



Three Rivers Fellowship

The Post Resurrection Appearances of Jesus of Nazareth

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1. Introduction

A simple reading of the Gospels betrays a lack of understanding on the part of the apostles and disciples who spent three years as part of the direct ministry of the Savior Himself. His teaching ability and pedagogical style has no earthly rival, yet we see time and time again his students “having no clue”. Perhaps we should all take a clue from Christ’s pedagogical skill and not despair when someone does not “get” what we are trying to say to them. 😊

In this very brief outline no exact chronology has been considered just an approximate listing of appearances to Jewish believers and eventually one Body Believer (Paul).

2. The Savior’s Passion

Christendom holds to an unusual notion that Christ was crucified and died on Friday and was resurrected from the grave on Sunday morning. This, however, betrays a lack of knowledge of simple arithmetic. For if the Savior died Friday afternoon between the hours of 3pm and 6pm then Christ could not have been in the grave for three days.

The Crucified Messiah had to be buried in the ground for three *full* days according to Scripture and there is no credit for partial days. In parallel to this is the death of Lazarus, who was dead for four days as warned by Lazarus’ family and friends “Behold he stinketh.”

The Savior was in the grave for three days and not a minute more or less.

3. Christ’s Post-Resurrection Appearances

3.1. Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John (John 20:1-18)

We see a most happy, entertaining, yet sad account of the Sunday morning after the Savior had been buried for three days.

John 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

- 11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,
12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.
14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.
15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.
16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.
17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.
18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

Mary had come to the tomb early in the morning on Sunday, before it was light only to find the stone rolled away. She ran back to the house to get Peter (who is apparently in charge now) and he came running back to the tomb along with John, who apparently outran Peter. This was all slightly before 6:00a Sunday morning. The account of young John outrunning Peter is rather entertaining as he was a youth and ready for action (and apparently¹ a “morning person”).

Verse 10 is particularly important in telling us that the disciples were not quite up to par at this late date with the teachings of Jesus and His many discussions about His death, burial, resurrection, and eventual ascension. They still did not have a firm understanding of the Old Testament doctrine of the Suffering Servant and the Passion of their own Christ! But in just a few short 50 days, Peter will give a sermon that brings the entire household of Israel to its knees.

As Peter and John run back to the house, evidently to tell the others, Mary remains at the tomb. She is approached by a person, whom she thinks is the gardener only to wonderfully find out that He is the Savior Himself.

It is quite interesting that Jesus chooses to reveal Himself first to Mary Magdalene. Her faithfulness throughout His ministry is evident, whereas Peter and John, especially Peter tends to “speak before he thinks” and they both run off. Once back at the house Mary tells everyone that she has seen and talked with the Savior and that most importantly He is ALIVE!

Sadly, according to the parallel passage in Mark 16:9 (Mk 16 the people back in the house, including Peter and John did not believe her story). The first appearance occurred sometime before or around 6:00a Sunday Morning (Day 1).

¹ I have *apparently* fallen in love with the word “apparently”, since I have used it three times in the referenced paragraph and twice in this footnote. 😊

3.2. Other People (Women? Mat 28:9,10)

There were other ladies with Mary Magdalene, who were separated from Mary after the original finding.

Mat 28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Evidently, on the way back to tell the disciples about the Savior's resurrection Jesus Himself met them on the way. Imagine the wonder of it all to see Christ alive after such a terrible death and act of eternal injustice. See also Mark 16:5, 8; Luke 24:4, 9; Mat 28:5,8. Sometime after 6:00a.

3.3. Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5)

This is the first appearance of Jesus to Peter.

Luke 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,
34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

See also 1 Cor 15:5. Arguably, it is now closer to 12 noon.

3.4. The Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-30)

The famous story of the Jesus meeting two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. The tenderness and compassion that Christ has for them is stunning. Opening the Scriptures to them concerning His passion and resurrection and reminding them that all of this is recorded in the Old Testament.

Luke 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.
14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.
15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.
16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.
17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?
18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?
19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:
20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.
21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.
22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;
23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

- 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.
- 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
- 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
- 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.
- 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.
- 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.
- 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.
- 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.
- 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?
- 33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.

It is quite interesting that the Savior revealed Himself in a very ceremonial way, when giving thanks for the meal which they were about to share. See also Mark 16:12. It is approximately 7 miles between Jerusalem and Emmaus and would have taken about 2 hours if walked leisurely. Thus, no less than 4-5 hours transpired with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and dinner. We are probably now around 6:00p when the disciples get back to Jerusalem. I am quite sure that the time back to Jerusalem was much less than the time to get to Emmaus.

3.5. Ten Apostles/Disciples and the Emmaus Disciples (Luke 24:35-49)

Later that evening, Sunday the first day of the Savior's resurrection the disciples were gathered to discuss what had been happening that day.

- Luke 24:35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.
- 36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.
- 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.
- 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
- 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
- 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.
- 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
- 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.
- 43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them.
- 44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.
- 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
- 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

See also Mark 16:14; John 20:19-24; 1 Cor 15:5.

3.6. Disciples with Thomas (John 20:26-29)

Eight days later the disciples are together with Thomas and the Lord appears.

John 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.
27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.
28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.
29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

On day 8 after the Resurrection Christ appears the disciples again. Here He wastes no time showing Thomas his wounds.

