Session 26 Jesus’ Resurrection and Ten Appearances

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus are the high points in the four gospel accounts. By these Jesus is publicly declared with power to be divine as the Son of God (Rom. 1:4)

B. I have found it helpful to have a chronological overview of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances. In seeking to present them in sequence, we acknowledge that the biblical information is not always precise on the exact timing or location of several of the events related to His appearances. I present the following as a possible sequence of His appearances from His resurrection to His ascension.

1. On Resurrection Sunday, Jesus made five appearances—two of them to Peter (in the early afternoon and then in the evening). First, He appeared to Mary Magdalene after Peter and John left the tomb (Jn. 20:6-16). Next, He appeared to several women as they were en route from the tomb to share the angel’s message of His resurrection with the disciples (Mt. 28:5-10). A little later that day, He appeared to Peter (Lk. 24:34). On that Sunday afternoon, He appeared to the two disciples traveling to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-32). In the evening of Resurrection Sunday, He appeared in the upper room to the disciples (excluding Thomas), and those who were with them, plus the two men from Emmaus (Lk. 24:33-49; Jn. 20:19-23).

2. The following Sunday (eight days after the crucifixion), He appeared to all of the apostles including Thomas (Jn. 20:26-29).

3. During the next 32 days, He appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-14), and to 500 people (1 Cor. 15:6), and then to the Eleven in Galilee charging them with the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20). Finally, after 40 days, He appeared to the apostles on the Mount of Olives where they witnessed His ascension (Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:2-12).

C. Summary: Jesus made His first five appearances on Resurrection Sunday, He appeared one week later, plus three times in Galilee and finally on the Mount of Olives when He ascended to heaven.

Appearance #1 Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:16).
Appearance #2 Jesus appeared to several women en route to testify to the apostles (Mt. 28:9).
Appearance #3 Jesus appeared to Peter (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
Appearance #4 Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-32).
Appearance #5 Jesus appeared to the apostles (excluding Thomas), and to those who were with them, plus the two disciples from Emmaus (Lk. 24:33-49; Jn. 20:19-23)—the first Sunday evening.
Appearance #6 8 days after His death, He appeared to the apostles with Thomas (Jn. 20:26-29).
Appearance #7 He appeared to seven disciples fishing in Galilee (Jn. 21:1-14)—the 32-day period.
Appearance #8 Jesus appeared to over 500 probably in Galilee (1 Cor. 15:6)—the 32-day period.
Appearance #9 Jesus charged the apostles with the Great Commission in Galilee (Mt. 28:16-20).
Appearance #10 After 40 days, He appeared to the apostles on the Mount of Olives (Lk. 24:50-53).
II. THE EVENTS AT THE TOMB BEFORE JESUS APPEARED TO ANYONE

A. There are several differences in the gospel accounts—all four tell of women coming to the empty tomb, the removal of the stone, Mary Magdalene’s name, and Sunday as the first day of the week.

B. Several women came to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body, not to see Jesus with a resurrection body. This was the same group of women who saw Jesus’ burial and thus knew where the tomb was. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is not mentioned. Salome was the mother of Zebedee’s sons (Mt. 27:56).

1. …Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2. Very early in the morning…they came to the tomb… 3. And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” 4. But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. 5. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe… 6. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus…He is risen…’But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” (Mk. 16:1-7)

1. Go: The women ran to tell the disciples the good news (Mt. 28:7-9; Lk. 24:9-11; Jn. 20:2).

2. As He said: The angel reminded them that Jesus predicted His death and resurrection (Mk. 16:6; cf. Mt. 16:21; Lk. 9:22) and spoke of meeting with them in Galilee (Mk. 14:28).

22 …saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day…” (Lk. 9:22)

28 “But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” (Mk. 14:28)

3. Peter: Jesus had a special message for Peter in Galilee related to denying Him (Jn. 21:15-19).

C. Mary Magdalene saw that the stone was rolled away so she immediately began to run to tell Peter and John that Jesus’ body was not there, while the other women stayed a little longer at the tomb (Mt. 28:7-9; Lk. 24:9-11; Jn. 20:2). Mary saw the open tomb and assumed enemies or grave robbers had stolen Jesus’ body; she probably did not enter the tomb. She was separated from the other women after their initial visit to the tomb. On her second visit to the tomb Jesus appeared to her.

1. Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [John], and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” (Jn. 20:1-2)

D. Before the women arrived, an angel removed the large stone that covered the entrance to the tomb (Mt. 28:2-4). The angel sat on the stone so that the guards could not roll it back over the tomb. Luke and John mentioned two angels (Lk. 24:4; Jn. 20:12; cf. Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Matthew and Mark only mentioned the angel who spoke to the women (Mt. 28:1, 5; Mk. 16:5).

2. …an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. (Mt. 28:2-4)
III. APPEARANCE #1—JESUS APPEARED TO MARY MAGDALENE

A. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:16). The fact that Jesus appeared to Mary first rather than to the Sanhedrin or the apostles gives us insight into how He responds to love and devotion to Him. She remained at the cross while He was dying, even when many fled for safety (Jn. 19:25), and she was the first to come to the tomb even while it was still dark (Jn. 20:1).

9 Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with Him... 11 And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. (Mk. 16:9-11)

B. After Peter and John departed, Mary remained at the tomb, and Jesus spoke to her (Jn. 20:16). Jesus asked her why she was weeping—it was not necessary in light of His resurrection. She recognized Jesus when He called her by name. She called Him by a name she had probably used many times.

11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping...she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels...” 14 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?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him...” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father...’” (Jn. 20:11-17)

IV. APPEARANCE #2—JESUS APPEARED TO SEVERAL WOMEN

A. Jesus appeared to several women en route to testify to the disciples (Mt. 28:9). After Mary Magdalene had left to tell Peter and John that Jesus’ body was stolen, the other women entered the tomb and saw an angel (Mt. 28:5-7). The women may have barely missed Peter and John who had just left to go to the tomb with Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:1-2).

5 But the angel...said to the women, “…He is risen... 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead...” 9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.” (Mt. 28:5-9)

B. Jesus instructed the women to tell the brethren to go to Galilee see Him (Mt. 28:10). However, He appeared to them that evening and a week later before they went to Galilee.

10 Jesus said to them, “...Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.” (Mt. 28:10)

C. Jesus was a shining light to a poor people in an area called “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Mt. 4:15) in fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied about Messiah bringing light there (Isa. 9:1-2). This has implications for Jesus’ heart to reach “all nations” or the Gentiles (Mt. 28:19-20).

13 And leaving Nazareth, He...dwelt in Capernaum...14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” (Mt. 4:13-16)
V. APPEARANCE #3—JESUS APPEARED TO PETER

A. Jesus appeared to Peter on Resurrection Sunday, probably in the afternoon (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). On that Resurrection Sunday in the afternoon, Jesus appeared to the two disciples traveling to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-32). Jesus revealed to them that He had appeared to Peter (Lk. 24:34).

33 So they [disciples on the road to Emmaus]… returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven…, 34 saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (Lk. 24:33-34)

B. Paul wrote of Jesus appearing to Peter “before” He appeared to the Twelve later that same day (Jn. 20:19-23).

4 …He rose again the third day… 5 and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once… (1 Cor. 15:4-6)

C. Summary: Scripture describes six occasions in which Jesus appeared to Peter. On Resurrection Sunday He appeared to Peter twice—in the afternoon (Lk. 24:34) and in the evening (Jn. 20:19-23). Eight days after His death, Jesus appeared to all the apostles with Thomas (Jn. 20:26-29) and then to seven disciples (including Peter) while they were fishing in Galilee (Jn. 21:1-14). Later, in Galilee Jesus charged all the apostles (including Peter) with the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20) and finally after 40 days, Jesus appeared to the apostles on the Mount of Olives (Lk 24:50-53).

VI. APPEARANCE #4—JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS

A. Jesus appeared to two disciples walking to the village of Emmaus (Mk. 16:12-13; Lk. 24:13-32). This occurred on Resurrection Sunday. He appeared in another form to them (Mk 16:12).

