if I should feel sin, death, and evil and nothing good in my flesh, I must nevertheless believe in the kingdom of Christ. For the kingdom of Christ does not have its place in the senses. The treasure lies in the certainty of life. Feelings of despair and afflictions have to do with the sack, for they are done externally. Therefore whoever is tormented in his feeling by sin and death, let him rise again in the Word and kingdom of Christ and say, “My Christ lives.” I am not speaking of those righteous people who should taste the firstfruits of the Spirit and the flavors of sweetness (as the scholastics say). But I am speaking of the wrestling of life, of sweetness and the firstfruits of the Spirit, when we are involved with the devil’s worst bites and still overcome by faith. This is the very work of faith, to fight against sins and to slug it out with death. This is the security of the godly. (Luther)

create Jerusalem. † John links the coming of a new heaven and a new earth with the “new Jerusalem” (Rev 21:1–2). A restored Jerusalem after the exile prefigures the Messianic kingdom and its consummation in this greater Jerusalem. (CSB)

Instead of remembering the former afflictions, the people are exhorted to “be glad and rejoice forever.” God is about to recreate Jerusalem, which will be the focal point of the new creation, as also in the eschatological vision of Ezekiel 40-48. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

This is a figure of speech where the abstract is put for the concrete. I want these people and Jerusalem to be rejoicing itself, as Terence says that the malicious man is malice itself, and Christ is called righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). There a rich excellence is meant. So Christ will be an abundant joy to me, so that I am nothing but joy. But we do not feel this in this life, since it must be pure joy objectively and formally. (Luther)

65:19 *rejoice ...be glad.* So great is his love toward us, that he delights in our prosperity not less than if he enjoyed it along with us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

To the extent that one is a Christian he is joy. To the extent that we believe, however, it is a matter of foretaste. There are two joys: Not only do we have a new heaven, but we shall also see God in eternal joy. (Luther)

weeping. To weep means to cry and to howl. This is the antithesis between the Law and faith and Christ's kingdom. He who is under the Law sees sin, God's wrath, and death, and joyful things are apparitions and the realm of Moses. This condition will last as long as we have the skin and the sack. But when we are in Christ's kingdom, another joy will appear and be revealed. (Luther)

65:20 *no more shall there be* – The usual circumstances of life and death in a sin-broken world are cast aside. In the new creation, life triumphs over death (cf 25:8). (TLSB)

The best explanation is that again earthly language is being used to describe heavenly realities that far surpass what can adequately be conveyed in terms we can understand. Eternal life is described as the absence of any of the tragedies that can cut life short in this world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

hundred ... mere youth. Comparable to the longevity of Adam and his early descendants. (CSB)

The context describes creation without the corruption of sin and death (vv 17–25), so the examples here seem confusing. But, in fact, they are hypothetical (a conditional use of Hbr *ki*, “though”; cf Jer 49:16; 51:53). One could translate it “supposing that the young man shall die.” The two halves of v 20 present a contrast, and the examples of the second half are unreal—remarkably, the vulnerable infant and old man live on, but those strong by worldly standards (“young man,” “sinner”) would surely suffer death or a curse. *a hundred years.* Used figuratively for a great length of time. See p 217. Time will no longer have its aging effect on those who formerly were under the curse of sin. (TLSB)

God does not promise here that every believer will live to the ripe old age of 100 but that every believer in the church is “blessed by the Lord” and comes under His watchful eye. (PBC)

65:21-25 The blessings of the covenant with God are again expounded as being fully restored for His people (cf Dt 6:10–12). (TLSB)

65:21–22 Contrast Moses' curse for disobedience in Dt 28:30. (CSB)

65:21 *inhabit,,eat their fruit* – God's people will never fear invading outsiders. They will be free to enjoy the blessing of laboring (remember, Adam was put in unspoiled Eden to work and keep it, Gen 2:15) and enjoying the fruits (cf. the fruit-bearing trees in Rev. 22:2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

How shall we harmonize this: He builds new heavens, we build houses? Because in the skin we do not see but may know by faith that the head of the kingdom grows, so they may build houses, plant vineyards, and set up households, which do not consist of house and stones, but of wife, children, and family. So the church will grow, and one church will produce ten. They also enjoy their own fruits. (Luther)

65:22 *shall not build and another inhabit* – Unlike the futility of the exodus, when those who began neither finished the journey nor entered the Promised Land, here there is completion of the promised dwelling. (TLSB)

Earlier they had anxieties and toil, and another was in possession. That is to say, they served the devil with their merits. (Luther)

days of a tree. Compared to the righteous also in Ps 1:3; 92:12–14. (CSB)

A tree is a symbol of permanence and endurance. Job 14:7-17 uses the figure of a re-sprouting tree to describe eternal life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

This is a well-known comparison in Scripture, where the ungodly are compared to hay and to herbs that fade quickly, as in Ps. 37:2 and Is. 37:27. The godly are the opposite and are compared to trees planted by streams of water (Ps. 1:3). It is as if He were saying: “My godly people shall not struggle in vain, because their righteousness is lasting like a flourishing tree.” They are not hay like the ungodly, for the godly are always bearing fruit. They do not speak idle words. For that reason He says, “The days of My people shall be like the trees.” This, too, is not apparent, just as the new heaven and the kingdom of Christ cannot be perceived except in the Word. Whatever is left over in the senses belongs into the sack and bag. (Luther)

long enjoy. Cf. Ps 91:16. (CSB)

This is a Hebraism often used, that the godly are compared to permanent trees. For that reason He here calls them a lasting tree which produces lasting works. See Ps. 1. They shall do what they want, because they flourish like a palm tree and last even to old age, “they shall grow old.” Both shall blossom: The godly in such a way that they will not grow old; the ungodly shall blossom too, but like a flower and like grass. Because the work of the godly man is permanent, it is not forgotten. The godly distribute¹¹ and give to the poor, and they are not forgotten. The ungodly man also distributes and is forgotten. (Luther)

65:23 *labor in vain.* Ever since the fall of Adam into sin, his descendants have often labored for nothing – the “vanity” lamented in Ecclesiastes. In the eternal state people will labor for God (see the Gospel reading) and will see the fruit of their efforts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

There is a difference in giving birth between the godly and the unrighteous. The travail of the fools prostrates them. They are in extreme and useless labor. Here He condemns not only the useless labor but the very travailing and begetting itself. So the labor of the godly is not only light labor, but they do not even feel the labor. In all labors they are happy and cheerful. (Luther)

calamity. Such as death or captivity. (CSB)

Refers to the ravages of war. (TLSB)

The death of a child, which psychologists describe as the most traumatic of losses, will never happen again. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

That is, they do not travail like the ungodly, who, as it were, bring forth a premature birth which may not see the sun. It is as if He were saying: “With the ungodly there is much laboring, and, what is even worse, there is much laboring for nothing.” This is not the case with the godly. Their works are a Bernard. What the ungodly bring forth is a miscarriage, as Ps. 7:14 tells us. They bring forth nothing. Therefore all endeavors and works of the ungodly are clearly useless and futile. But the godly “shall not bear children for calamity,” that is, they shall not bring forth an abortion. (Luther)

offspring of the people blessed of the LORD. God’s faithful people. (TLSB)

Whatever they say and undertake is done by the Holy Spirit, and there will be no abortion. (Luther)

65:24 *while they are yet speaking I will hear.* Luther: “Our prayer pleases God because He has commanded it, made promises, and given form to our prayer. For that reason He is pleased with our prayer, He requires it and delights in it, because He promises, commands, and shapes it. Therefore only the prayer of the godly is a prayer for the sake of God’s excellent promises, since we know that they are acceptable and pleasing. But the prayer of the ungodly is sin. God cannot get enough of the prayers of the godly. Therefore the prayer of the godly is likened to the most attractive odor which one cannot smell enough. Then He says *I will hear*. It is not only guaranteed, but it is actually already obtained” (AE 17:393). (TLSB)

