

Resurrection of Christ

Related: [Resurrection](#)

Christ's Resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is vital to Christianity because it is the proof that our sins are gone, and that God is satisfied with the work of Calvary. The Lord rose bodily from the dead, not merely in spirit, as some have taught through the ages. When Paul summed up the gospel that he preached, he said that he preached Christ who died, was buried, and had risen from the dead; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 17, Romans 10:9. When comparing Christianity to other religions we should ask ourselves: where is Confucius? Where is Buddha? Where is Muhammad? They are all dead. We have a Savior who was raised from among the dead - His tomb is empty. Christ's suffering and death was the *payment* of our debt, but His resurrection is the *receipt* that proves our debt was paid; *"raised for our justification"* (Rom. 4:25). Not only is the resurrection critical to justification, but Paul shows that it is also critical to the resurrection of believers, because Christ is *"risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept"* (1 Cor. 15:20). It is really a cornerstone of the Christian faith; *"but if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"* (1 Cor. 15:17). What would we have for our faith if the gospels said nothing of Christ's resurrection?

Resurrection, Justification, and Peace are connected all through the New Testament. See Acts 13:37-39, Romans 4:24-5:1, etc. The Lord's first words after resurrection were: *"Peace be unto you"* (John 20:19). Also, Hebrews 13:20 says *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus..."* See also 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The only solid ground for a person to have peace in their soul, is to lay hold of not only the death, but also the resurrection of Christ, which is the witness of God's satisfaction with the work of Calvary.

The Believer's Association with Christ Risen. The death of Christ answered the question of our responsibility before God, and of the guilt of our sins. But also, by association with Christ, we died with Him (Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:3). Our standing before God is not in our natural life, not "in Adam". That old standing was completely removed in the death of Christ. But we have a new standing, "in Christ" risen from the dead! We are associated with Christ, not only in His death, but also in His resurrection; *"buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead"* (Col. 2:12). Before the cross, Christ was in a place of responsibility under the law (Gal. 4:4). He went into death under the sentence of our sins - under the curse of a broken

law (Gal. 3:10). But, having borne the curse for us, He rose from the dead in a new position. Christ rose in a sphere of life, of victory over sin and death, into a place where sin can never come. *“Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God”* (Rom. 6:9-10). We are associated with Christ in that risen place! *“If ye then be risen with Christ”,* etc. (Col. 3:1). For a believer to put themselves under law is to misunderstand completely the Christian position.

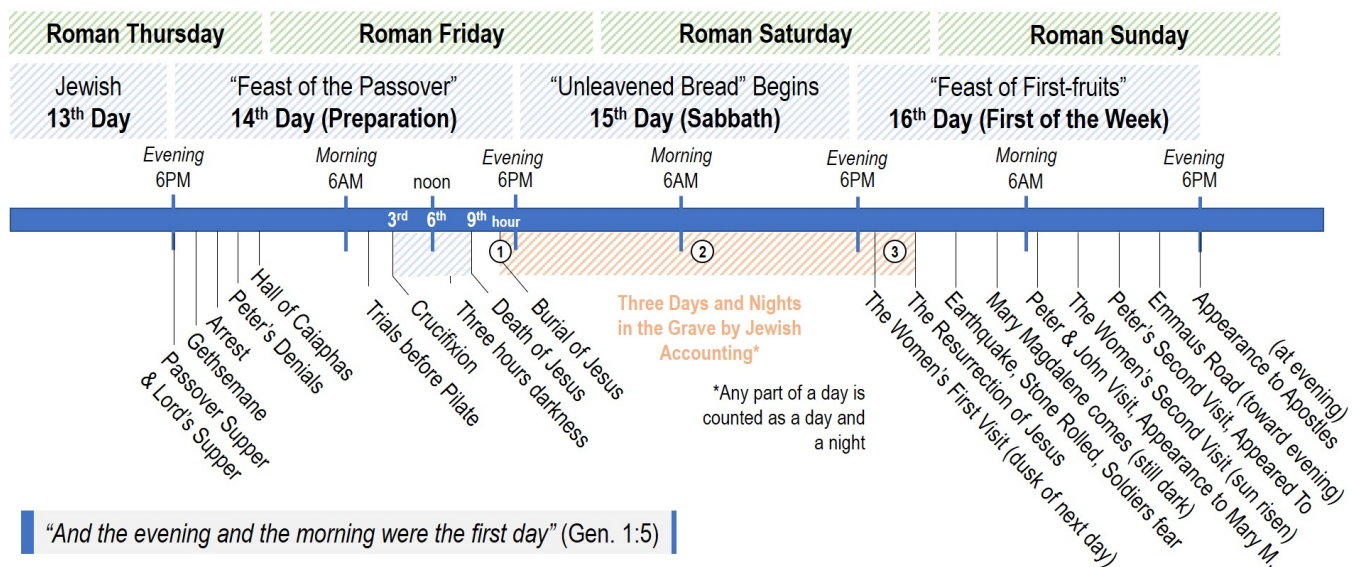
There is no one part of foundation truth on which Christians generally are feebler than in their laying hold of the place into which the resurrection of Christ brings the believer.¹

