

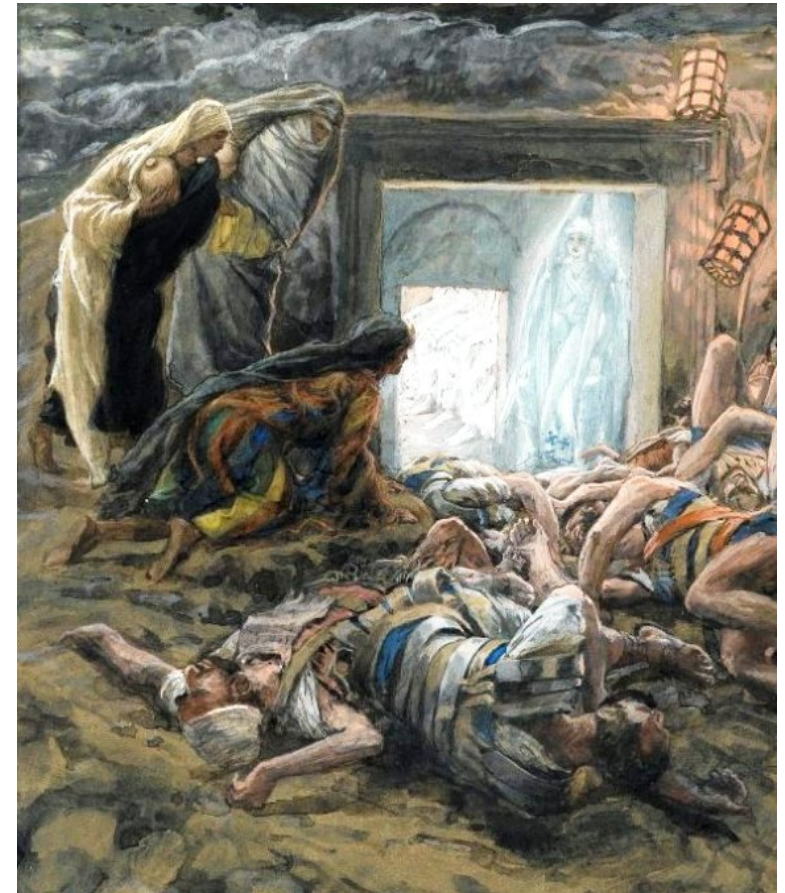
Eyewitness accounts of The Resurrection of Jesus

We start at the tomb...

1. In Jerusalem

A. Earthquakes, angels, empty grave clothes.

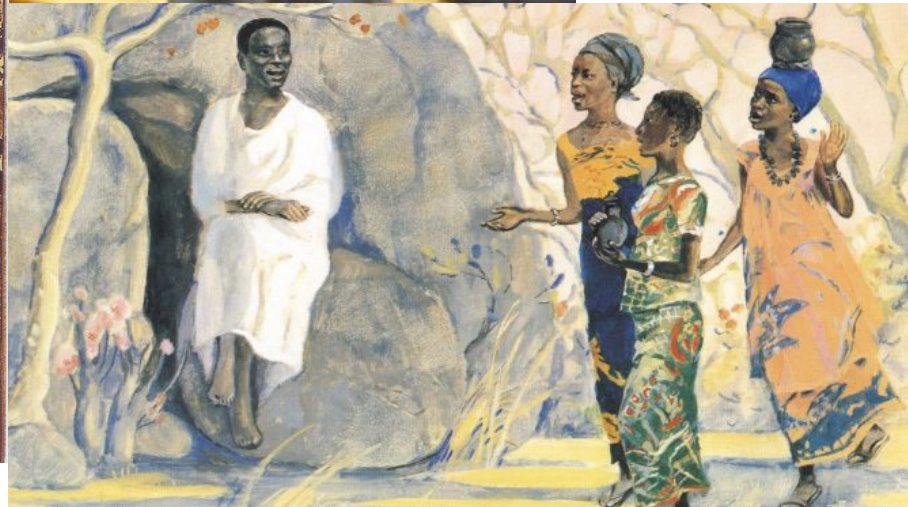
1. *Bribing the Roman Guard.* Matthew reports the start of the account from the point of view of **the Roman guard**, placed to stop the disciples stealing the body. They reported their experiencing an earthquake, and seeing an angel, of whom they were terrified. They were bribed by the Chief Priests to say that the disciples had, after all, stolen the body of Jesus while they were sleeping. The Chief Priests said they would clear the soldiers with the Roman Governor, for they all knew that sleeping on duty was a capital offence. How many? We're not told, but anything from 4-20 is a conservative estimate. (Mtt 27:62-66; 28:2-4; 11-15)