See also Mark 16:14.

3.7. Disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25)

Here we see the Risen-Savior teaching His disciples (7 in attendance), partly about commitment to Him. Jesus *agapes* Peter, whereas Peter *philews* Jesus. Note too, the 153 fish caught in the net.

3.8. The Great Commission (Mat 28:16-20)

Here the Savior reiterates the mission of Israel to be the channel of blessing to the Nations. In this context, he tells them to baptize the new Gentile converts. This of course has nothing to do with the Body of Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Mat 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.
17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.
18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Jesus also reiterates His faithfulness telling the disciples that He will be with them always, even unto the end of the “age” (Time between the Flood and Second Advent).

According to Paul, he retells the account as also including no less than 500 disciples here and that many of those people were still alive at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians.

See 1 Cor 15:6.

3.9. James (1 Co 15:7a)

Paul tells us that Jesus also appeared to James some time prior to His final ascension.

1 Cor 15:7a After that, he was seen of James;

3.10. All the Apostles (1 Cor 15:7b)

1 Cor 15:7b then of all the apostles.

3.11. The Savior's Ascension (Acts 1:4-11)

Here the Savior tells the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the Feast of Pentecost and wait for the Holy Spirit to give them "holy spirit" (divine power).

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

Afterwards they are to be the channel of blessing to the Gentiles. It took them until Acts 8 to fulfill that role corporately (with notable exceptions, Philip).

3.12. Seen of Paul (1 Cor 15:8-9)

1 Cor 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.
9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Christ Jesus met Paul, first in Acts 9 on the road to Damascus. There Paul was converted by the Spirit of God and reacted to the Savior in a very humble and obedient manner.

He also personally met with Paul in Arabia for a period of 2 to 3 years, where he re-educated the great young Pharisee in the Body of Christ. We read about this in Gal 1:17.

4. Graphical View and Comments

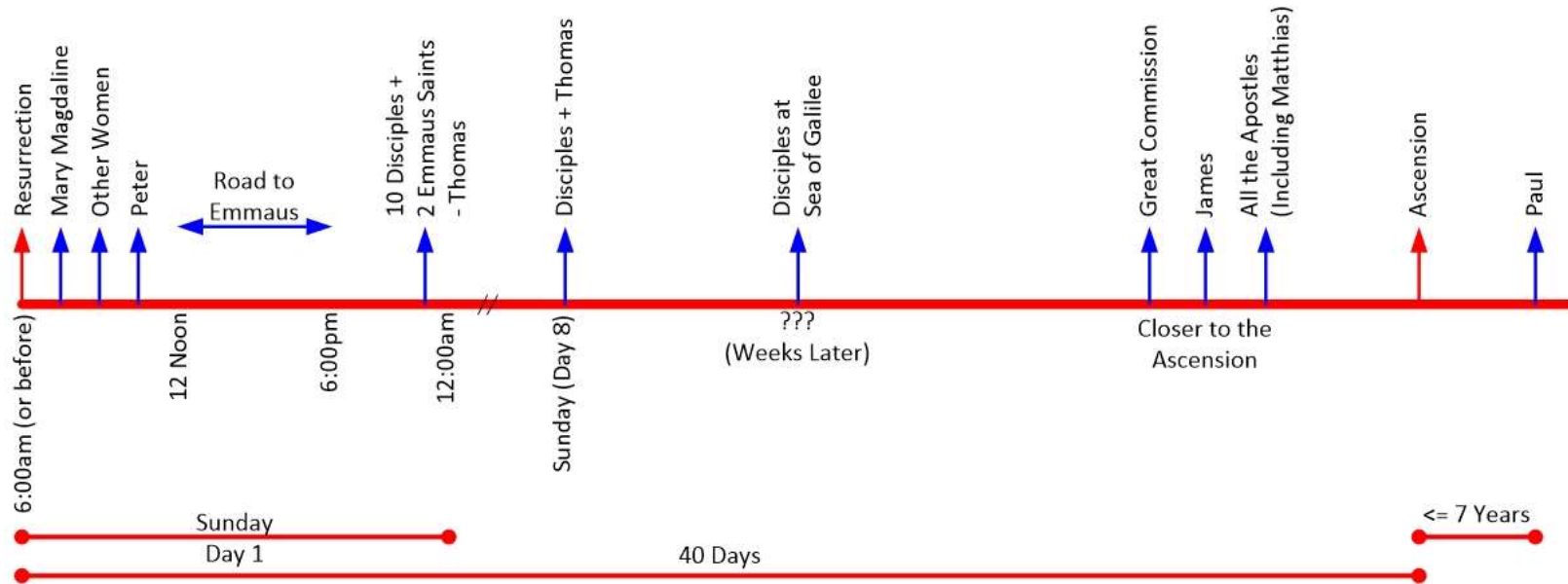


Figure 1. A Possible Timeline of the Post-Resurrection Appearances to Paul

Comments

When Jesus rose from the grave on Sunday morning (after midnight some time) and when Mary Magdalene met Him, she was unable to touch Him because He had not ascended to the Father. Yet, 8 days later when Thomas was with them, Jesus encouraged Thomas to touch his hands and legs and see his scars. Is it reasonable to assume that Jesus ascended to the Father prior to the meeting with Thomas?