

The Resurrection Appearances of Christ

A Proof of Christ's Statements and the Father's Satisfaction



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THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF CHRIST



1A. THE RECORD OF THE APPEARANCES:

This is found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts and 1 Corinthians, in the following passages:

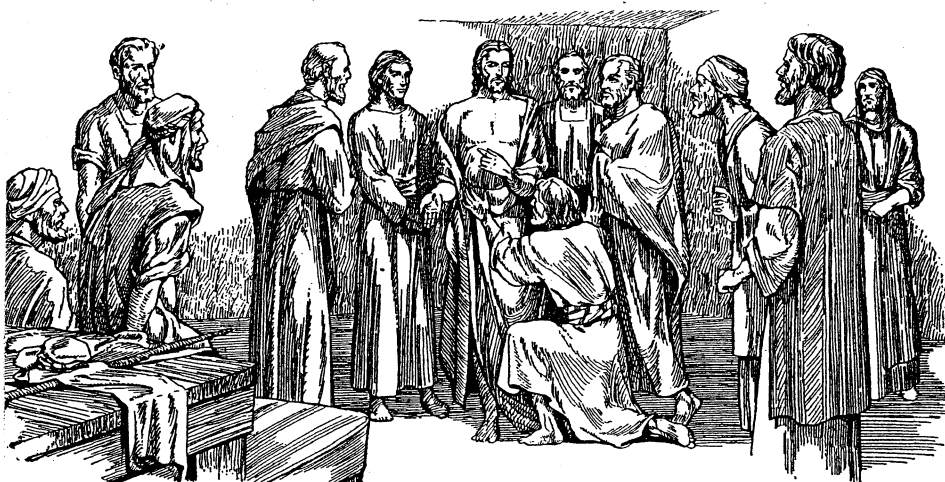
Mt. 28:1,9,10,11-15, 16-20; Mk. 16:9-11, 12, 13-14, 15-18, 19, 20; Lk. 24:13-32, 33-35, 36-43, 44-49, 50-53; Jn. 20:11-18, 19-25, 26-31; 21:1-25; Acts 1:3-8, 9-12; 1 Cor. 15:5,6,7.

This shows: (1) the records are distributed.
 (2) no evangelist gives a full account.
 (3) the records are not made with regard to chronological sequence.

2A. THE NUMBER OF THE APPEARANCES:

TIME	SEEN BY	SCRIPTURE	PLACE
Easter morning	1 Mary Magdalene	Mk. 16:9-11; Jn. 20:11-18	Jerusalem
Easter morning	2 Other women	Mt. 28:9-10	Jerusalem
Afternoon	3 Peter	Lk. 24:33-34; 1 Cor. 15:3	Jerusalem
Evening 4-6 PM	4 Two disciples	Lk. 24:13-33	Emmaus
8 PM	5 Ten apostles and others (Thomas absent)	Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:15-25	Jerusalem
Sunday past Easter	6 Eleven apostles (Thomas present)	Jn. 20:26-31; 1 Cor. 15:5	Jerusalem
Unknown	7 Seven disciples	Jn. 21:1-24	Sea of Galilee
Unknown	8 Eleven apostles and over 500 brethren	Mk. 16:15-18; Mt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 15:6	A mountain in Galilee
Unknown	9 James	1 Cor. 15:7	Jerusalem
Ascension Day	10 Eleven apostles	Acts 1:3-12; Mk. 16:19-20	Bethany
A.D. 35	11 Stephen	Acts 7:55	Jerusalem
A.D. 37	12 Paul	Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor. 15:8	Damascus Road
Unknown	13 Paul	Acts 22:17-21; 23:11	Temple
c. A.D. 95	14 John	Rev. 1:10-19	Patmos

- 1b. Varied as to the type of individuals or groups:
one, group, two, ten, eleven, seven, eleven, over 500, one, eleven, one, one, one, one.
- 2b. Varied as to time:
 - 1c. the date
 - 2c. Time of day: morning, noon, afternoon, evening.
- 3b. Varied as to distances:
 - 1c. Jerusalem, Emmaus, Galilee, Bethany
 - 2c. Covering the distance to Emmaus.
- 4b. Varied as to empirical evidence: sight, hearing, touch, eating.