2. *Mary Magdalene sees the stone rolled away, and no body inside.*

According to John's account, **Mary Magdalene** first saw the body had gone from the tomb. (Jn 20:1-2)



3. *Jesus' women disciples see no body in the tomb.* According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, a combination of **Mary Magdalene**, **Mary mother of James**, **Salome** (wife of Herod Antipas' Steward), **Joanna**, and **other women**, also saw that the body had gone. Angels tell them he has been raised. The women ran in fear and joy to tell the men who were in hiding that Jesus' body had gone (Mtt 28:1-8).



4. **Peter and John find no body.** Although they didn't believe the nonsense *they* thought the women were talking, **Peter** and **John** then ran to the tomb, also finding no body there. They went back to tell the others. (Jn 20:3-10)

B. Jesus appears “For forty days after his death Jesus appeared to his disciples many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that He was alive. They saw Him, and He talked about the Kingdom of God.” (Acts 1.3)



5. **Mary Magdalene is first to see the risen Jesus.** John has an intimate extra snapshot of Mary Magdalene's encounter, which Mark also mentions: **Mary Magdalene** remained at the tomb after the men and other women disciples had left. She is the first to see the resurrected Jesus, but doesn't at first recognise him, thinking the one she was encountering was the **gardener**. She recognises him only when he calls her **name**, Mary! She tries to hug him, but he refuses, instructing her not to cling on to him, but to tell the others, "I am returning to Him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God." (Mk 16:9-11; John 20.11-17)



6. ***The Marys take hold of Jesus' feet.*** Matthew records a probably subsequent meeting of the risen Jesus with **Mary Magdalene** and the **'other' Mary**: "Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" They came up to him, **took hold of his feet**, and worshipped Him. Jesus tells them not to be afraid, but to tell his brothers to go to Galilee where they'll see him. (Mtt 28:9-10)



7. Cleopas and friend meet the Risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

On the same day (Sunday) Mark and Luke record Jesus meeting two of Jesus' followers (**Cleopas and unnamed companion**) on the road to Emmaus, about seven miles away, or two-three hours walk.

Luke has the detail.

They're talking about the missing body of Jesus as reported by the women, confirmed by some of the male disciples.

Jesus walks with them, again they don't recognise him even when he relates the Old Testament account of the coming of the Messiah to the events of the last few days to them.

He's invited to stay for supper, and in the breaking of bread, they suddenly realise who he is, but he "disappears from their sight."

They said, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" (Mk 16:12; Lk 24.32)

8. **Simon Peter sees the risen Lord.** At once, the two got up and returned to Jerusalem where the 11 were gathered "with the others." They greeted the travellers with "The Lord is Risen indeed: he has appeared to **Simon!**" (Lk 24.34) There's no account of this meeting in the gospels, but Paul records it, "He appeared to Cephas (i.e. Peter the Rock)..." (1Cor 15.5). This account may well have been sourced when Paul stayed for 15 days with Peter, around AD35, researching the life of Jesus (Gal 1:18).