A Synopsis of Events. By comparing all four gospels, we get a comprehensive outline of the events that unfolded surrounding the resurrection of Christ, the angelic appearances, and the appearances of Christ. Often these passages are picked at by infidel scoffers to undermine faith in the Divine record. When we study it, all the details fit together perfectly, and yet each gospel maintains its own slant. Following is a brief synopsis. On what was our Saturday evening, at *“the dusk of the next day after sabbath”*, the two Marys came to the sepulchre, and then went home (Matt. 28:1). Apparently, they brought spices with them (Mark 16:1), and left them there. Early the next morning *“when it was still dark”* (John 20:1), Mary Magdalene came and saw the stone removed and the body gone. She ran to tell Peter and John. Peter and John came to the tomb to investigate, but did not know the scripture, and therefore remained dumbfounded. They returned home. However, Mary remained by the tomb weeping. She stooped down to look in and saw two angels, one at the head and the other at the foot of where the Lord had lain (John 20:12). This was a special vision, which only Mary Magdalene saw. The two angels asked her why she was weeping. Then the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden (although she didn't recognize Him at first), and told her to go to the disciples and declare that He was about to ascend to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. Mark 16:10 makes it clear that Jesus *“appeared first to Mary of Magdala”*. Then, after *“the rising of the sun”*, the other Mary and Salome arrived (the three are grouped together in the synoptic gospels). One angel was outside the tomb, which Matthew notes as saying *“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”* Mark speaks of the other angel (called a man) sitting at the right side of the place, who says *“Behold the place where they laid him”*. Both angels are accounted for. Mary the wife of Cleopas and Salome (Joanna) get a different message from Mary Magdalene; *“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goes before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said to you”* (Mark 16:7). Then other women arrived who had travelled from Galilee, grouped with the former three, but called *“the others with them”* (Luke 24:10).

These women apparently brought more spices in addition to those brought by the women on the previous evening (Luke 24:1). These ones also stood dumbfounded for a moment, and then *"two men suddenly stood by them in shining raiment"* (Luke 24:4). It would be the same two angels, now together again. These other women receive still yet a different message; more of a rebuke for their not believing the Lord's words. All the women went together to the eleven apostles (Luke 24:10). At first, they ran with the mixed emotions of fear and joy. But then Jesus met them on the way, saying *"Hail"* (rejoice), and *"fear not"* (Matt. 28:8-10). The women delivered their respective messages, but the eleven refused to believe them (Mark 16:11). Peter rose up, and perhaps a few others with him (Luke 24:24), and went to the tomb again, but was still bewildered; i.e. he *"wondered at these things"* (Luke 24:12). When Peter returned from his second visit, the Lord met him and had a private interview (Luke 24:34). After that, the Lord appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-35), and then *"that same day at evening"* to the apostles gathered behind closed doors (John 20:19).

TIMELINE OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Joshua Stewart, 2018



Eyewitnesses of the Risen Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15, when Paul is defending the authenticity of Christ's bodily resurrection, he lists a number of eyewitnesses who could attest to the reality of what had happened. He does not mention them all, but gives those witnesses who would be most effective at settling doubts. I will attempt to walk through the various appearances of Christ after His resurrection in the "forty days" between the resurrection and ascension of Christ:

1. **Mary Magdalene.** Chronologically, the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene first, and gave her a special message to give to the disciples (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:17). Other women came to the sepulchre as well, but Mary is singled out as the first to see the resurrected Jesus.
2. **The women.** Then, as all the women were running to tell the disciples, the Lord appeared again to all of them, saying "All hail" (Matt. 28:8-9).
3. **Simon Peter.** The disciples did not believe the testimony of Mary and the others, and so Peter went a second time to the tomb. After this, the Lord had a personal meeting with Peter (Luke 24:34), which corresponds to the first appearance listed in 1 Cor. 15:5a; an appearance to Cephas, or Peter. This is probably the private meeting where the Lord appeared to Peter, a wandering sheep who had denied the Lord just days earlier.
4. **The two on the road to Emmaus.** The next appearance was to Cleopas and his companion (Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12-13). When their eyes were opened, they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples.
5. **The Disciples (#1).** After the two disciples from the road to Emmaus had finished telling their story to "the eleven", the Lord appeared to the whole group "at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews". See 1 Cor. 15:5b, and note on "the twelve". Jesus spoke words of comfort (John 20:19), and also words of rebuke (Mark 16:14). At the very first appearance to the group, we read that Thomas "was not with them when Jesus came" (John 20:24).
6. **The Disciples (#2).** Eight days later, the Lord appeared again to the twelve, at which time Thomas was present (John 20:26). The Lord showed Thomas His wounds, and Thomas believed.
7. **The Great Crowd.** The next appearance was to a large company of believers at once; "above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6). Probably, this took place in Galilee (Matt. 28:10; 16-17). Paul says that the majority of them were *still alive* at the time of writing, although some had died. It was as if to say; "you can go out and ask them about what they saw".
8. **The Disciples (#3).** During this time in Galilee, the Lord "shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias" (John 21:1). It was at this time that the disciples experienced a great haul of fishes.
9. **James the Just.** The next appearance is to James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. 15:7).

He is often referred to as “James the Just”, perhaps on account of his close observance of the law. Initially, along with the other siblings – Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55), James didn’t believe on the Lord Jesus (John 7:5). He must have been converted around the time of the cross, for we read that the Lord had a personal interview with James before His ascension.

10. **The Disciples (#4).** The final appearance on earth was to “*the apostles*” on mount Olivet, near Bethany (1 Cor. 15:7; Luke 24:50; Acts. 1:2, Acts. 1:5-7). After this, the Lord was parted from them and taken up into heaven.
11. **The Apostle Paul.** The final appearance of the resurrected Christ was very unique (1 Cor. 15:8-12). Paul saw not a risen Christ on earth, but a risen Christ in heaven! He gives more details on this in 2 Cor. 12, where he describes an experience, “*whether in the body, or out of the body*”, he could not tell. He was caught up “*into paradise*”, and there heard “*unspeakable words*”, which were not lawful for a man to utter (2 Cor. 12:3-4). By comparing that account with Gal. 1-2, it would indicate that the event took place very soon after Paul’s conversion, if not at the very moment when he was stricken down on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).

Footnotes

1. W. Kelly. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians*.