In Isaiah 64 the Israelites complained to God that he did not listen to them when they cried out to him. In the eschaton he will abundantly hear. So great is God’s love, he is ready to answer prayer immediately, if not sooner. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

This promise is extremely necessary for strengthening our hearts and inciting them to pray. John explains this passage (cf. John 15:7). We know what promises we have if only we would pray. Here you see the power in the prayer of the godly. We must know, in the first place, that we must remain with the Word. In this life our old skin always smacks of the nature of its origin. The wine takes on the taste of the barrel. Therefore it must always be cleaned out. Our life, however, is set firmly on the foundation of the apostles and prophets so that in these remains we can always say, “I am a child and an heir of God.” We can say this not because of ourselves but because of the most far-reaching promises, for the sake of which we are certain that we shall be heard. In the presence of God our prayers are regarded in such a way that they are answered before we call. (Luther)

The prayer of the righteous man is answered before it is finished. Before they begin to formulate, when they are still speaking in general, as elsewhere, “Thou hast given him his heart’s desire” (Ps. 21:2). So God heard Moses, groaning and laboring in the anguish of his heart; he heard the groan and the sob of his heart. Then He struck the sea. So Bernard says to his brothers, “Do not despise prayers, and know that as soon as you will have raised your voices, they are written in heaven, and it will come to pass and it will be given you. If it is not given, then it is not good for you, and God will give you something in its place that is better and more useful.” (Luther)

65:25 *wolf ... lamb ... lion.* Proverbial opposites. The first is aggressive and voracious; the latter, weak and helpless, the wolf’s natural food. (TLSB)

A new harmony will exist in the age with no enmity; contrast Gen 3:15. Eden is restored. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

lion shall eat straw – Nature itself is changed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

dust ... serpent’s food. The serpent will be harmless (see 11:8). (CSB)

As a reminder from Gen 3:14, it indicates that the propensity of the serpent to attack man will be a thing of the past. It shall indeed “eat dust,” i.e., taste defeat, but its presence in the picture shall not mar the perfection of God’s new creation. (Leupold)

They ... mountain. Identical to the first two lines of 11:9. (CSB)

Cf 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11; 66:20. Denotes paradise restored (cf Rv 21:10). (TLSB)

The prophet calls attention to God's "mountain," the new Zion with no temple or altar for sacrifice, just the Lamb who was slain (Revelation). Here the benefits of the Savior's atonement will be enjoyed fully and forever. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 4)

65:17–25 In the Lord's new creation, we will completely forget the weeping and futility so characteristic of life in a fallen world. In their place shall be joy and gladness, fulfillment and satisfaction. It is the Lord's desire that His repentant people should no longer remember or be troubled by their former sins. Our place in the Lord's new creation has been secured through faith in Jesus. Through the saving work of His hands, we have the joy of sins forgiven and the gladness of life eternal. • Lord God, You who are quick to hear and answer the prayers of Your people, hasten the day when we will enjoy the fullness of Your new creation. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

The Resurrection of the Dead

19 If in Christ we have hope[b] in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 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. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

15:19-28 Paul's first letter to the Corinthians addresses specific problems and questions that the early church encountered there. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul deals with these challenges in a straightforward Law/Gospel approach. Present-day pastors confront many of the same problems and challenges, i.e., sexual immorality, marriage and divorce, strife, division in the church, abuse of the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of the dead. This epistle is timely and particularly relevant for us today. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

In the 15th chapter, Paul deals with the question of the resurrection of the body. He also assures his readers that because Christ was raised in his body, we too shall have a bodily resurrection at his return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

15:19 *most to be pitied* – If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied,” and we are also the greatest fools, for we alone renounce all goods and comforts, all joy and happiness of this life and of all creatures, we expose ourselves to every peril of life and limb in vain and for nothing and to the terrible and unspeakable terror of hell, so that we have to live in contempt and in misery before the world and in eternal fear before God. (Luther)

εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ... ἡλικιώτερες ἐσμὲν μόνον—Some interpreters take the adverb μόνον, “only,” with the verb immediately preceding it: “If in this life we have only hoped”—that is, we have no certainty, only a hope that is an empty shell, a hope which ultimately disappoints us. But the NT does not speak of hope in that negative way. More likely the adverb “only” modifies the whole sentence, and above all the phrase “in this life.” That is the consensus of the English versions; cf. RSV: “If *for this life only* we have hoped in Christ ...” (emphasis added). (CC p. 560)

Indeed, Paul continues, if the skeptics are right, Christians have lost both the present and the future. They do not enjoy present forgiveness in Christ, nor do they have any hope that extends beyond the veil into heaven (15:19; cf. Heb 6:18-20). Their hope is only good for this life. Contrary to what Paul maintained in 1 Cor. 13:13, hope would not endure and be fulfilled in eternity. With such limited hope, Christians would be “of all people most miserable. They would have staked their lives on a great delusion. Even more did this apply to Paul and his coworkers. When they could have been “living it up,” eating and drinking, they had subjected themselves to extraordinary dangers and labors because of their resurrection hope (15:30-32; cf. 2Cor 6:4-10; 11:23-29). Was their hope merely a mirage? (CC p. 564)

Practical Implications

For Paul, Christ’s resurrection is inseparably connected to the future resurrection of Christians; they are two sides of the same coin. Through Baptism Christians have become members of Christ’s own body (1 Cor 12:13). Consequently, the bodily resurrection of Jesus guarantees the resurrection of the believers’ bodies. And that resurrection will be the fulfillment of the gift of salvation accomplished through Christ’s death and inaugurated by Christ’s own bodily rising. Paul’s entire argument hinges on the unbreakable connection between Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of believers on the Last Day. (CC p. 564)

Here is profound and direct insight for our proclamation of Christ’s Easter victory. Easter means that the victory has been won by Christ. At the same time, for God’s people the full participation in that victory is yet to be experienced. Easter is, then, an eschatological event with end-time implications that the church must never forget if she is not to lose her hope. (CC pp. 564-565)

Contemporary Christians, including preachers, sometimes seem to forget that the final Christian hope is not just for the soul to enter Christ’s presence after the death of the body. It is surely true that the Christian’s soul goes “to be with Christ” immediately upon death (Phil 1:23; see also Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Rev 6:9). At times, however, it seems as though this has become the only goal in the minds and hearts of believers, and that the return of Christ Jesus and the resurrection of the body do not play as vital a place in everyday living, believing, and hoping. (CC p. 565)

But the great hope toward which the church and indeed all creation looks is the renewal of that creation and the resurrection of the body. On that day, God will receive the full harvest of which Christ’s own bodily resurrection is the firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20). For Christ will on the Last Day “raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.” Without this hope, the Gospel proclaimed by Paul would collapse. Faith would be futile, sin and its consequences would remain, fellow Christians who have died would have perished, and humanity should look upon us Christians as people who are wasting their time. (CC p. 565)

Paul has led the Corinthians from their view—that there is no final resurrection of the body—to the place of despair to which such a view inevitably leads. Next, with the glorious rhetorical pivot of “but as it is ...” (15:20) Paul will move them from despair back to hope. (CC p. 565)

15:20 Leaving behind the depressing hypotheses which filled the previous paragraph (1 Cor. 15:12–19: “if there were no resurrection of the dead ...”), Paul gives a ringing affirmation: “But as it is [ὡνὶ δέ], Christ has been raised from the dead” (15:20). The Corinthians should never doubt this basic tenet of their creed, nor should they doubt its implications for their own resurrection. For the risen Christ is not the only one who would rise; he is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (15:20; cf. Rev 1:5). Just as the Israelites brought the sheaf of firstfruits to the Lord on the “Sunday” after Passover as a sign that the whole harvest belonged to him (Lev 23:9–15), so Christ’s resurrection was the pledge that all who had fallen asleep in him would be physically raised as he was. (CC p. 568)

but – nuni – But now, just now, but as it is, meaning that it is a fact and this is the end of all speculation. (TLSB)

Christ has indeed been raised. Paul’s categorical conclusion based on his evidence set forth in vv. 3–8. (CSB)