9. The Risen Jesus invites the disciples to feel his wounds.

As Cleopas and the other disciple were telling the rest of their encounter, Jesus stood among them, saying "Peace be with you." They were terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. He showed them his hands and feet, saying, "Why are you alarmed? Why are these doubts coming up in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is I myself. **Feel me**, and you will know, **for a ghost [pneuma = spirit] doesn't have flesh [sarka as in sarcophagus] and bones [osteia as in osteopath], as you can see I have.**"

(Lk 24.36-40)



10. **Jesus eats barbecued fish.** They still could not believe (so full of joy and wonder), so he asked them “D’you have anything here to eat?” They gave him some **barbecued fish**, which he ate in their presence. He explained, “These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.” (Lk 24:41-44) Peter refers to this meeting in his speech to Captain Cornelius and the gentiles of Joppa: “God raised Him from the dead and caused him to appear...to **us who ate and drank with him** after he rose from death.” (Acts 10.41)



11. ***Thomas refuses to believe unless he sees for himself.***

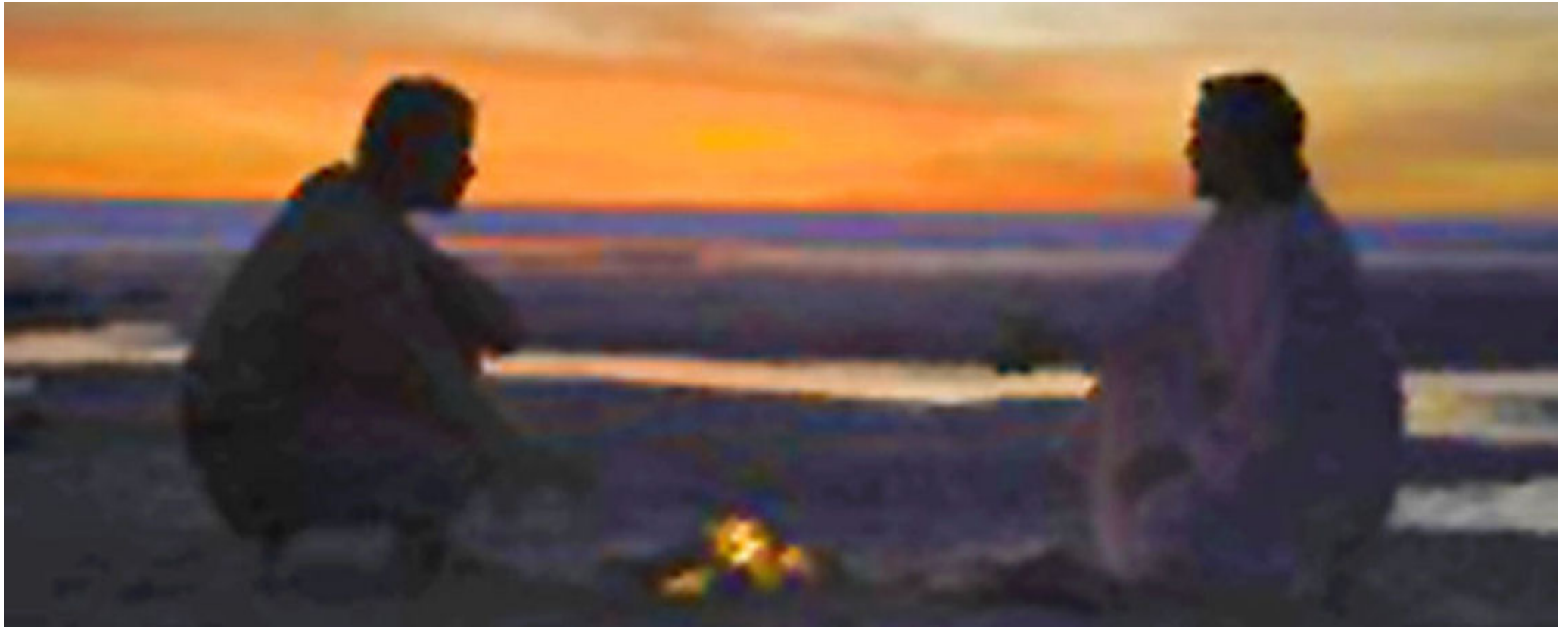
John adds in further detail: **Thomas** was not there the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples. They told him about it, but he said, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe." Eight days later the disciples are again in locked room with Thomas. Jesus 'came and stood among them.' He said to Thomas "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." [*Lit: bring the finger of you here and see the hands of me; and bring the hand of you and put it into the side of me*] (Jn 20:24-29)