3A. THE MANNER OF THE APPEARANCES:

- 1b. The Problem:
 - 1c. More is concealed than revealed.
 - 2c. Our present ignorance of the properties of the resurrection body.
 - 3c. Christ's earthly body was already supernatural:
"Even before the Cross He had a certain power which is strange to us. He could pass through the midst of His enemies, and go on His way; he could convey Himself away; He could hide Himself, and leave the Temple (Lk. 4:30; Jn. 5:13; 8:59)."
(Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels*, p. 613).
- 2b. The Passage:
 - 1c. Christ's appearance to Mary: John 20:14-17
(1) Christ was visible, (2) He wore a human guise, (3) Mary did not recognize Him, (4) He was commonly dressed, (5) He spoke to her in her language, (6) she did not know

His voice, (7) when He mentioned her name, something in His tone or smile revealed Him, (8) He could be touched, but declined to be, (9) as He was, He could ascend to heaven.

2c. Christ's appearance to the women: Matthew 28:9-10

(1) He is visible, (2) He walks along the road, (3) He speaks to them, (4) He is at once recognized by them, (5) they clasp His feet.



- 3c. Christ's appearance to the Emmaus disciples: Luke 24:13-16, Mk. 16:12-13 (ff.32)
 (1) He was manifested in another form to them, (2) Jesus was visible and human, (3) He walked some miles with the disciples, (4) He entered their house and reclined at the table, (5) He took the bread, broke it, and distributed it, (6) as He did so, their eyes were opened, (7) He vanished out of their sight, (8) the marks of the nail could not have been visible to them either on the road or at the table, (9) "their eyes were holden." For genuineness of Mark 16:9-20, see Bibliotheca Sacra, December 1966, pp. 306-307.



JESUS MEETS THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.

4c. Easter night: Mark 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-20

1d. The **natural** elements:

(1) visible, physical body, (2) with marks of the nails in His hands and feet; (3) His reference to His "flesh and bones;" and (4) His eating honey and fish.

2d. The **supernatural** elements:

(1) Entering the room without opening the door; (2) His mistaken appearance as a spirit.

3b. The Peculiarity of the Appearances:

- 1c. Mysterious power of withdrawing Himself from recognition: Jn. 20:14; Lk. 24:16; Mk. 16:12.
- 2c. Supernatural quality of withdrawing Himself from sensible perception: Lk. 24:31, 36; Jn. 20:19, 26.
- 3c. Strange ability of withdrawing Himself from conditions of time and space, transcending physical limitations: Lk. 24:36; Jn. 20:16, 26; Lk. 24:5; Acts 1:9.
- 1d. Closed doors
- 2d. Ascension; into a new dimension
- 3d. Distance



4A. THE PROOFS FOR THE APPEARANCES

1b. Common elements in the accounts:

- 1c. No stilted expressions by the Evangelists.
- 2c. No grotesque exaggeration of the account.
- 3c. No abnormal experience for Christ.

2b. Unintentional evidence for the appearances:

- 1c. He was not recognized at first: Lk. 24:16; Jn. 21:4
- 2c. He did not appear to His enemies.
- 3c. He told Mary not to touch Him but no reason is given: Jn. 20:17
- 4c. He emphasized Peter, "tell the disciples *and Peter*." Mk. 16:7
- 5c. He made Himself known simply by calling Mary's name: Jn. 20:18
- 6c. He greeted his disciples in Galilee with, "Have you anything to eat?" Jn. 21:5

3b. Pauline evidence for the appearances:

1 Cor. 15:5-6: "And that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, After that he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep."

- 1c. The nature of the passage:
 - 1d. It is apologetic in nature.
 - 2d. It is chronological in nature: (Greek words)
 - 3d. It is official in nature.

2c. The names in the passage:

1d. They are only men.

1e. Paul omits certain women whom he had not met and whom the Corinthians would not know.

2e. Evidence of women was inadmissible in a Jewish court. (Josephus, *Antiquities*, IV, viii, 15).

2d. They are only believers.

1e. He appeared to establish their faith.

2e. He said that to His enemies He would only appear in judgment.

3e. Appearance to unbelievers would have contradicted His use of miraculous power.

4e. The most qualified witnesses are friends, not strangers.

5e. Revelation does not supersede but imply faith.

3d. The nature of Paul's vision:

1e. His vision was as objective as that of the disciples.

1f. He uses the identical word "appeared" for them and himself.

2f. He witnessed an objective external fact.

2e. His vision was an **encounter**, theirs was a **recognition**.

3e. His vision concluded the objective post-resurrection appearances, "last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8).



5A. THE PURPOSE OF THE APPEARANCES:

1b. The purpose individually: to reclaim Peter, dispel Thomas' doubts, dry Mary's tears, teach the eleven.