“Christ has indeed been raised.” The verb *hegēgertai* is the perfect passive of *hegeirō*, “to raise.” This verb form expresses the certainty of Christ’s bodily resurrection as an accomplished fact. This is the 7th occurrence of the verb in this chapter. “Make no mistake,” Paul is saying, “Christ has been raised!” It is done! We know it and believe it! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

But He came forth alive from the grave in which He lay and destroyed and consumed both devil and death, who had devoured Him. He tore the devil’s belly and hell’s jaws asunder and ascended into heaven, where He is now seated in eternal life and glory.” This is to be comfort and defiance. For on His name we are baptized, and we hear and profess His Word. After Him we are called Christians, and for His sake we suffer every misfortune and grief from the hand of the devil. For this is not aimed at us but at Him and His kingdom, whose enemy the devil is. He tries to destroy it, and he treats us so roughly and wearies us with pursuit, harassment, and death so that we might forsake Christ. (Luther)

The apostle comes now to the triumphant assertion of the fact, the proof of which he has already stated. (CB)

firstfruits. The first sheaf of the harvest given to the Lord (Lev 23:10–11, 17, 20) as a token that all the harvest belonged to the Lord and would be dedicated to him through dedicated lives. So Christ, who has been raised, is the guarantee of the resurrection of all of God’s redeemed people (cf. 1Th 4:13–18). (CSB)

The earliest portion of a harvest, which Israel sacrificed to God in thanks for the full harvest to come. (TLSB)

The first of any crop, herd or family was given to the Lord. This represented all the rest of the crop, herd or family. In this case it means that Christ’ resurrection includes the resurrection of everyone else.

This is the perfect passive. This verb form expresses the certainty of Christ’s bodily resurrection as an accomplished fact. This is the 7th occurrence of the verb in this chapter. “Make no mistake,” Paul is saying, “Christ has been raised!” It is done! We know it and believe it!

ἀπαρχή—This is one of the Greek words the LXX uses (e.g., Ex 23:19; Ezek 44:30) to translate בְּכֹרִים, the “firstfruits” God commanded the Israelites to offer to him (e.g., Ex 23:19; 34:22, 26; Lev 23:17, 20). The “firstfruits” were the first produce from the harvest, with the full harvest yet to come. The LXX also uses the word to translate בְּכוֹר, the “firstborn” son and “firstborn” animals that were to be offered to God (e.g., Ex 22:28; Deut 12:6, 17). The NT regularly uses this term of a first installment which betokens a greater fullness to come (Rom 8:23; 11:16; 16:5; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13; James 1:18; Rev 14:4). Cf. LXX Lev 23:10. (CC p. 566)

And what is more than that, by calling Christ “the Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” Paul wishes to signify that the resurrection is to be viewed and understood as having already begun in Christ, indeed, as being more than half finished, and that this remnant of death is to be regarded as no more than a deep sleep, and that the future resurrection of our body will not differ from suddenly awaking from such a sleep. For the main and best part of this has already come to pass, namely, that Christ, our Head, has

arisen. But now that the Head is seated on high and lives, there is no longer any reason for concern. (Luther)

15:21-22 Luther: “St. Paul is still speaking only about those who are Christians. These he wants to instruct and console with this article. For although also the non-Christians must all arise, this will not be to their comfort and joy, since they will arise for judgment and not for life.... I will say nothing of that great vulgar throng which seeks its pleasure and consolation only here, which [despises] God’s Word and cares not a mite for God and His kingdom. It is not surprising that such people are annoyed to hear of the blessed resurrection; for us, however, it is pure joy, because we hear that our greatest Treasure, over which we rejoice, is already in heaven above, and that only the most insignificant part remains behind; and that He will awaken this, too, and draw it after Him as easily as a person awakens from sleep” (AE 28:114–15). (TLSB)

15:21 *by a man came death*. Through Adam (Ge 3:17–19). (CSB)

δι’ ἀνθρώπου θάνατος ... δι’ ἀνθρώπου ἀνάστασις—Literally, “through a man death ... through a man resurrection.” The Greek is succinct; there are no verbs and no definite articles. The translation of ἄνθρωπος as “man” (KJV, NIV, RSV) rather than “human being” (NRSV) is defensible not only for its succinctness but also because of the referents, Adam and Christ (15:22). (CC p. 566)

“In Adam all die.” All who are in Adam—his descendants, meaning all people—must suffer death because they have inherited his sin and its consequences. This is why Paul reminds us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death (v 26). Since all human beings are physical descendants of Adam, all are heirs of the physical result of his disobedience: death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Through one man’s disobedience, the tragedy of human suffering and death had become the common lot of all (1 Cor 15:21–22) (See also, e.g., Gen 2:17; 4:8, 23; 5:5). It was fitting, then, that it would be through the obedience of another man, the second Adam, that resurrection and life would come to all men. Later Paul would spell this out more fully in his epistle to the Romans (5:12–21). Here he sketches the Adam-Christ typology in the briefest terms. Just as Adam’s sin and death affected not only himself but all humanity, so the Corinthians needed to appreciate that Christ’s resurrection was not only for his own benefit; through this Man the resurrection from the dead had become the destiny of all believers. For just as Adam was the head of the old humanity, so that his fall left a legacy of sin and death to all, so Christ stands as head of the new humanity to be made alive in him. And—to use Luther’s fine analogy from the birth of humans and animals—“after [the head] is born, the whole body follows easily.” (CC pp. 568-569)

Cf. LW 28:110:

For the main and best part of this has already come to pass, namely, that Christ, our Head, has arisen. But now that the Head is seated on high and lives, there is no longer any reason for concern. We who cling to Him must also follow after Him as His body and His members. For where the head goes and abides, there the body with all the members must necessarily follow and abide. As in the birth of man and of all animals, the head naturally appears first, and after this is born, the whole body follows easily. (CC p. 569)

the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. Through Christ, the second Adam, “the last Adam” (v. 45; cf. Ro 5:12–21). (CSB)

Here St. Paul places these two types over against each other. He wants to say: “Through one man, Adam, so much was effected that all men must now die, both he and all of us who, after all, did not commit or

perpetrate the offense but came into sin and death solely because we are descended from him.” Although this happens after the Fall, yet it is no longer the sin of another, but it becomes our own when we are born. That is a miserable deal and an awful judgment of God; and it would be still more terrible if we were all to remain in death eternally. But now God placed a second Man, called Christ, over against the first one, so that, just as we die without any fault of our own by reason of the first man, we shall live again by reason of Christ and without our merit. And as we in Adam have to pay solely for the fact that we are his members or his flesh and blood, so we enjoy our advantage here in Christ also solely by virtue of His being our Head. It is pure grace and gift, so that we have no works or merits to boast of here. (Luther)

“In Christ all will be made alive.” The verb *zōiopoieῖthēsontai* is first future passive indicative of *zōiopoieō*, “to make alive.” Paul contrasts the present reality of death with the future reality of resurrection. Though physical death is a certainty for everyone, it is equally certain that those in Christ will be made alive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

15:22 *in Adam all die*. All who are “in Adam”—i.e., his descendants—suffer death. (CSB)

ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ ... ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ—The definite articles point to both Adam and Christ as specific historical persons. (CC p. 566)

in Christ all shall be made alive.† All who are “in Christ”—i.e., who are related to him through faith—will be made alive at the resurrection (cf. Jn 5:25; 1Th 4:16–17; Rev 20:6). (CSB)

ζωοποιηθήσονται—See this verb also in 15:36, 45. In the LXX God “is almost always the subj[ect] of ζωοποιεῖν.” He kills and *makes alive* (2 Ki 5:7; cf. 1 Sam 2:6). In the NT the subject may be God the Father (Jn 5:21; Rom 4:17; 8:11) or God the Son (Jn 5:21; 1 Cor 15:45) or God the Spirit (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6). The verb is strongly soteriological and eschatological, pointing to the triune God’s unique power in making alive through the Gospel those who are spiritually dead, and raising those who are physically dead. In Jn 5:21 and Rom 8:11 it parallels ἐγείρω. Compare Rev 20:4–6, 12–15, which portrays “the first resurrection [ἀνάστασις]” (Rev 20:5) as the spiritual resurrection of Christians in this life, when they are made alive through the Gospel. The second resurrection is the bodily resurrection of all people on Judgment Day. (CC pp. 566-567)

This latter clause in 1 Cor 15:22 (“so also in Christ all will be made alive”) must not be understood in a universalistic sense. Only “those who belong to Christ” (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15:23) through baptismal incorporation (“we all were baptized with one Spirit into one body,” 12:13) and by faith will receive the gift of resurrection to eternal life. Unbelievers too will be raised bodily but then will be cast into the lake of fire, which is “the second death” (Rev 20:14–15; cf. Dan 12:1–3). (CC p. 569)

The verb is first future passive indicative, “to make alive.” Paul contrasts the present reality of death with the future reality of resurrection.

