

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #69
"Post Resurrection Appearances" (Part Two)
(Scriptures from NKJV)

Acts 1:1-3:

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION: We now continue where we left off in the last lesson. During the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus is recorded to have appeared to His followers on ten occasions, the first five being on the day of His resurrection. In the previous lesson, we covered the first six of His ten appearances. These were:

- A. FIRST: TO MARY MAGDALENE (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18).**
- B. SECOND: TO THE WOMEN RETURNING FROM THE TOMB (Matthew 28:8-10)**
- C. THIRD: TO PETER, PROBABLY IN THE AFTERNOON (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5).**
- D. FOURTH: TO THE TWO MEN ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32)**
- E. FIFTH: TO THE DISCIPLES ON SUNDAY EVENING WITH THOMAS BEING ABSENT (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)**
- F. SIXTH: TO THE DISCIPLES ON THE NEXT SUNDAY NIGHT, THOMAS BEING PRESENT (John 20:26-29; I Corinthians 15:5)**

We then pointed out that the entire Christian faith rests upon the trustworthiness and testimony of those who were the actual eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ, and that it is through the testimony and writings of the Apostles and others that future believers will be blessed. The "*many infallible proofs,*" which convinced the early eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection, are confirmed to us by the testimonies of these believers as found in the records of the Gospels. In order for persons to qualify as true believers, they must receive the teachings of the Apostles, and these are found in their writings. A Christian cannot receive another person as being a true Christian who rejects the writings of the Apostles as being unreliable and untrustworthy.

We are now ready to cover the rest of Christ's appearances after His resurrection. The next one is number seven.

G. SEVENTH: TO THE SEVEN DISCIPLES BESIDE THE SEA OF GALILEE (John 21:1-25).

1. Verses 1 and 2: ***"After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together."***

a. The words, ***"after these things"*** refers to the period of time after the events in chapter 20. The disciples had left Jerusalem and made their way north to Galilee as Jesus had commanded them (Matthew 28:10, 16; Mark 14:28; 16:7). Apparently, on this occasion, all eleven did not travel together in one group, since this incident involved only seven of them.

b. The statement that Jesus ***"manifested Himself . . . to the disciples"*** emphasizes the truth that after His resurrection He was not recognizable unless He revealed Himself. What was true of physically recognizing Jesus is also true spiritually. No one apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit can call Jesus Lord (I Corinthians 12:3). This is because the ***"natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*** Since there are none who seek after God (Romans 3:11), it was necessary for the Son of Man to come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). Apart from the Son's seeking, the Gospel remains hidden from the natural man.

2. Verses 3 and 4: ***"Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus."***

a. Simon Peter, in his impatient and impulsive manner, grew tired of waiting for Jesus to appear. He makes an interesting statement. ***"I am going fishing."*** The verb tense indicates that he was returning to his old occupation of fishing. The rest of the disciples then said ***"we are going with you also."*** They were not well off and had lost many days of work. Their financial support depended upon fishing. We do not know how many of these disciples had families to support. We do know that Peter had a wife. They must earn a living in some way, and fishing was their profession.

b. Fishing in the Sea of Galilee was done best at night, but they labored all night and caught nothing. As the morning arrived, Jesus made His appearance on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize Him. Jesus allowed them to spend the entire night in futility before appearing in the morning. They must be brought to see their inability before Jesus reveals His ability. He had called them to be fishers of men, and they must be weaned from their old means of livelihood to follow Him.

3. Verses 4 through 6: ***"But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish."***

a. Let us remember this was not just a recreational fishing trip. They had followed Jesus for three years and had all their needs met. But it has become unclear what they must do since Jesus has risen and is leaving them. They concluded they must return to what they knew they could do to support themselves. They have failed miserably. They not only did not catch enough fish to support their fishing business, they did not even catch enough to eat for themselves.

b. At this point, they were told to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. They did what the stranger on the shore told them to do and suddenly their net was filled with fish.

c. Something supernatural was obviously at work. What was it? Jesus! The One who could control the wind and the waves can also control the movement of fish. He had guided these fish away from the boat during the night. Now He guided them into the net. Jesus is the Lord of nature as well as the Lord of men.