2b. The purpose collectively:

1c. To instill faith.

2c. To instruct.

1e. To show the purpose of His work from the OT predictions.

2e. To teach them concerning Himself: Mt. 28:18

3e. To instruct them concerning their ministry: Act 1:8

- 4e. To teach them by miracle that their needs would be supplied: Jn. 21:6
- 5e. To confer on them authority: Mt. 26:16ff.
- 6e. To assure them of a future kingdom: Acts 1:6ff.

(Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook*, p. 569)

- 3b. The purpose locally:
 - 1c. They were commanded to go to their homes in Galilee.
 - 2c. His appearances in Jerusalem were perhaps because of their apathetic state. He upbraided them for their unbelief: Mk. 16:14
 - 3c. Had they departed for Galilee immediately, as commanded, there would have been few, if any, Jerusalem appearances.

6A. THE THEORIES CONCERNING THE APPEARANCES:

1b. The Swoon Theory:

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus was never really dead; He merely swooned from the pain and torture.
- 2c. The Representatives: Paulus, Schleiermacher
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. The testimony of the Apostles.
 - 2d. John records that Christ's side was pierced: Jn. 20:27
 - 3d. The disciples were not convinced of the resurrection.
 "Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death; at the most, could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, or have elevated their reverence into worship"
 (A.B. Bruce, p. 367a).
 - 4d. The customs of the day demanded that the criminal be guarded until death.

2b. The Theft Theory:

- 1c. The Rationale: Friends stole the body.
- 2c. The Representatives: Pharisees, Joseph Klausner (*Jesus of Nazareth*). Luke gave Christ a drug and revived Him.
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. All the Roman soldiers couldn't possibly have been asleep.
 - 2d. The change and ministry of the disciples cannot be explained.
 - 3d. Christ would be a liar.



3b. **The Hallucination Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: The appearances of Jesus are the creation of excited nerves and ardent expectations.
 "Death is a thing so absurd when it strikes the man of genius or of a great heart, that people cannot believe in the possibility of such an error of nature. *Heroes do not die.* . . . That adored Master had filled the circle of which He was the centre with joy and hope—could they be content to let him rot in the tomb?" (Renan in A. B. Bruce, p. 387).
- 2c. The Representatives: Renan, Strauss
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. Time was needed for the development of such a state of mind.
 - 2d. This was not the disciples' frame of mind. Mk. 16:11-12, Jn. 20:25, disappointment and disbelief. Lk. 24:21-27, Emmaus disciples. Mt. 28:17, "some doubted." Mk. 16:11, "believed not." Lk. 24:11, "idle tales." Mk. 16:10, "mourned and wept."
 - 3d. Appearances to large groups.
 - 4d. Appearances extended over a long period of time.
 - 5d. The simple, unembellished account of the appearances.
 - 6d. Hallucinations would not have suddenly and simultaneously ceased with the ascension, within six weeks.
 - 7d. If Christ willingly permitted them to make this error, He is the author of error and forfeits our moral respect.

4b. **The Telegraph Theory**

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus continued to live in His spirit and produced the manifestations which the disciples took for *bona fide* bodily appearances, to assure them of His immortality. "A sign of life from Jesus, a telegram from heaven was necessary, after the crushing overthrow of the Crucifixion, especially in the childhood of humanity." (Keim, in A.B. Bruce, p. 392).
- 2c. The Representatives: Keim and Canon Streeter.
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. The tomb was empty.
 - 2d. The telegrams were inaccurate because the disciples understood a bodily resurrection.
 - 3d. It takes a miracle to get rid of a miracle. A supernatural vision is just as great a miracle in the natural realm, which critics say can't happen.

5b. **The Myth or Legend Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: The emphatic teaching of the disciples gave rise to a misunderstanding in the Church, embodied in the tradition of the Gospels. Resurrection is an existential loudspeaker, brings to light faith.
- 2c. The Representatives: Weizsäcker, Brunner, Bultmann
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. The faith of the disciples was in the resurrection. They had seen Him.
 - 2d. The theory gives no true account of the appearances to the disciples.
 - 3d. The theory gives no probable explanation of the rise of the materialistic legends or the resurrection.
 - 4d. Paul defends his apostolic authority and adduces witnesses.