Therefore the grace, the consolation, and the joy are as great here as the misery and sadness are there, indeed, even greater. The benefit surpasses the harm done by far. If someone inflicts a slight injury on me and another compensates me richly for this, what cause for complaint do I have? It is as if a thief had stolen ten florins from me and a rich man reimbursed me with one hundred florins. Therefore when the devil kills my body with all sorts of evil, Christ again restores this to me in a state much more glorious, beautiful, and brilliant than the bright sun. Therefore we must not be concerned about our reluctance to die, but against this we must vividly picture the happiness and the joy that will be ours in yonder life. This will be inexpressibly greater and more glorious than the damage and the woe which we now suffer from Adam. (Luther)

This clause must not be understood in a universalistic sense. Only “those who belong to Christ” (15:23) through baptismal incorporation (“we all were baptized with one Spirit into one body,” 12:13) and by faith will receive the gift of resurrection to eternal life. Unbelievers too will be raised bodily but they will be cast into the lake of fire, which is, “the second death” (Rev 20:14-15; cf Dan 12:1-3), (CC p. 569)

15:23 *each in his own order.*† Christ, the firstfruits, was raised in his own time in history (c. A.D. 30), and those who are identified with Christ through faith will be raised at his second coming. His resurrection is the pledge that ours will follow. (CSB)

ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι—The word τάγμα is related to words like τάσσω, ὑποτάσσω, and τάξις, all of which have to do with “order.” A τάγμα can designate a military division; a group like the Sadducees or Essenes; or a position someone assumes, a rank. Here the context (“firstfruits, then . . . then”) seems to require the meaning listed under BAGD, s.v. τάγμα, 2: “order, turn, arrangement.” (CC p. 567)

That is what is meant here when we read: “each in his own order.” These words differentiate between His resurrection and ours. For the order demands that He be the first; He must blaze the trail and produce life. After that He will gather all those who are His members and belong to the resurrection, one after another, so that they all come forth together on one day appointed by Him and live with Him eternally. (Luther)

Paul goes on to encourage the Corinthians to be patient. The end is not yet; their loved ones must still rest in the grave for a time. But everything will surely happen in its proper order. Christ’s resurrection is the great first step, the firstfruits holding the promise of everything else. Then His resurrection leaven will work through the whole church lump, as those who belong to Him (cf. Gal 5:24) will be raised when He descends from heaven on the Last Day (1 Thess 4:16). At no point in 1 Cor 15:2-28 does Paul refer to the fate of unbelievers; his concern is to bring comfort and hope to the believers (cf 1 Thess 4:18). (CC p. 569)

at his coming – Gk *parousia*; commonly described a royal visit. Used 18 times in the NT for Christ’s reappearing in glory. (TLSB)

παρουσία—Of its twenty-four occurrences in the NT, παρουσία is used six times of the arrival or physical presence of people (e.g., Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, 16:17), and eighteen times of Christ’s second coming in glory—its meaning here, which the English transliteration “parousia” conveys. Deissmann showed that the word was commonly used for a royal visit. (CC p. 567)

belong to Christ – The dead in Christ. (TLSB)

15:24 *the end.* The second coming of Christ and all the events accompanying it. This includes his handing over the kingdom to the Father, following his destroying all dominion, authority and power of the persons and forces who oppose him. (CSB)

τὸ τέλος—J. Weiss and H. Lietzmann held the view that τὸ τέλος here means a third group or τάγμα after Christ and the redeemed. But J. Hering has shown that τέλος never means a group of people. τὸ τέλος means “the end,” particularly in the sense of God’s great goal or purpose of redemptive history. (CC p. 567)

All things on earth will come to an end, and that which we together with all saints have desired and waited for since the beginning of the world will be ushered in, namely, that God Himself will be Lord alone and rule alone in us, His children. To this rule there will be no end. He Himself explains what He

means with the end when He says that He will abolish every rule and power and will alone be all in all. (Luther)

he delivers – Christ, as a conquering general, now wars against sin, death, and the power of the devil. He will present His conquest to His Father, who has given Him authority to wage this war (v 28). (TLSB)

ὅταν παραδιδῶ ... ὅταν καταργήσῃ—The change from the present subjunctive παραδιδῶ in the first clause to the aorist subjunctive καταργήσῃ in the second may be significant; the aorist here indicates prior action. Thus Christ’s subjugation of the powers will precede his delivering the kingdom to the Father. The kingdom (βασιλεία, 15:24) is the *activity* of ruling, as indicated by the *verb* βασιλεύω in 15:25. (CC p. 567)

At the appointed time, *then* Christ’s second coming will usher in the consummation of the age (1 Cor 15:24). The conjunction “then” (15:24) does not necessarily indicate that there will be a marked interval between his return and his handing over the kingdom to the Father. Rather, the triumphant Messiah may be compared to a nobleman who had journeyed to a far country to receive a kingdom and then to return (Luke 19:12). All authority had been entrusted to him for this assignment (Matthew 11:27; 28:1). In the course of His campaigns against the enemies of the kingdom, he had bound up the “strong man” (Satan) and plundered his goods (Mark 3:22-27), so that Satan’s former possessions now belong to the conqueror. The He hands over His people to His God and father, having deposed all spiritual and temporal authorities and powers (1 Cor. 15:24). (CC p. 569)

to God the Father – τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ—Literally this phrase reads “to the God and Father.” This is a good example of Sharp’s rule: “When the copulative καὶ connects two nouns of the same case, ... of personal description, ... if the article ... precedes the first of the said nouns or particles, and is not repeated before the second noun or particle, the latter always relates to the same person.” (CC p. 567)

There is no personal pronoun “his” in the Greek phrase. But Jesus often referred to God as “my God” (e.g., Mt 27:46) and “my Father” (e.g., Mt 10:32). Since the plural pronoun ἡμῶν (“our”) is not used, Paul probably has in mind Jesus’ unique relationship with the Father. That relationship is indicated by inserting “his” in the translation above. (CC p. 568)

every rule and every authority – Spiritual powers that manifest themselves in sinful institutions and orders on earth. (TLSB)

The texts parallel to 15:24 make it clear Paul has in mind primarily hostile spiritual powers: the devil and his forces (Cf. Eph 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12). But his terminology is comprehensive, and he may well have been thinking also of hostile human authorities: kings, rules, and all anti-Christian forces who under the influence of demonic forces range themselves against the Lord and His Anointed. (CC p. 570)

Psalm 2; Acts 4:25–28; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19. Revelation portrays the anti-Christian forces as consisting of an unholy trinity, composed of Satan—the dragon (Revelation 12)—and two beasts (Revelation 13). The second beast later becomes “the false prophet” (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) and also the “harlot” (Rev 17:1, 5, 15–16; 19:2). The harlot riding the beast represents Babylon (Rev 17:1–6), which would refer to Rome, and to every oppressive power, especially when a false religious power unites with a governmental power to persecute the church. See the commentary on Rev 17:1–6 and the excursus “Is the Harlot the Antichrist?” in L. Brighton, *Revelation*, 435–45, 481–83. (CC p. 570)