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem… 15 While they conversed… Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. (Lk. 24:13-15)

B. Jesus had a long conversation while walking with these two disciples (24:17-27). Jesus showed them from the Scriptures why Messiah was to suffer, be killed, and raised from the dead.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us… 23 They came saying that they had seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb…but Him they did not see.” 25 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Lk. 24:22-27)

C. They invited Jesus to stay with them for a meal, and then their eyes were opened (24:28–32).

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going… 29 He went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24:13-32)
VII. APPEARANCE #5—JESUS APPEARED TO THE APOSTLES (EXCLUDING THOMAS)

A. Jesus appeared to the apostles (excluding Thomas), and to those with them, including the two disciples from Emmaus (Lk. 24:33-49; cf. Mk. 16:14; Jn. 20:19-23)—the evening of Resurrection Sunday. The two had returned from Emmaus to testify to the disciples (in the upper room).

   So they [disciples on the road to Emmaus] rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”…Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them…They were terrified…and supposed they had seen a spirit. (Lk. 24:33-37)

B. Jesus showed the disciples the wounds in His hands, feet, and side to convince them that it was really Him (Lk. 24:37-40). Jesus’ resurrection body resembled His former body.

   Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet…He said to them, “Have you any food here?” So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. (Lk. 24:36-43)

C. Thomas was not in the upper room when Jesus appeared (Jn. 20:24). Jesus’ resurrection body had passed through grave clothes and a rocky tomb. Now it passed through the walls of this structure.

   Then, the same day at evening…when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled…Jesus came and stood in the midst…was not with them when Jesus came…So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails…I will not believe.” (Jn. 20:19-25)

D. Jesus gave different charges on different occasions. Each gospel and Acts contains a specific charge to reach the nations (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-48; Jn. 20:21-23; Acts 1:8).

   Then He said to them, “…that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem…” Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power…” (Lk. 24:46-49)

VIII. APPEARANCE #6—JESUS APPEARED TO THE APOSTLES WITH THOMAS

A. The next Sunday, Jesus appeared to the apostles, including Thomas, in Jerusalem (Jn. 20:26-31). This occurred eight days after Jesus’ crucifixion (Jn. 20:26).

   And after eight days [after the crucifixion] His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side…” Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “…Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (Jn. 20:26-29)

B. Thomas proclaimed his faith in Jesus as God (Jn. 20:28). John’s gospel includes eight declarations of Jesus’ deity—John the Baptist (1:34), Nathanael (1:49), Jesus (5:25; 10:36), Peter (6:69), the blind man (9:35), Martha (11:27), Thomas 20:28), and John (20:30-31).
IX. APPEARANCE #7—JESUS APPEARED TO SEVEN DISCIPLES IN GALILEE

A. Jesus appeared to seven disciples who were fishing on the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-4). This occurred sometime during the 32-day period between Thomas’ confession (20:28) and Jesus’ ascension. One view often taught is that Peter was intending to return to his occupation as a fisherman.

1…Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias…3Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”…that night they caught nothing. 4But when the morning had come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus…6He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side…” They were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. 7…that disciple whom Jesus loved said…“It is the Lord!” (Jn. 21:3-7)

B. This is the conversation with Peter in Galilee indicated by the angel on the first Sunday (Mk. 16:7).

15…“Simon…do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord: You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” 16He said…a second time, “Simon…do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord…” 17He said to him the third time, “Simon…do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time…And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep” (Jn. 21:15-17)

X. APPEARANCE #8—JESUS APPEARED TO OVER 500 AT ONE TIME

A. Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time, probably in Galilee (1 Cor. 15:6) during that 32-day period between Thomas’ confession (Jn. 20:28) and Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1).

4…He rose again the third day…5and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. 6After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once… (1 Cor. 15:4-8)

B. This is one of the most dramatic supernatural events in salvation history.

XI. APPEARANCE #9—JESUS CHARGED THE APOSTLES WITH THE GREAT COMMISSION

A. Jesus gave the Great Commission to the apostles in Galilee (Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18)

16The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed… 18Jesus…spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations… 20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:16-20)

B. The “all nations” (ethnos) speak of all ethnic groups or tribes as nations (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).

XII. APPEARANCE #10—JESUS APPEARED TO THE APOSTLES ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

A. After 40 days, He appeared to apostles on the Mount of Olives (Lk. 24:50-53; Mk. 16:19-20).

51While He blessed them…He was…carried up into heaven… (Lk. 24:50-53)

B. Jesus’ ascension to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Mk. 16:19-20; Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12).

9…while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:92)