6b. **The Objective Encounter Theory:**

- 1c. The Rationale: Jesus returns from the dead in "an objective trans-subjective encounter."
 - 1d. The resurrection is no resuscitation of a corpse but "correspondence and personal identity." *Creation ex nihilo* (a creation out of nothing).
 - 2d. The empty tomb is no "ontological necessity" but a sign, pointer, not imperative but illuminative.
 - 3d. The resurrection is equated with the ascension, thus no appearances.
- 2c. The Representatives: (See my Master's thesis, *"The Resurrection of Christ in Contemporary German Theology,"* Dallas Theological Seminary.) C. H. Robinson, Althaus, Künneth, Bornkamm, Pannenberg
- 3c. The Refutation:
 - 1d. The tomb was empty. Disposal of body demands a new miracle.
 - 2d. The appearances are meant to be both personal and corporeal. "The body was the same though different, different though the same" (*ISBE*, p. 2567).
 - 3d. What is the difference between an objective vision and an objective appearance?
 - 4d. The world-view is wrong. These questions are answered negatively: (1) is the record intended to be historical? (2) Were the witnesses in a position to know the facts? (3) Were the witnesses properly motivated in communicating the facts? (4) Were the witnesses accurate in their report?
 - 5d. There is no such thing as the resurrection of a spirit!

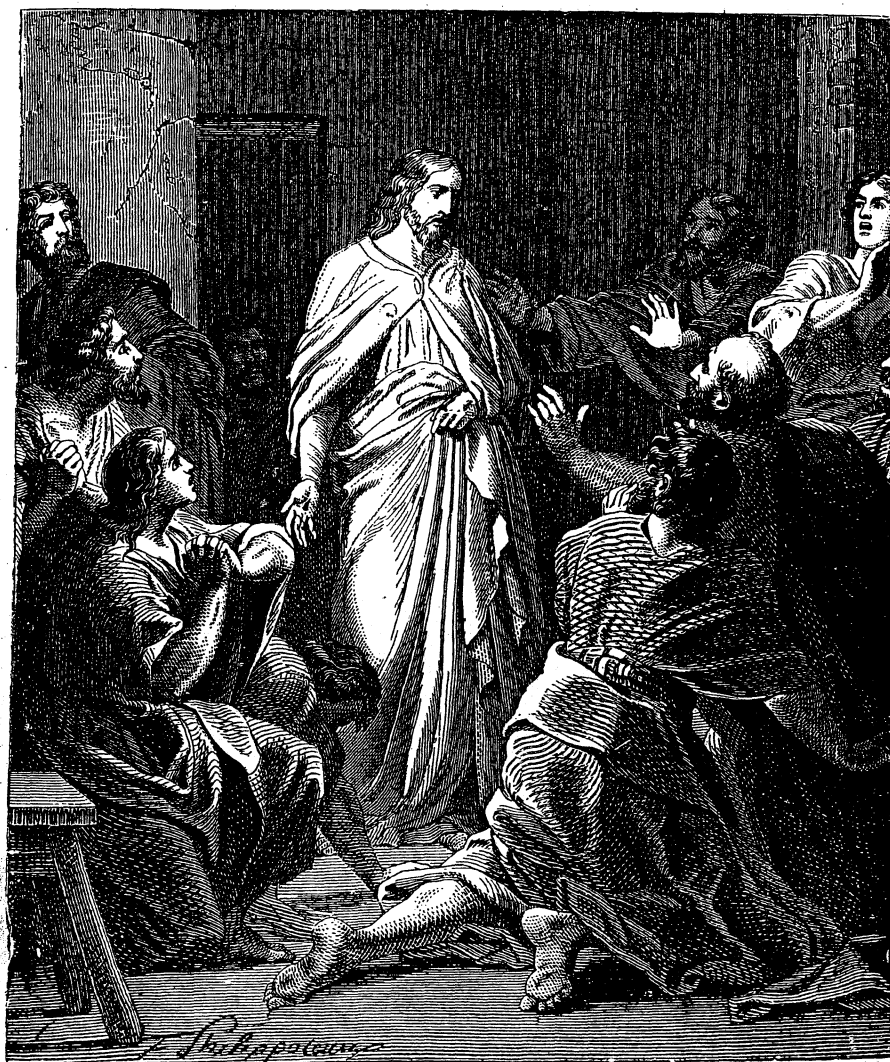


CONCLUSION:

Is the Christian faith based on facts or on a fraud, on a dream, deception, or delusion? Unbelief must deny the accuracy of the Gospel accounts, completely destroy the witness of Acts, set aside the evidential value of Paul, controvert the testimony of Hebrews, and reject all the testimony of the Fathers, commencing with Clement's *Corinthians*, A.D. 95.

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JESUS APPEARING TO THE APOSTLES.