Hays finds in the terms “ruler,” “authority,” and “power” (1 Cor 15:24) not only a reference to “cosmic spheres or forces” but also “concrete political implications” (*First Corinthians*, 265). While Hays’ suggestion that this text has “political implications” and that Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection is “subversive” outruns the evidence, he is probably right in maintaining that Paul would include among the powers whose days are numbered “the ideology of imperial Rome” with its cities “replete with statues and temples dedicated to the glory of the Roman rulers.” (CC p. 570)

Christ’s triumph over these powers (1 Cor 15:25) fulfilled God’s plan as it had been laid down in Ps 110:1. David says: The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.” (CC p. 570)

Paul cites the psalm freely to show the divinely ordained necessity that Christ should triumph over death and ascend to the Father’s right hand, where he is enthroned and rules in the midst of his defeated foes (Ps 110:2). (CC p. 570)

Note how Paul differs from LXX Ps 109:1 (MT/ET 110:1) by inserting πάντα (“all his enemies”) and by altering the LXX’s ὑποπόδιον (“footstool”) to ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας (“under the/his feet”). Paul may have effected these changes in order to make Psalm 110 (cited in 1 Cor 15:25) and Psalm 8 (cited in 1 Cor 15:27) echo one another according to the rabbinic method of *gezerah shawah* (“equal category”). Compare the citation of both Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:5–7 in close proximity in Heb 1:13–2:9 and in early Christian writings. See, for example, D. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973). On *gezerah shawah* (גְּזֵרָה שְׂוָה), see R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999) 20. (CC p. 570)

His regency would continue until *all* his enemies had been subjugated completely. Paul adds “all” to the quote in 1 Cor 15:25 and places “all” first in the Greek of 15:27 to emphasize it. (CC p. 570)

15:25-27 *He. Christ. last enemy ... death.* Contrary to notions of death as friendly and suicide as a solution, the Bible describes death as our enemy. The Lord created us for life, not death. Death is destroyed by the gift of eternal life in Christ. *subjection under His feet.* Paul applies these verses to Jesus. He is the man by whom God fulfills His purposes for all humankind. “There is and remains in Christ only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty, and glory, which is peculiar to the divine nature alone. But it shines, manifests, and exercises itself fully—yet voluntarily—in, with, and through the received, exalted human nature in Christ. In glowing iron there are not two kinds of power to shine and burn. But the power to shine and to burn is a property of the fire. Since the fire is united with the iron, it manifests and exercises this power to shine and to burn in, with, and through the glowing iron. From this union also the glowing iron has the power to shine and to burn without changing the essence and the natural properties of fire and iron. This guides how we understand the testimonies of Scripture that speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted” (FC SD VIII 66–67). (TLSB)

15:25 *For he must reign.* † During this process of Christ’s destroying all dominion and handing over the kingdom to the Father, Christ must reign (Rev 20:1–6). Some take this to mean that Christ will literally reign with his saints for 1,000 years on the earth. But this refers to Christ’s reign over the course of history and in the lives of his people, who are spiritually raised, or born again. This reign is viewed as continuing throughout the present age. (CSB)

under his feet. An OT figure for complete conquest. Verse 25 is an allusion to Ps 110:1 (cf. Mt 22:44). (CSB)

Paul cites the psalm freely to show the divinely ordained necessity that Christ should triumph over death and ascend to the Father’s right hand, where He is enthroned and rules in the midst of His defeated foes.

His regency would continue until all His enemies had been subjected completely. Paul adds “all” to the quote and places “all” first in the Greek of 15:27 to emphasize it. (CC p. 570)

For through the Gospel and through Christendom He strikes the factious spiritually, repels the devil, dethrones the tyrants, subdues the raging and raving of the world, deprives sin and death of their strength and might, etc. This is His work which He pursues and in which He engages until the Last Day, only that He now does this piecemeal and by degrees. Then, however, He will knock the bottom out of the barrel and put an end to everything at one time. (Luther)

15:26 *the last enemy* – This destruction of death will occur at the end of the second-coming events after Christ conquers his enemies (Rev 19:11–21; 20:5–14), at the great white throne judgment (when death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire). (CSB)

ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος—Literally, “death is destroyed as last enemy.” “Death” is the subject of the sentence because it is preceded by the definite article, while “last enemy” (without the article) is the complement. The verb applies to a future event, but the verb’s present tense “strikes a note of vividness and certainty.” (CC p. 568)

A little later Paul will call death an “enemy” with a vicious sting,” “the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law” (1 Cor 15:56). Humankind fears death as a hostile and destructive force (Heb 2:15) and the punishment for sin (Rom 6:23). (CC p. 570)

Luther sees death as “the last enemy” (15:26) because it outlasts the Christian’s other enemies (the flesh, the devil, the world, sin, and the Law): “Thus these enemies can deal with us only here on earth; after that they have to cease. Death, however, survives all the others and holds us in his power” (LW 28:136). (CC p. 570)

As long as people continue to die as the wages of their sin, inherited from Adam, who rebelled against the Creator, God’s good and gracious will for His creation is not yet brought to completion. But after all Christ’s people have been raised to life at His second coming, there will be no more death (Rev. 21:4). (CC p. 570-571)

The fact that death is our spiritual enemy has immense significance for Christian existence and Christian funerals. Sometimes at funerals one hears comments such as these: “We shouldn’t be sad; we should only rejoice. This is a victory celebration.” To be sure, there is a sense in which that is true. But death, the last enemy and sign of sin’s universal dominion over fallen humanity, will not be swallowed up until the Last Day (1 Cor 15:54), and Christians are free to grieve at the death of their loved ones. God never intended the pain of separation and the heartache that attends death. That sharp pain of grief can be an entirely appropriate manifestation of the biblical understanding that death is the enemy that has not yet been fully overcome. And so Christians may and should mourn at funerals—but not as those who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13–18). (CC p. 571)

Paul’s depiction of death as “the last enemy” to be defeated finds a graphic parallel in Revelation, where the unholy trinity of the beast, the false prophet, and the devil are thrown into the lake of fire, to be followed at last by “death” and Hades (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14). (CC p. 571)

See the commentary on those verses in L. Brighton, *Revelation*, 522, 575–76, 586–87. To speak of death as an “enemy” is important both for Paul’s culture and for our own. Just as ancient Stoics and Gnostics welcomed death as the soul’s release from the body, so today advocates of euthanasia and suicide speak of death as a “friend.” (CC p. 571)

GOSPEL – Luke 24:1-12

The Resurrection

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, 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.” 8 And they remembered his words, 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.

24:1 *first day of the week.* Sunday began by Jewish time at sundown on Saturday. Spices could then be bought (Mk 16:1), and they were ready to set out early the next day. When the women started out, it was dark (Jn 20:1), and by the time they arrived at the tomb, it was still early dawn (see Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2). (CSB)

Sunday is the day God said, “Let there be light” (Gn 1:3, 5). (TLSB)

at early dawn – ὄρθρου βαθέως—The genitive signifies the period of time (the one known as “deep dawn”) *during* which the action takes place. (BDF § 186 [2], calls this an unclassical usage for the point of time *at which*.) Perhaps the most illuminating comment on this phrase is the remark of B. B. Rogers in his commentary on Aristophanes, where he describes ὄρθρος βαθέως as “the dim twilight that precedes the dawn ... the thick dullness of night [that] has not yet yielded to the clear transparency of day” (*The Wasps of Aristophanes*, 32, n. 216). (CC pp, 963-964)

spices – Used for the final burial rites (23:55–56). (TLSB)

went to the tomb – ἦλθον—The subject of “they went” is the women in 23:55 (who will be identified at 24:10). This is confirmed by the feminine plural participle θέρουσαι and the reference to the spices that these women had prepared in 23:56a. (CC p. 964)

