

1012 The first appearance of Jesus after resurrection

(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

The Bible's record of the first appearance of Jesus is apparently inconsistent. Because we firmly believe that the Bible is inspired by God, we then ask what God wants us to know by these apparent inconsistencies. Besides the example of his first appearance, we use three more examples to illustrate this observation. The first example is in Psalms 8:5, where we can see that we need to use the verse in the New Testament to explain what described in the Old Testament. The second example is in Ecclesiastes 3:21, where we can see that the culture of Hebrew is not always correct. We can also see that both the New Testament and the Old Testament say consistently that human consists of three parts - spirit, soul, and body. The third example is related to Romans 11:24, where we see that God emphasizes on life.

First, let us take a look at three verses. In John 20:1, it says, "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb." Matthew 28:1 states, "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave." In Mark 16:1-2, it says, "When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen." People then ask the question regarding how many persons came to the grave.

Because we firmly believe the verse in 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God ...", we therefore ask the question about what God wants us to know. In web address 1, you can see that the author points out what he thinks about where the apparent inconsistencies are [1]. Then in web address 2, the same author tries to explain what happens to resolve inconsistencies [2]. Apparently from his text, he also points out in his explanation that there are things which aren't said in the Bible and are human logical conclusions.

In the past, I tried to use the same method to explain the consistency of the Bible, and thought that the same event should be described in the same way from different angles. Nowadays, I firmly believe that the Bible is inspired by God and God doesn't make mistakes. Therefore, we really want to ask what God wants us to understand by these apparent inconsistencies.

Using the first appearance of Jesus after resurrection as an example, what God wants us to know is clear. It was declared that Jesus is the Son of God by resurrection as said in Romans 1:4, "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord." The important fact is that Jesus resurrected. In terms of how many people showed up in the grave, it is not important.

As a matter of fact, things not important sometimes are not even mentioned in the Bible. For example, we talked about Methuselah at chapter 5 in Genesis before. If you calculate

the timeline, you'll find out that the flood came at the same day when Methuselah died. The Bible doesn't say that he was drowned by the flood or when he died then the flood came immediately. When the Bible doesn't say things explicitly, we cannot be one hundred percent for sure. If one insists, it often leads to arguments and we cannot edify others. Although we are humans and it is impossible to know God's will every time since He is infinite and we are finite, we need to at least try to look at things in the aspect of God. We'll use three examples to illustrate what the Bible wants to tell us in different cases.

In Psalms 8:5, "Yet You have made him a little lower than God (H430), And You crown him with glory and majesty!" But in Hebrews 2:7, it says, "You have made him for a little while lower than the angels (G32); You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands." Both translations in English are correct by the original languages as given in the Strong's numbers. God is definitely above everything, so the Old Testament description doesn't give any information. I believe that God wants to use the apparent inconsistency to tell us that we need to use the verse in the New Testament to explain what described in the Old Testament caused by human errors.

In Ecclesiastes 3:21, it says, "Who knows that the breath (H7307) of man ascends upward and the breath (H7307) of the beast descends downward to the earth?" The word H7307 is the spirit. Spirit is used to communicate with God, and we know the beast has no spirit but soul and body. We never heard that there were any animals except humans that can worship God. As a matter of fact, we can see in Genesis 2:7 that only man has the breath of life, "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." The others were made by God's word such as in Genesis 1:24, "Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so." God wants to tell us that there is no distinction between spirit and soul in Hebrew. This is not consistent with what the New Testament in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "...and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In Hebrews 4:12, it says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." So, human consists of three parts - spirit, soul, and body. Apparently, the Hebrew culture is not all correct; otherwise, they will not nail the glorious Jesus to the cross and don't recognize Him even nowadays. And they need not what did in Luke 24:45, "Then He (Jesus) opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Furthermore, they would know the purpose of studying the Bible is to have life. "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. (John 5:39-40)

In this example, we can actually see that both the New Testament and the Old Testament say consistently that spirit and soul can be divided. Why do we say that? In Genesis 2:16-17, it says, "The Lord God commanded the man (Adam), saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."" We know that Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Adam still lived "...one hundred

and thirty years, ..." (Genesis 5:3) God doesn't lie. So, we know that his spirit died. In this case, his soul still had lived with his body for quite a while. From here, we can see that spirit and soul are divided. One is dead, and the other one lives meanwhile.

The final example is related to this verse. "For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?" (Romans 11:24) If one looks at the knowledge of horticulture, one will say that a good branch has to be grafted in order to get good fruits. So, there are people thinking that this verse is not correct. Just think about that the Bible is inspired by God and God must have such knowledge, we may ask what then God wants to tell us. We already talked about the purpose of studying the Bible is to have life. Let us take a look at another verse. In John 15:4-5, it says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." God's emphasis is to have life. Therefore, the verse in Romans 11:24 is talking about life. We can also see that God cares about the rich root as stated in Romans 11:17-18, the rich root of life. "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you."

References

- [1] Web address 1: <http://blog.adw.org/2011/04/making-sense-of-the-resurrection-accounts-are-there-discrepancies/>.
- [2] Web address 2: <http://blog.adw.org/2011/04/a-chronological-sequence-of-the-resurrection-events/#:~:text=A%20Chronological%20Sequence%20of%20the%20Resurrection%20Events%201,of%20the%20forty%20days.%20...%208%20VIII.%20>.