4. Verses 7 through 14: ***"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are***

You?’—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.”

a. Upon seeing the great number of fish in the net, John turns to Peter and says, ***"It is the Lord."*** John was the reflective one while Peter was the impulsive one. God uses both kinds of personalities in the building of His kingdom. Christ uses disciples of love and insight, as well as disciples of zeal and activity. The disciples no doubt remembered the fishing lesson which He had given them at the beginning of their being called into the service of Christ. This was recorded back in Luke 5:1-11. It was there that this group of fishermen had again labored all night and caught nothing. In verses 4-11 we read: ***"When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.' But Simon answered and said to Him, 'Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.' And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!' For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.' So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him."***

b. Just as they forsook their fishing business to follow Christ then, now they will do so once again. NOTE: When Christ has ordained for us to do something in His service, He will see that we will fail in everything else until we submit to do what He has called us to do. I found this to be personally true when Christ called me into the ministry.

c. When Peter realized it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment and jumped into the water, and either swam or waded for about one hundred yards to shore, leaving the rest to bring the boat and the net of fishes to land. A word about the King James Version is necessary at this point. It states that Peter was naked prior to his clothing of himself with his outer garment. This is correct in that the Greek word is "gumnos." The word can either be used in a literal or figurative sense. It means to be "naked, unclad, or poorly dressed." It is used in the later sense in James 2:15 which reads, ***"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food. . ."*** Here it does not mean to be naked in that their body is bare and unclothed. Rather it means to be poorly dressed. This is the meaning in the case of Peter. He fished in his work clothes which consisted of what we

would call a man's underwear. If one appeared in public in his undergarments, he would be considered shameful as if he was naked or unclothed. He did not want to appear in the presence of His Lord clothed in a shameful manner. Thus he put on his outer garment before he jumped into the water.

d. Upon arriving on shore, they counted the fish to be 153 in number and large in size. Jesus had their breakfast already prepared consisting of charbroiled fish and bread. This is showing that Jesus will continue to meet their needs in the future as He has done so in the past. The words of Paul in Philippians 4:19 are appropriate. ***"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."***

5. Verse 14: We read in verse 14 that ***"This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead."*** This is referring to the Apostles as John describes in 20:19-25 (the first Sunday night), and 20:26-31 (the second Sunday night). It is the seventh appearance in all up to this point.

6. Verses 15 through 17: ***"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, 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.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'"***

a. After breakfast, Jesus led in an extended conversation with Peter, which would lead to his humiliation and restoration to service. The true gospel call to follow Christ is a call to self-denial. It is not a man-centered call to self-fulfillment. The gospel calls sinners to submit fully to Jesus Christ, to find their lives by losing them, to gain their lives by abandoning them, to live life to the fullest by emptying themselves. Peter had to learn the hard way what it means to love Christ. He had boasted that his devotion to Him was far superior to the other disciples and that if they all fell away, he would certainly not. He had said that he would even be willing to lay down his life for Christ. But when things got tough, his self-acclaimed love failed as he openly denied three times that he even knew Jesus.

b. Jesus will now ask Peter three times if he loved Him ***"more than these."*** There are three possible interpretations of these words. They are:
One: Do you love Me more than you love these disciples?
Two: Do you love Me more than you love this fishing gear?

Three: Do you love Me more than these other disciples?

There are good teachers who hold to differing views to the question. My view is that the latter view makes the most sense. It was Peter's boast that his love for Christ was superior to that of the other disciples. In view of his failure, Jesus is asking if he can still make that claim. There has been much discussion as to the meaning of the words translated "love" but for time sake, I must bypass them.

Peter is grieved because Jesus asked the question three times. He did so because Peter had denied Jesus three times. When Peter now confesses that Jesus knows his heart and whether he loves Him, there is not a trace of self-confidence or self-righteousness in Peter. Jesus then restores Peter to the role of feeding His sheep.

7. Verses 18 through 19: ***"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"***

Jesus now reveals to Peter what the future had in store for him. While he would live to be an old man, he would die a martyr's death. He would be free to do as he wished until a time would come that others would do to him as they wished. According to Tetullian, one of the church fathers, and Eusebius, a church historian, Peter was crucified in Rome in A.D. 67 or 68. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down at his request, because he felt himself unworthy to be crucified upright like His Lord. Peter has now learned humility.