The hearer of the gospel observes a transformation taking place in the women as they move through these events. Having kept the Sabbath according to the commandment, the women come to the tomb from the perspective of the old covenant of salvation. Note how the tomb is emphasized in this section: they are coming to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body because they think Jesus is dead. This is the attitude of those who are still living in the old covenant: they have confidence in resurrection on the Last Day, as Martha says in Jn 11:24 (see, e.g., Job 19:25–27; Is 25:6–9; Dan 12:2–3), but they certainly do not expect resurrection *now*. So the women are perplexed when they find that the tomb is empty. The stone has been rolled away, but entering (the tomb!) they did not find the body of Jesus. Luke uses the word “find” (εὑρον) in an ironic way to emphasize the emptiness of the tomb: the women “found” the stone rolled away from the empty tomb but “did not find” Jesus. To find the tomb empty may seem to be to find nothing, but in finding nothing, the women will make the greatest find: the discovery that Jesus is risen! (CC pp. 965-966)

24:2 *the stone rolled away.* A tomb's entrance was ordinarily closed to keep vandals and animals from disturbing the bodies. This stone, however, had been sealed by Roman authority for a different reason (see Mt 27:62–66). (CSB)

**Resurrection
Appearances**

EVENT	DATE	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	1 Corinthians
At the empty tomb outside Jerusalem	Early Sunday morning	28:1–10	16:1–8	24:1–12	20:1–9		
To Mary Magdalene at the tomb	Early Sunday morning		16:9–11		20:11–18		
To two travelers on the road to Emmaus	Sunday at midday		16:12–13	24:13–32			
To Peter in Jerusalem	During the day on Sunday			24:34			15:5
To the ten disciples in the upper room	Sunday evening			24:36–43	20:19–25		
To the eleven disciples in the upper room	One week later		16:14		20:26–31		15:5
To seven disciples fishing on the Sea of Galilee	One day at daybreak				21:1–23		
To the eleven disciples on the mountain in Galilee	Some time later	28:16–20	16:15–18				
To more than 500	Some time later						15:6
To James	Some time later						15:7
At the Ascension on the Mt. of Olives	Forty days after the resurrection			24:44–49		1:3–8	

23:3 *they went in* – Boldly seeking their Lord. (TLSB)

did not find the body – οὐχ εὑρον τὸ σῶμα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ—Luke leaves absolutely no doubt that the resurrection is historical fact. This pericope is framed by the empty tomb. Here the women “did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” At the end of the pericope Peter runs to the tomb and sees “the linen cloths alone” (24:12, implying that the body they once covered was not there). The Emmaus disciples will tell Jesus that the women reported that they did not find his body (24:23; μὴ εὐροῶσαι τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ), and this was confirmed by the disciples who found the tomb just as the women had reported and who also did not find Jesus’ body (24:24). (CC p. 964)

24:4 *while they were perplexed* – ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου—The antecedent of τούτου is the empty tomb; that is what perplexed them. (In 21:25 Jesus said that nations would be bewildered by the cosmic signs in creation at the coming of the Son of Man.) L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 387, notes: “The *fact* of the empty tomb does not itself lead to faith. It must be interpreted” (emphasis Johnson). Likewise, the Emmaus disciples know of the fact of the empty tomb in 24:22–24 but do not understand until Jesus interprets it for them in 24:25–27. (CC p. 964)

behold two men – καὶ ἰδοῦ—Luke uses καὶ ἰδοῦ three times in Luke 24 (vv 4, 13, 49). This repetition increases the continuity between the three major pericopes of this chapter: 24:1–12; 24:13–35; and 24:36–53. (CC p. 964)

two men. They looked like men, but their clothes were remarkable (see 9:29; Ac 1:10; 10:30). Other reports referring to them call them angels (v. 23; see also Jn 20:12). Although Matthew speaks of one angel (not two, Mt 28:2) and Mark of a young man in white (Mk 16:5), this is not strange because frequently only the spokesman is noted and an accompanying figure is not mentioned. Words and posture (seated, Jn 20:12; standing, Lk 24:4) often change in the course of events, so these variations are not necessarily contradictory. They are merely evidence of independent accounts. (CSB)

Identified as angels (v 23). As angels announced Jesus’ birth (2:8–14), they also announce His resurrection. (TLSB)

dazzling apparel – Similar term is used for Jesus’ clothing at His transfiguration (9:29), reflecting God’s splendor. (TLSB)

ἀστράπτουση—See comments at 9:29. In the transfiguration account ἐξαστράπτω (9:29) describes the dazzling nature of Jesus’ clothing, and here ἀστράπτω (24:4) describes the dazzling apparel of the angels. Perhaps the compound form ἐξαστράπτω (9:29), a hapax legomenon in the NT, indicates that Jesus’ clothing was even brighter than that of the angels. (CC p. 964)

However, the women, like other participants in the gospel, need to have the significance of the facts explained to them. They are still in a state of confusion; they do not grasp the import of the empty tomb they see before them. With two typically Lukan phrases, “it came to pass” (24:4; καὶ ἐγένετο, used twenty-nine times in Luke) and “and behold” (24:4; καὶ ἰδοῦ, used twenty-six times in Luke), the evangelist signals that a great moment of revelation is about to take place. And indeed it does, with two men appearing in dazzling clothes. (CC p. 966)

Luke’s resurrection narrative and the transfiguration account have a striking parallel in the phrase “and behold, two men,” καὶ ἰδοῦ ἄνδρες δύο. In the transfiguration account at 9:30, that phrase introduces Moses and Elijah, who appear in glory discussing, Jesus’ “exodus [ἐξοδον], which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem” (9:31). Only Luke mentions that Moses and Elijah appeared “in glory” (9:31), and Luke also emphasizes the glory of Jesus (9:32). Luke alone uses ἐξοδος, “exodus,” to describe what Jesus is about to fulfill in Jerusalem. Using that term, only Luke alludes to the death and resurrection of Jesus in

the transfiguration account. The passion themes in these few verses of the transfiguration parallel the resurrection narrative in 24:4–7, where the two angels call the women to remember Jesus’ prediction of his passion. Now that Jesus has accomplished in Jerusalem what he set out to do, Luke reflects back on both the prophecy of Jesus in Galilee in 9:22 (cf. 9:44) and the prophecy of the entire exodus event in the OT Scriptures, which foretold of Jesus’ passion and resurrection as the glorified figures discussed (9:31). (CC pp. 966-967)

24:5 *frightened and bowed their faces* – Reverential awe in recognition of the angels. (TLSB)

ἐμόφοβον δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὰ πρόσωπα εἰς τὴν γῆν—This genitive absolute is translated causally, as expressing the reason why the angels spoke the words that they did. It could also be construed temporally, “when they became afraid . . .” The feminine participle κλινουσῶν shows that the women are the ones who became afraid, and the feminine pronoun αὐτάς in the next phrase indicates that the words were spoken to the women. (CC p. 964)

The women perceive that the angels are a heavenly visitation; fearful, they bow their faces to the ground. The angels ask the women a question that invites them to see things from the perspective of the new era of salvation. The women had come to anoint a dead body, but the angels ask, “Why are you seeking the living one among the dead?” (24:5). Then they interpret what the women observed with their own eyes—that the tomb is empty! “He is not here, but he has risen” (24:6).

the living – τὸν ζῶντα—This is translated “the living one” because of the article. This is not just any living being, but “*the living one*,” who is the source of life. Luke emphasizes that the resurrected Christ is alive and is the one who gives life. This theme will continue throughout Luke 24. Cf. Rom 14:9.

