



In this last lesson of the series we will cover the events of the seventh period of Jesus' life that include His resurrection, appearances and final ascension. We've seen the corrupt Jewish leaders demanding and obtaining permission to post a guard at Jesus' tomb in order to prevent any tampering by His disciples. We also learned that the female disciples intended to return to the grave after the Sabbath in order to properly prepare Jesus' body for final rest.

The Final Forty Days

There are three main events that took place after the death and burial of Jesus. Each scene is described by several gospel writers.

Event Group #1 The Resurrection

140. The resurrection itself

Matthew 28:2-4

Only Matthew described what actually took place before the women arrived that morning to find an empty grave.

- There was a severe earthquake.
- This coincided with the descent of an angel.
- He rolled the stone away from the entrance and sat upon it.
- The soldiers guarding the tomb fainted.
- The angel's appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white.

We are not told how Jesus left the tomb or if He said anything, only the angel's appearance and the guards' reaction (they fainted and did not see the Lord because He showed Himself only to believers after His resurrection).

141. The women find the empty tomb

Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1-2

Mary Magdalene, Jesus' Aunt Mary, Johana and others come to the tomb to finish the burial process.

- They find it open and empty.
- By now the soldiers have run back to the chief officials.
- Mary Magdalene immediately returns to tell the Apostles leaving the other women alone at the graveside.

142. The angels speak to the women

Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-8; Luke 24:4-8

The women who remain see two angels and also become afraid.

- They invite the women to inspect the tomb and tell them to go and tell the disciples what has taken place, all according to what was promised.
- They also tell the women that Jesus has gone to Galilee (in the north again) to meet His disciples.
- These women also leave with the intention of telling the disciples that the Lord has risen from the dead.

143. Peter and John arrive at the tomb

Mark 16:11; Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10

Now that the other women have left the scene to tell the Apostles and disciples, Peter and John arrive. They have been told of the resurrection by Mary Magdalene, and while the others were skeptical, Peter and John have raced to the scene ahead of Mary who is trailing behind. John arrives first but waits for Peter to go inside. Once inside they see the linen wrappings on the ground and the towel, used to cover his face, rolled up in the corner. John says that once they saw the empty tomb, they then believed and understood what Jesus had been telling them concerning His resurrection.



Event Group #2 The Appearances

These are very hard to put in order because of the small time frame and little background information given.

144. Appearance #1 – Mary Magdalene

Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18

After Peter and John have seen the empty tomb and left, Mary Magdalene arrives once again at the scene.

- The Bible says that she does see two angels sitting in the tomb who ask her why she is weeping.
- When she goes outside she sees Jesus who she mistakes for the gardener at first and she asks Him where they have taken the body.
- When Jesus speaks, she recognizes Him and tries to cling to Him, but Jesus does not permit it. He sends her to tell the Apostles of His resurrection and imminent ascension.

145. Appearance #2 – Other women

Matthew 28:8-10

The other women, who had seen the angels and were en route to the city were now visited by the resurrected Christ while on their way.

- Matthew reports that the women took hold of His feet and worshipped Him and He told them what the angels had said: go tell the disciples that He would meet them in Galilee.

146. The priests bribe the guards

Matthew 28:11-15

While all of this is going on with Jesus' disciples, Matthew reports that the guards who had fainted at the appearance of the angels have gone to their superiors to tell them what had happened. They are in serious trouble since it was their duty to guard the tomb, if Roman soldiers failed in the line of duty often it was a death sentence.

- The Jewish leaders arrange to pay them a bribe to claim that the body was stolen while they slept.
- They agree in exchange for the promise that if this came to the attention of Pilate, the priests would vouch for them.
- Matthew claimed that this was the "official" story given out at the time that he wrote his gospel some 30-40 years after the fact (Matthew – 60-70 AD).



147. Appearance #3 – Peter

Luke 24:34

Peter doesn't even mention this appearance in his own writings.