In Galilee

12. ***The 153 Fish.***
Later, in Galilee now, Jesus appears to seven disciples out fishing **Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, (James & John), and two others.** They haven't caught anything all night. At dawn on the beach, Jesus has made a fire, cooking fish for breakfast. He calls, "Have you caught anything?" "No" "Put your nets out on the other side!" 153 fish! Jesus asks them to bring some fish, and they eat together. (Jn 21:1-14)



13. **Jesus asks Peter some difficult questions.** Jesus has difficult conversation with **Peter**, so **Peter** sees him up close and personal, and very challenging. “Are you really my friend?” (Jn 21:15-19).



14. ***John overhears a conversation about himself.***

The risen Jesus has a conversation with Peter about John, to which John is witness, and about which he writes as witness.

(Jn 21: 20-24)

15. ***The Risen Lord gives final instructions.***

Up a hill in **Galilee**, Jesus appears to the **eleven disciples**.

“Having seen Him, they worshipped Him, though some doubted.”

He gives the **Great Commission**, to go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them to do everything he'd taught his first disciples: proclaim the kingdom, heal the sick.

In other words, tell others of your experience of the ongoing presence of the risen Jesus! Jesus promised that if they/we do this, “I will be with you always.” (Mtt 28:16-20)



Unknown locations



16. **120 believers gather.**
120 'believers' gather in Jerusalem. We assume they had all seen the Risen Lord. (Acts 1:15)



17. *Two more named witnesses.* **Joseph Barsabbas** and **Matthias**, two out of the 120, are chosen as 'witnesses of the resurrected Jesus,' prime candidates to fill the place of Judas Iscariot as twelfth Apostle. (Acts 1.22-3)

18. There are two or three more appearances mentioned by Paul, writing to the church in Corinth in about AD55: first, Paul confirms the Apostles' account (see 8 above) that Jesus appeared to Peter. Paul says he spent 15 days with Peter in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18-19) researching the stories of Jesus. So he has ample time to check this story out with Peter, and appears to have confirmed it satisfactorily. Paul goes on: "Then he appeared to more than **five hundred** of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died." He doesn't tell us where this was, but he's sure enough to put it in writing! (1 Cor 15.6)





19. ***Jesus appears to James.***

Then he appeared to **James**.

This apparently individual meeting isn't recorded in the Gospels or Acts: is it an extra appearance of which we only have Paul's record? (1Cor 15.7a)



20. *Jesus appears to all the Apostles...*and afterwards to **all the Apostles**: this may be the same as 10 or 11 above, or a unique appearance? (1Cor 15.7b)



Back in
Jerusalem /
Bethany

21. *The
Ascension.*
Later still
Jesus led **the
disciples** out
of Jerusalem
to **Bethany**,
where **he
blessed
them** and
was taken
into heaven.
This was the
last time
they saw
Jesus
physically
on earth.
(Mk
16:19-20;
Lk
24:50-53;
Acts 1:9-11)

The Road to Damascus

22. *Saul / Paul meets the risen Jesus.*

On his way to destroy the early church in Damascus, **Saul/Paul** meets the risen Jesus on the road and was totally transformed by the encounter.