Tombs are for the dead. They are led to remember His promised resurrection (v 7). (TLSB)

24:6 *he is not here but has risen* – ὅκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη—J. Fitzmyer, *Luke X–XXIV*, 1537, calls this phrase “the *praeconium paschale*, the essential Easter proclamation in the Synoptics.” *It is the focus of Luke’s final chapter.* The aorist passive of ἐγείρω could have either a passive sense, “be raised,” or an intransitive sense, “rise” (BAGD 2 c). The passive would be theological: “raised” *by God*. The intransitive “he has risen” emphasizes the divinity of Jesus; he himself has the power to rise. An intransitive sense is supported by the use of the second aorist *active* infinitive ἀναστῆναι, “to rise,” in 24:7. (CC pp. 964-965)

In this *praeconium paschale*, the order of the two phrases in Matthew (28:6) and Luke (24:6) agree: “He is not here . . . he has risen,” whereas Mark (16:6) has the reverse: “He has risen; he is not here!” Matthew includes the words “as he said,” which Luke expands with a passion statement (see comments below). The two-phrase proclamation in Luke is the third (so-called) “Western non-interpolation,” since some manuscripts omit it (D it geo^B). Some argue that Lukan manuscripts containing it have been influenced by Matthew and Mark, but B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 183–84, 191–93, notes that the majority of the UBS³ committee considered it authentic to the text because Luke alone casts it in the antithetical form “He is not here, *but* [ἀλλά] he has risen,” while Matthew and Mark lack the adversative ἀλλά. (CC p. 965)

Then Luke alone records the angels’ announcement in 24:6b–7. (Matthew and Mark preserve other angelic words not included in Luke.) It is a complete kerygmatic statement about the passion and resurrection of Jesus that recalls what Jesus said while he was in Galilee. As the angels urge the women to remember, so also are the hearers of the gospel urged to go back to the Galilee narratives (i.e., the gospel from 4:14 to 9:50) and ponder how the full kerygma about Jesus was latent already there. These angelic words are the first of two *hermeneutical* instructions in Luke to “read back” from the perspective of Luke

24 and observe how this great moment—the revelation of Jesus’ resurrection—was adumbrated in the evangelist’s record of Jesus’ teaching and miracles (cf. 24:44). (CC p. 967)

The passion statement in 24:6–7 stands out for several reasons. First, it is only found in Luke. Second, the matter-of-fact tone, “remember ... it is necessary,” contrasts dramatically with the bewilderment of the women. The reliability of the statement is reinforced by connotations of the aorist imperative μνήσθητε, “remember.” That verb (μυμνήσκομαι) is used in Luke only six times and in each case that which is to be remembered (by God or by people) has to do with something God said or did. (Lk 1:54, 72; 16:25; 23:42; 24:6, 8) This imperative may therefore have suggested to Luke’s hearers that Jesus’ words in Galilee were worthy of the greatest trust and confidence because they were the words of God. Third, this passion statement mentally transports the hearer back to 9:22, where Jesus, *during his ministry in Galilee*, makes the first prediction of his passion. (CC pp. 967-968)

remember how he told you – These women from Galilee (23:55) may have also heard what Jesus taught the disciples. (TLSB)

was still in Galilee. Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection on a number of occasions (9:22), but the disciples failed to comprehend or accept what he was saying. (CSB)

>Why Did Jesus Fold the Napkin?

>

**>This is one I can honestly say I have never seen circulating in the e-mails so; I'll
>start it, if it touches you and you want to forward it.**

>

**>Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection? I never noticed
>this....**

>

**>The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the
>face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes..**

>

**>The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded,
>and was placed at the head of that stony coffin.**

>

**>Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb
>and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.**

>

**>She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved..
>She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where
>they have put him!'**

>

**>Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple out ran
>Peter and got there first. He stopped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying
>there, but he didn't go in.**

>

**>Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings
>lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying
>to the side.**

>

- >Was that important? Absolutely!
- >Is it really significant? Yes!
- >
- >In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand
 - >a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day.
 - >The folded napkin
 - >had to do with the Master and Servant, and every
 - >Jewish boy knew
 - >this tradition.
- >
- >When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was
 - >exactly the way the master wanted it.
- >
- >The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out
 - >of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch
 - >that table, until the master was finished.
- >
- >Now if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers,
 - >his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the
 - >table.
- >
- >The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded
 - >napkin meant, "I'm finished."
- >
- >But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside
 - >his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because.....
- >
- >The folded napkin meant,
 - >"I'm coming back."

24:7 *Son of Man must be delivered* – Jesus’ prior teaching, briefly summarized, but hard to accept and remember (9:44; 18:31–33). *must be*. A divine plan foretold by Scripture and by Jesus (1Co 15:3–4). (TLSB)

Fourth, the language used by Luke in 24:7 appears throughout Luke-Acts with reference to Jesus’ passion. For example, the title “Son of Man” is used in Jesus’ three Lukan passion predictions at 9:22, 44; 18:31, and it also occurs in the context of a passion allusion at 17:24–25. The term of divine necessity, δεῖ, “it is necessary,” links 24:7 with 9:22 (cf. 17:25) and is used three times in Luke 24 (vv 7, 26, 44). Luke clearly portrays the death of Jesus as a divine necessity. Other important passion words in 24:7 are “betray,” παραδίδωμι (Lk 9:44; 18:32; 24:20; Acts 3:13), “hands of men,” χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων (Lk 9:44), “crucify,” σταυρώω (“cross,” σταυρός; 9:23), “rise,” ἀνίστημι (9:22 [variant reading]; 18:33; 24:46), and “on the third day,” τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (Lk 9:22; 18:33; 24:21, 46; Acts 10:40). (Interestingly, this is the first time the word “crucify” [σταυρώω] occurs in a passion statement, for in 9:22 Jesus said simply that he must be killed. Now that the crucifixion is a historical fact, the method of Jesus’ death is included in the passion statement.) *In summary, by incorporating allusions to the other passion statements into the story of the empty tomb, Luke affirms that the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus are part of the divine plan as foretold by the ancient Scriptures and by Jesus himself.* (CC p. 968)

24:8 *they remembered* – The first moment of comprehension. (TLSB)

The women respond (24:8) by remembering what the angels recalled for them: the prophesied passion and resurrection facts. Luke’s phrase in 24:8 “and they remembered his words,” καὶ ἐμνήσθησαν τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ, contrasts with the comments in 9:45 and 18:34, after Jesus’ second and third predictions of the passion. There the apostles “did not understand this word [ῥῆμα], and it was hidden from them . . . and they were afraid to ask him concerning this word [ῥῆμα]” (9:45); “this word [ῥῆμα] was hidden from them, and they did not know the things that were spoken [τὰ λεγόμενα]” (18:34). No direct response to Jesus’ first passion prediction (9:22) is recorded, but the behavior of Peter, John, and James at the transfiguration, which occurred “after these words [λόγοι]” (9:28), immediately after the first prediction, certainly evidenced a lack of comprehension. (CC p. 968)

But now a breakthrough occurs. The Word of God—finally—penetrates the uncomprehending minds of sinful humans and produces faith. For the first time, Jesus’ words are “remembered” (24:8)—that is, understood by faith and believed, as shown by the women’s faithful reporting of “all these things” (ταῶτα πάντα; 24:9), “these words” (τὰ ῥήματα ταῶτα; 24:11). At long last, minds and eyes are being opened to understand God’s Word. And the process will continue with still more followers of Jesus in the rest of Luke 24. (CC pp. 968-969)

The women began this eighth, eschatological day—“the first day” of the new week (24:1)—from the perspective of the old covenant. But now they remember the words of the Lord and through faith are incorporated into the new covenant. They have been transformed through the announcement of the angels on the first day of the new era of salvation. “Something more than ‘prophecy/fulfillment’ is at work here. The words of Jesus are regarded as critical for understanding the events, providing a first interpretation that shapes their very perception.” Only when the historical facts are interpreted by the divinely revealed Word do enlightenment and faith follow. The enlightened women are the first human participants to witness the empty tomb, to hear the significance explained by an appeal to Jesus’ own words, and then to remember those words with an understanding of faith created by those very words of Jesus. (CC p. 969)

24:9 *to the Eleven and to all the rest.* “Eleven” is sometimes used to refer to the group of apostles (Ac 1:26; 2:14) after the betrayal by Judas. Judas was dead at the time the apostles first met the risen Christ, but the group was still called the Twelve (Jn 20:24). The “others” included disciples who, for the most part, came from Galilee. (CSB)

