

The 17 Resurrection Appearances of the Lord

1. The first appearance of the resurrected Christ was to Mary Magdalene, John 20:11-17, “But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; (12) and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. (13) And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him. (14) When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away. (16) Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher). (17) Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

2. The second appearance was to the other women, Matthew 28:5-9, “And the angel answered and said to the women, “Stop fearing, for I know that you seek Jesus [His humanity] who was crucified. (6) He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He goes before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him. Lo, I have told you [I have followed my orders]. (8). And they quickly departed from the tomb with awe [occupied with Christ] and great joy [sharing God’s happiness] and ran [in good condition] to report it to His disciples. (9) But as they were going to report to His disciples, behold, Jesus also met them [2nd appearance], saying, “Hail [greetings]! And they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.”

3. The third appearance was to Peter. He appeared on Sunday afternoon, according to Luke 24:34, “saying, ‘The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.’” 1 Corinthians 15:5, “And that He appeared to

Cephas, then to the twelve [the group was called the “twelve” though it now excluded Judas Iscariot].”

4. The fourth appearance was to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:13-31, “Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. (14) They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. (15) As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; (16) but they were kept from recognizing him. (17) He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. (18) One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” (19) “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. (20) The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; (21) but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. (22) In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning (23) but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. (24) Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus. (25) He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! (26) Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? (27) And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (28) As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. (29) But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So, he went in to stay with them. (30) When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. (31) Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.”

5. The fifth appearance was to the ten disciples (Thomas was not there, nor Judas Iscariot), John 20:19, 24, “So when it was evening on that day [on resurrection day], the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Prosperity be with you.” (24) But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” Also found in Mark 16:14 and Luke 24:36-43.

6. The sixth appearance was to the eleven disciples including Thomas. How he acquired the name ‘Doubting Thomas’ is found in John 20:25, “So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” At the sixth appearance, Thomas was present. John 20:26, “After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Prosperity be with you.”

7. The seventh appearance was to the seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee, John 21:1-23. These first seven appearances might be classified as personal resurrection appearances to friends and associates.

8. The eighth appearance was to more than five hundred believers, 1 Corinthians 15:6, “After that, He appeared to more than five hundred at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.”

9. The ninth appearance was to James, his stepbrother. 1 Corinthians 15:7, “Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles.”

10. The tenth appearance was again to the eleven disciples on the Mountain in Galilee, Matthew 28:16-17, “And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had assigned to them [before his death] (17) And when they saw Him, they [the eleven disciples] worshiped Him, but some [other Jewish people in Jerusalem believed the report of the guards] doubted.

11. The eleventh appearance had great historical and doctrinal significance. This appearance was followed by His ascension. Acts 1:9, “And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

The rest of the resurrection appearances were post-ascension where our Lord would leave the right hand of the Father and make an appearance under special conditions. All these appearances ceased after the completion of the book of Revelation.

12. The twelfth appearance was to Stephen, the first and most famous of the martyrs in Acts 7:55, “But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God [the Father] and Jesus standing at the right hand of God [the Father].”

13. The thirteenth appearance had great significance, the appearance to Paul on the road to Damascus, the basis for his conversion. This story is told in three different passages in Acts namely Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:13-18.

14. The fourteenth appearance of the resurrected Christ was to Paul in Arabia for the purpose of teaching him the spiritual life of the Church Age. Galatians 1:12,17, “For I neither received it [the spiritual life] from man, nor was I taught it [the spiritual life] from man, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ [in Arabia]. (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me [for an explanation regarding the spiritual life], but I went straight away to Arabia [to be taught by Christ] and returned once more to Damascus.”

15. The fifteenth appearance was to Paul in the Temple in Jerusalem. Acts 22:17-18, “It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple that I fell into a trance, (18) and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’”

16. The sixteenth appearance was to Paul in the Roman barracks. Acts 23:11, “But on the night immediately following [a Jewish mob trying to kill Paul], the Lord stood at his [Paul’s] side and said, ‘Take courage for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem so you must witness at Rome also.’”.

17. The seventeenth and final one was the appearance to John on the Island of Patmos, Revelation 1:12-20. What John was recording was so fantastic that he was overwhelmed by his emotions and fainted (verse 17). He didn’t faint from shock because, remember that John has already seen our resurrected Lord on four different occasions. Instead, it was the emotional impact of seeing all these things and so fainting was really like an emotional fuse shutting off. “The first and the last” also in verse 17, is another analogy regarding the Lord’s control of history. As the first he is the author of history, as the last he is the terminator of history. During his first advent, he provided salvation; at His 2nd Advent He begins his Millennial and eternal rule.

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Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

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