Paul himself says, “Last of all he appeared also to me—even though I am like someone whose birth was abnormal.” (Acts 9:1-6; 1 Cor 15.8) Earlier in the letter, Paul had insisted, “Am I not an Apostle: have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” (1Cor 9:1)





Into all the world

23. **The Risen Lord works with his followers.** Mark adds a small, but deeply significant detail: “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord **worked with them** and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.” (Mk 16:20) Luke confirms this: Jesus warned them to wait in the city for the power of the Holy Spirit: “But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1.8 // Mt 28.19; Mk 16.15; Lk 24.47,48). This experience of the Risen Jesus working in and through his mission-active disciples is then repeated endlessly through the Acts, reported in Paul’s letters, and beyond to the present day. I myself met, and was totally transformed by, the risen Jesus while reading the bible in a school assembly when I was 17. I didn’t understand who it was I met at the time, but nothing has been the same since.

In summary: Eyewitness accounts of The Resurrection of Jesus

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A. Earthquakes, angels, empty grave clothes.

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2. **Mary Magdalene sees the stone rolled away, and no body inside.** (Jn 20:1-2)
3. **Jesus women disciples see no body in the tomb.** (Mtt 28:1-8)
4. **Peter and John find no body.** (Jn 20:3-10)

B. Jesus appears “For forty days after his death Jesus appeared to his disciples many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that He was alive. They saw Him, and He talked about the Kingdom of God.” (Acts 1.3)

5. **Mary Magdalene is first to see the risen Jesus.** (Mk 16:9-11; John 20.11-17)
6. **The Marys take hold of Jesus’ feet.** (Mtt 28:9-10)
7. **Cleopas and friend meet the Risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus.** (Mk 16:12; Lk 24.32)
8. **Simon Peter sees the risen Lord.** (Lk 24.34; 1Cor 15.5)
9. **The Risen Jesus invites the disciples to feel his wounds.** (Lk 24.36-40)
10. **Jesus eats barbecued fish.** (Lk 24:41-44; Acts 10.41)
11. **Thomas refuses to believe unless he sees for himself.** (Jn 20:24-29)

In Galilee

12. **The 153 Fish.** (Jn 21:1-14)
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14. **John overhears a conversation about himself.** (Jn 21: 20-24)

15. **The Risen Lord gives final instructions.** (Mtt 28:16-20)

Unknown locations

16. **120 believers gather.** (Acts 1:15)
17. **Two more named witnesses.** (Acts 1.22-3)
18. **500 see Jesus at once.** (1 Cor 15.6)
19. **Jesus appears to James.** (1Cor 15.7a)
20. **Jesus appears to all the Apostles** (1Cor 15.7b)

Back in Jerusalem / Bethany

21. **The Ascension.** (Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11)

Road to Damascus

22. **Saul / Paul meets the risen Jesus.** (Acts 9:1-6; 1 Cor 15.8; 1Cor 9:1)

Into all the world

23. **The Risen Lord works with his followers.** (Mk 16:20; Acts 1.8 // Mt 28.19; Mk 16.15; Lk 24.47,48).

Minimum 500 individuals, 20 named, maybe 50 identifiable, in at least seven different named locations, over 40 days.

Individuals identified:

1. **The Roman Guard (maybe 10-20?)**
2. **Mary Magdalene**
3. **Mary James' mum,**
4. **Joanna**
5. **Salome**
6. **'Other women disciples'**
7. **Peter**
8. **John**
9. **Cleopas and**
10. **N (Emmaus)**
11. **10 Disciples (Peter & John already counted, no Thomas)= Nathanael**
12. **+James &**
13. **+Simon Zealotes &**
14. **+Matthew &**
15. **+Andrew &**
16. **+James (younger)**
17. **+Jude/Thaddeus &**
18. **+Philip**
19. **Thomas**
20. **S/Paul**
21. **Joseph Barsabbas and**
22. **Matthias 'witnesses of the resurrected Jesus.' (Acts 1.22-3)**

At least 22: we don't know how many Roman guards or other women disciples there were.

Plus

23. **120 believers in Acts 1: had they all seen the Risen Lord?**
24. **500** at once (1Cor 15.6)
25. The risen Lord **works with his obedient disciples** who were sharing their experience of his rising (Mk 16.20) = ***thousands of millions!***

James Bruce 22nd Mar 2020

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