8. Verses 20 through 23: ***"Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, 'But Lord, what about this man?' Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.' Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'"***

a. Peter and John were close friends. Peter now asked Jesus what is in store for John. Jesus replies that should not concern Peter. Peter's concern should be with his own obedience. God has appointed all of the events in our lives to be certain. We must not compare ourselves with what God is doing in the lives of others. This will help eliminate envy, strife and division. This stopped the arguing among the disciples over who was going

to be the greatest. It will help us all learn contentment with what God is doing in our lives.

b. When Jesus said of John, ***"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you,"*** it led to a misinterpretation that John was not going to die but live until Jesus comes again. Jesus was not saying that John was not going to die, but was setting forth a hypothetical question, that even if John was not going to die, that should not detract Peter from his duty to follow Christ in a walk of obedience.

H. EIGHTH: TO THE APOSTLES AND OVER FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN AT ONCE (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; I Corinthians 15:6).

1. In I Corinthians 15:6, Paul describes this large group of eyewitnesses. ***"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."*** This is the only time we are told anything about this group. We are told they were all together at once. The majority of them were still alive two decades later during Paul's lifetime. We are not told where this event took place.

2. A. T. Robertson, in his *"Harmony of the Gospels"* says it probably took place on a mountain in Galilee as described in Matthew 28:16 which says, ***"But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain, where Jesus had appointed them."*** There He gave them what has been called "The Great Commission." This location would not attract the attention of unbelievers to such a large number of people, but we cannot be certain. Those who hold to the "Hallucination Theory" of the resurrection, have a hard time convincing people that 500 people at one time could imagine they saw Jesus.

I. NINTH: TO JAMES, THE LORD'S HALF BROTHER (I Corinthians 15:7).

1. ***"After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles."*** While we are not told the exact identity of who this James was, the majority opinion sides with holding that it was Jesus' half brother. He was the author of the Book of James and a key leader in the Jerusalem church. (Acts 15:13-21).

2. James grew up in the same home as Jesus, yet he and his brothers were unbelievers. Now, he had witnessed the resurrected Christ and was brought to saving faith. He will become a great leader in the church in Jerusalem and write the Book of James. We have no record of his death.

J. TENTH: HIS LAST RECORDED APPEARANCE AND HIS ASCENSION FROM

MOUNT OLIVET (Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12; I Corinthians 15:7).

1. The forty days which Luke describes in Acts 1:3 are now coming to an end. Christ will now ascend into Heaven.

2. In I Corinthians 15:7, 8, Paul confirms that the Apostles were present, ***"After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."***

3. The location was on Mount Olivet, located between Bethany and Jerusalem, about one mile from Jerusalem.

a. Thus we read in Luke 24:50-53, ***"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."***

b. Also it is recorded in Acts 1:9-12, ***"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey."***

4. In His ascension, Jesus imparts a promise that He will come back to this earth in the same body as they had seen Him ascend into heaven. Much more will be said about this when we cover His ascension in a later lesson.

K. AFTER HIS ASCENSION, IT IS RECORDED THAT HE APPEARED ONE OR MORE TIMES TO THREE MEN.

1. First, to Stephen at his stoning (Acts 7:55-60).

2. Second, to Paul.

a. At his conversion (Acts 9:3-8, 17; 22:6-11, 14, 15; 26:12-19; I

Corinthians 9:1; 15:8).

- b. At Corinth (Acts 18:9, 10).
- c. In the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21).
- d. Later at Jerusalem (Acts 23:11)
- e. In another vision in II Corinthians 12:1-4).

3. Third, to John on Patmos (Revelation 1:10-19 and other visions recorded in the Book of Revelation.

L. SUMMARY

In reference to the resurrection of Christ, we have looked at the chronological order of events occurring on the resurrection morning. This was followed by the ten post-resurrection appearances prior to His ascension and the appearances to three men after His ascension. All of these were to provide many convincing proofs to the newly forming Christian community that He had truly risen in a real human body. In each of these appearances, Jesus initiated the action, and the people reacted in varying ways. But Jesus was in sovereign control of it all. Jesus chose to reveal Himself to some men, not to all men. That was His right and our duty to believe and accept. This is what is meant by sovereign grace.