- One of the men who had seen the Lord on the road to Emmaus recounts that the Lord told them that Jesus had indeed appeared to Simon Peter.
- Paul confirms this fact in I Corinthians 15:5 with a similar reference

148. Appearance #4 – Two disciples on the road to Emmaus

Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35

We are no longer certain where Emmaus was located, but it was near Jerusalem (5-7 miles).

The two disciples were on their way home after being witnesses of what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem. While discussing this, Jesus comes along and begins to travel with them sharing in their conversation. They are prevented from recognizing Him as He questions them regarding their discussions.

- They tell Him that they were hoping that Jesus would have been the Messiah, but now that He has been tortured and killed, they're not so sure.
- Like most Jews, they hoped the Messiah would be a glorious figure like David (warrior king).
- In the Old Testament, Isaiah (53:1-12) presented the Messiah as a figure of suffering and servanthood. Many Jews saw this as a personification of themselves – even to this day.

Jesus comes to these two disciples and explains to them that the Messiah would have two profiles:

1. A suffering servant

It wasn't the Jews who were Isaiah's model for his suffering servant – it was the Messiah that he was talking about.

- Jesus' suffering was not a repudiation of His claim as Messiah, it was a confirmation that He truly was fulfilling all that was written about Him in the Old Testament.
- This was a stumbling block for Jews and Jesus explains this to these two disciples.

2. A Powerful Savior

Like David who saved his people, Jesus in His resurrection defeats man's greatest enemy: death.

- This was the nature of what Jesus taught these two disciples along the road.
- As darkness approached, they invite Him to spend the night with them and as they ate and Jesus blessed the meal, they recognize Him and He disappears from their sight.
- They return to Jerusalem to report this to the Apostles.

149. Appearance #5 – Jesus appears to the Apostles and disciples

Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23

When the two disciples find the Apostles and begin telling them of their experience, Jesus suddenly appears among them.

- At this first appearance among them, the Apostles were frightened and He reassures them by showing His hands and feet and asks for something to eat.
- After this, He teaches them what He had taught the two disciples along the road – that according to the Scriptures the Messiah had to suffer, die and resurrect.
- What they were seeing was the true fulfillment of scripture.

John tells us that it is at this point that Jesus breathes on them and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now they receive the indwelling of the Spirit to permit their growth in Christ (sanctification).

- This parallels a statement Jesus made earlier in His ministry that these men would be in-powered to carry out Christ's will here on earth after his ascension. (Matthew 18:18)
- We receive both forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit at the point of baptism (Acts 2:38).
- After this Jesus gives them the charge to be His witnesses in preaching the gospel, but to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the empowering from the Holy Spirit.

150. Appearance #6 – Thomas

Mark 16:14; John 20:24-31

In the previous appearance to the Apostles, Thomas was not among them, but this time he is.

- Mark says that Jesus rebuked them for being hard-hearted and unbelieving.
- John gives a fuller description of the scene where Jesus appears with the greeting, "Peace be with you" and takes special care in convincing Thomas of His person.
- Thomas acknowledges Jesus as Lord and God, and Jesus (this may be the rebuke Mark refers to) says that they have believed because they have seen but blessed are they who will believe without seeing.
- John comments that these things have been recorded for the express purpose of helping those who haven't seen to believe.

151. Appearance #7 – The Great Commission

Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18

- Jesus sends the Apostles north into Galilee where the majority of His ministry had taken place. It is here that He gives them the charge to go into all the world to preach, baptize and teach.
- His time for departure is drawing near so He comforts them with the promise that He will always be with them.