Judas’s replacement was not yet chosen (24:33; Ac 1:26). *all the rest.* Includes the two disciples returning to Emmaus (Lk 24:13, 22–24) and the larger group of Jesus’ followers, possibly some of the 120 of Ac 1:15. Some modern interpreters emphasize that since God chose to have women first bear witness to the resurrection, this means God specially ordained them for service in the Church. This argument fails on two counts: the angels were actually the first to bear witness to the resurrection (v 5), and God has always called all of His people to bear witness to His mighty acts (cf Ps 145), even children (Ps 8:2). The “go-and-tell” passages in the Gospels are not about ordaining or commissioning people to offices in the Church, but about people acting as couriers or witnesses (e.g., Mt 11:4; 18:15; Mk 5:19; Lk 7:22; 13:32). (TLSB)

ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου—This is the fourth “Western non-interpolation,” which a majority of witnesses include in the text. (CC p. 965)

The women, who continue to be the subject, return from the tomb, the locale for the previous section, and report to the Eleven and all the rest (24:9; τοῖς ἑνδεκά καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς λουποῖς). The women become the first evangelists. “The Eleven” is a reference to the Twelve minus Judas, and “all the rest” would most likely include the seventy (-two) from Luke 10 and the larger group of Jesus’ followers. The Emmaus disciples probably would have been among “all the rest” (see comments on 24:13). What the women

reported were the passion and resurrection facts, “all these things” (24:9; ταῶτα πάντα), especially the empty tomb and the appearance and words of the angels. (CC p. 969)

24:10 *Mary Magdalene*. She is named first in most of the lists of women (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; but cf. Jn 19:25) and was the first to see the risen Christ (Jn 20:13–18). She was a leader among these women because she had received more than all the rest, and therefore her measure of devotion and love was greater. Fourteen times Mary is mentioned by name. In eight of these her name leads the list. (CSB)

Somehow the name of this woman has come to be associated with fallen womanhood of the world over largely because some scholars chose to identify her with the unnamed sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50. There is no evidence in the Bible to support this thought.

In 24:10 the evangelist records for us who these women were. Some were the same as in 8:2–3, i.e., “the Magdalene Mary and Joanna” (ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννα). Mary, the mother of James, is added here, and Susanna (8:3) is not mentioned. “The rest of the women with them” (αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς) indicates that there were more women at the empty tomb than the three named. The women who were with Jesus in Galilee, supported him with their own resources (8:3), and viewed the crucifixion (23:49) are the first witnesses of the resurrection. Luke repeats that these women are the first evangelists to announce to the apostles the resurrection facts. The imperfect ἔλεγον, “they were telling” (24:10), suggests that the women’s telling was ongoing and repeated. (CC pp. 969-970)

Joanna. See 8:3. She is named by only Luke at this point (Mark is the only one who adds Salome at this time, Mk 16:1). (CSB)

Note from TLSB on 8:2-3: Accompanied Mary to anoint Jesus’ body. As wife to the household manager of Herod Antipas, she would have belonged to a higher social class.

Mary the mother of James. See Mk 16:1. She is the “other Mary” of Mt 28:1. The absence of the mother of Jesus is significant. She was probably with John (cf. Jn 19:27). (CSB)

Likely referred to in Mk 15:40. James’s identity is uncertain, but he may be “the son of Alphaeus,” one of the Twelve (Lk 6:15). (TLSB)

other women – αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς—The gender of both the adjective and the pronoun is feminine, “the rest [feminine plural] with them [feminine plural].” (CC p. 965)

Those from Galilee who witnessed Jesus’ death and burial (23:49, 55). (TLSB)

the apostles – τοὺς ἀποστόλους—See above at 6:13; 9:10; 11:49; 17:5; and 22:14 on “apostles.” (CC p. 965)

24:11 *did not believe* – The imperative ἀπιστουν, “they were not believing” indicates ongoing disbelief of the report despite the fact that the women continued to speak. (CC p. 970)

seemed to them an idle tale – Nonsense; hopeful but impossible. This continues the theme in Lk of the disciples’ slowness to believe and understand (cf v 25). (TLSB)

The angels’ announcement to the women prompted them to remember—and believe—Jesus’ words. But the announcement of the women to the apostles is met with a completely different response. The apostles consider the passion and resurrection facts “nonsense” (24:11; λῆρος), and they do not believe the women. The imperfect ἠπίστουν, “they were not believing” (24:11), indicates ongoing disbelief of the

report despite the fact that the women continued to speak (ἔλεγον, “they were telling”; 24:10) to the apostles. The apostles’ lack of understanding of the passion and disbelief at the resurrection (24:11) is emphasized most in Luke’s resurrection narrative. At this point, the apostles still do not comprehend God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. (CC p. 970)

If the whole tomb experience is now to become a contrasting episode to the risen Lord’s own instilling of the Easter faith (24:25ff.), then the painstaking establishment of all the *bruta facta* [“bare facts”] of the experience will serve only as the foil *ex parte hominis* [“on the part of man”] to the risen One’s activity! ... The *fact* of the empty tomb begets *perplexity* and requires the *interpreting word* of the angels. Here we encounter the first of three combinations of *unintelligible facts* versus *elucidating word* which will constitute the controlling pattern of this chapter’s design (vv. 2–3 vs. 5–7; 19–24 vs. 25–27; 36–43 vs. 44–49) (CC p. 970)

24:12 *Peter ... ran.* John’s Gospel (20:3–9) includes another disciple, John himself. (CSB)

True to his impetuous nature, Peter dashed off to the tomb. *linen cloths.* Burial shroud of 23:53. Jesus’ body is absent, but no theft has occurred. (TLSB)

This entire verse is the fifth “Western non-interpolation.” The majority of witnesses include it in the text. (See B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 184, 191–93.) (CC p. 965)

In this passage, the final verse (which some manuscripts omit; see textual note above) prepares for another announcement of the resurrection, this time to Peter (24:34). After the women’s report, dismissed by the apostles as nonsense, Peter, rising up, runs to the tomb and finds only the linen cloths. Just as the baby wrapped in strips of cloth (2:12; βρέφος ἐσπαργανωμένον) was a sign of the Messiah’s birth, so now “the linen cloths alone” (τὰ ὀθόνια μόνα) are a sign of the Messiah’s resurrection. Peter’s reaction —“marvelling” (θαυμάζων)—is the same reaction seen earlier throughout the gospel to Jesus’ miracles and teaching as the mighty acts of God happened among the people. (Lk 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14, 38; 20:26) “To marvel, be amazed” (θαυμάζω), as in those earlier passages, is a mixed, ambiguous response. It acknowledges that something extraordinary, even supernatural, has happened. And it is not a response of outright rejection or unbelief (contrast 24:11). But neither is it a response of understanding, acceptance, and faith. It is the response of one who is struggling to comprehend words and facts he cannot explain. (CC pp. 970-971)

Later on, the Eleven will report to the two Emmaus disciples that not only did Peter visit the tomb and see that it was empty, but that the Lord also appeared to him (24:34). Here, Peter’s response appears to be one of transition. Is his dash to the tomb the result of disbelief (24:11), as if Peter wishes to disprove the women’s report? Or is it, as seems more likely, a move away from blatant unbelief, a search for evidence that might confirm hope—even if that resurrection hope may have seemed unbelievably optimistic to Peter at the time? Regardless of Peter’s intent here, by the time the two disciples return from Emmaus (24:34), the apostles are convinced that Jesus is risen indeed. Jesus’ appearance to Simon (24:34), it seems, restored the apostle to his role as the one appointed to be the first among the *confessing, believing* apostles (cf. 9:20). (CC p. 971)

24:1–12 The women find the stone has been rolled away from the tomb. They find not the body of Jesus but two angels who say that Jesus is alive. Do we ever fail to believe the things Jesus has told us because they are impossibly good? “He is not here, but has risen” means that someday the graves of all His followers will be opened, and they, too, will rise to live with Him. Take comfort and joy! • In keeping with Your Word, fill our hearts, dear Lord Jesus, with the knowledge and comfort of Your empty tomb. Amen. (TLSB)