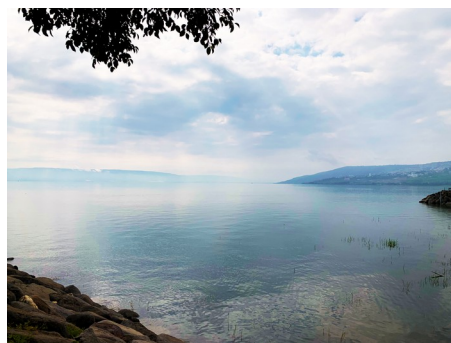


152. Appearance #8 – At the Sea of Galilee

John 21:1-25

John gives another long description of a time when Jesus appears to Peter and the other Apostles as they were fishing. It is here that Peter is reconciled with the Lord over his denial (Jesus asks for his love 3 times) and here Jesus gives him back his apostolic ministry (feed my sheep).

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- There is an explanation by John as to why some in the 1st century believed that he would not die until Jesus returned, John says that Jesus merely stated that if He wanted Him to remain alive until that time that was His decision to make, no one else's.
- It didn't mean that he would live until then, only that Jesus could do this if He wanted to.



He completes this chapter with the same kind of editorial comment that the record he kept only contained part of the things Jesus did – enough to generate faith, but if all were written it would fill the world.

153. Appearance #9 – Out of Season Appearances.

1 Corinthians 15:6-8

Not all of Jesus' appearances were recorded in the gospels.

Paul also describes some of Jesus' appearances that fit into the gospel narrative, but are not included by the writers.

- Simply for sequence sake we note that Jesus appeared to over 500 in Galilee (perhaps when He gave the great commission).
- He also appeared to James (His earthly brother)
- The Apostle Paul, but this was much later after His Ascension.
- Approximately 549 people recorded seeing Him in different situations and on different days.

Event Group #3 the Ascension

The final great event recorded by the gospel writers is the ascension of Jesus back into heaven.

154. The ascension

Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53

Luke says that this took place in Bethany, a place of happy memories with the Apostles, disciples and friends. They watched Him ascend into heaven as He blessed them.

- Together, Mark and Luke record that the Apostles felt great joy, returned to Jerusalem, and later on preached the good news.
- Luke gives a more complete version of this event in the first chapter of the book of Acts where he explains that the Lord instructed them to remain in Jerusalem to await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would empower them to do miracles and preach.

In His final words to them, He repeated the charge to be His witnesses to the world and

- Luke says that two angels encouraged them to stop looking into the sky noting that He would return some day in the very same way.

Lessons:

This is our last chapter and I want to share one last lesson or thought on this series.

1. We are mentioned

Even though Jesus' words were directed mostly toward the Apostles, their situation and the work that was ahead of them – Jesus also referred to us directly.

- In John 20, when He tells Thomas and the others that their faith was based on what they had seen, but blessed would be those whose faith would come even though they had not actually seen – that's you and I He's talking about.
- I always envied those whose names were actually mentioned in the Bible (David, Peter, Lydia, etc.) and how secure they must have felt because their names were recorded in the inspired text.

- Well, in His kindness, Jesus has made room for all of us in the phrase "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." Every time you read that passage realize that our names are included there from Jesus' own lips, and He will return one day to call our names in order that we might be with Him in heaven forever.
- **This is possible because even though we have not seen, through His word, we have believed.**

Discussion Questions

1. Summarize the following actions by Jesus:

- The resurrection itself (Matthew 28:2-4)
- The women find the empty tomb (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1-2)
- The angels speak to the women (Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-8; Luke 24:4-8)
- Peter and John arrive at the tomb (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10)
- Appearance #1 – Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18)
- Appearance #2 – The other women (Matthew 28:8-10)
- The priests bribe the guards (Matthew 28:11-15)
- Appearance #3 – Peter (Luke 24:34)
- Appearance #4 – Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35)
- Appearance #5 – Jesus appears to the Apostles and disciples (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23)
- Appearance #6 – Thomas (Mark 16:14; John 20:24-31)
- Appearance #7 – The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18)
- Appearance #8 – At the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25)
- Appearance #9 – Non-Gospel (I Corinthians 15:6-8)
- The ascension – (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53)

2. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

