

*“And if the Anointed has not been raised  
then our proclamation is vain,  
and your faith vain;”  
(1 COR 15:14)*

## **New Testament Accounts of the Resurrection**

### **THE RESURRECTION: PART 3**

There are five primary passages describing the resurrection of Jesus the Christ in the New Testament: four in the gospels and one by Paul. Translations by David Bentley Hart.

#### **Mark 16:1-8 (~70 CE)**

*Mark’s gospel seems to have been written just as the Roman legions were wrapping up their military campaign to crush the Jewish revolt that began in 66 CE and about to totally destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. It is roughly one generation after Jesus’s ministry. The original manuscript ended in verse 8, with an extended ending added later.*

And when the Sabbath had passed, Mary the Magdalene and James’s Mary and Salome purchased spices so that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the Sabbath—week they come to the tomb, as the sun is rising.

And they said to one another, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” And looking up they see that the stone has been rolled back—for it was extremely large. And entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting to the right, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed.

But he says to them, “Do not be amazed. You seek Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look: the place where they laid him. But go tell his disciples and Peter that he precedes you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.”

And, going out, they fled from the tomb, for trembling and bewilderment had taken hold of them; and they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.

### **Matthew 28:1-20 (~85 CE)**

*Matthew's gospel is clearly based on Mark and on a secondary source called "Q" used by Luke as well. It is written well after the events of 70 CE, and for a community of traditionalist Jews following Jesus.*

But after the Sabbath, at the dawn of the first day of the Sabbath-week, Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary came to view the tomb. And look: A great earthquake occurred, for an angel of the Lord, descending descending from the sky and coming forward, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And those who were standing guard were shaken by terror at him and became as dead men.

And speaking out the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who has been crucified; he is not here; for he was raised, just as he said; come see the place where he lay. And go quickly, tell his disciples that he was raised from the dead; and look: he precedes you into Galilee, where you will see him. See, I have told you."

And, quickly departing from the tomb with great fear and joy, they ran to announce it to his disciples. And look: Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings." And, approaching, they took hold of his feet and prostrated themselves before him. Then Jesus says to them, "Do not be afraid; go announce to my brothers that they should depart into Galilee, and there they will see me."

And as they were going, look: Some of the guard, going into the city, reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. And, having met with the elders and taking counsel together, they gave the soldiers a good quantity of silver, saying, "Say that 'His disciples, coming by night, stole him while we were sleeping.' And if this is heard of by the governor we shall prevail upon him and see to it that you are free from trouble." And taking the silver they did as they were instructed. And this is the tale that has been spread about by the Judaeans to this day.

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain

where Jesus appointed them, and seeing him they prostrated themselves; but some doubted. And, approaching, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, instruct all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you; and see: I am with you every day until the consummation of the age."

### **Luke 24:1-53 (~85 CE)**

*Luke's gospel is also based on Mark and Q, with other sources likely. It is also written after the destruction of the Temple and for a church combining Jews living by the Law and Gentiles with their own ways.*

But on the first day of the week, while it was still very early, they came to the tomb, having with them the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, and entering they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

And while they were in confusion over this, look: Two men in clothing shining like lightning stood beside them; and, when they became terrified and turned their faces down to the ground, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living with the dead? He is not here, but has been raised. Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, 'It is necessary for the Son of Man to be delivered into the hands of sinful men and to be crucified and on the third day to rise again.'" And they remembered his words.

And, returning from the tomb, they related all these things to the eleven and all the others. Now it was the Magdalene woman Mary, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, as well as the other women with them, who told these things to the Apostles. And in their eyes these reports seemed like nonsense, and they did not believe them. Then Peter rose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down he saw the linen cloths laid out by themselves; and he left, amazed within himself at what had happened.

And look: On that very day two of them were journeying to a

village sixty stadia (~10 miles) away from Jerusalem, the name of which was Emmaus, and they were talking with each other about all these events. And it happened that, as they talked and debated, Jesus himself approached and journeyed along with them; but their eyes were constrained so as not to recognize him. And he said to them, “What are these remarks you exchange with one another while walking?” And they stood still with saddened expressions.

And in reply one of them, Cleopas by name, said to him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and ignorant of the things happening in it these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” and they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, a man who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people. But the chief priests and our rulers both handed him over for condemnation to death and crucified him. But we had been hoping that he was the one about to liberate Israel; and, in addition to all this, it has reached the third day since these things occurred. But some women among us also astonished us, having come to the tomb early in the morning, And, not finding his body, came and told also of having seen a vision of angels, who say that he lives. And some of those with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said, but did not see him.”

And he said to them, “O fools, and with hearts slow to believe in all the things of which the prophets spoke: was it not necessary for the Anointed to endure these things and to enter into his glory?” And, beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he expounded to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures.

And they approached the village to which they were journeying, and he made as if to journey further on. And they urged him intently, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and this day has now set.” And he went inside to stay with them. And it happened that, as he reclined at table with them, he took the loaf and blessed it and, having broken it, he shared it with them; and

their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, “Was not our heart burning within us while he spoke to us on the road, as he opened up the scriptures to us?”

And, rising up in that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem and found the Eleven gathered together, along with those who were with them, saying: “The Lord truly has been raised and appeared to Simon.” And they related the things that had happened on the road, and how he had been recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

And as they were saying these things he stood in their midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

And, alarmed and terrified, they thought they were seeing a spirit. And he said to them, “Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet—that I am myself; touch me and look, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” And when he had said this he showed them his hands and feet. And while they were yet in disbelief from joy, and were in amazement, he said to them, “Do you have any food here?” And they gave him a piece of broiled fish; And, taking it, he ate it before them.

And he said to them, “These are the words I spoke to you when I was still with you: That it is necessary for everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms to be fulfilled.” Then he opened their mind to understand the scriptures; and he said to them: “Thus it has been written that the Anointed will suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day, and in his name transformation of the heart and forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see: I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

And he led them out as far as Bethany and, raising his hands, he blessed them. And it happened that while he was blessing them he withdrew from them, and was taken up into the sky.

And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were in the Temple constantly, blessing God.

**John 20:1-31 (~100 CE)**

*John's gospel stands alone with little resemblance to the three "Synoptic Gospels." It is written much later in a very different style and with the theological aim of declaring Jesus as the Logos of the Cosmos. The postscript in chapter 21 is considered to have been added later.*

Now early on the first day of the Sabbath-week, while it is still dark, Mary the Magdalene comes to the tomb and sees that the stone has been removed from the tomb. So she runs away and comes to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, him who Jesus loved, and says to them, "They took the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they put him."

So Peter and the other disciple went forth and came to the tomb. And the two of them were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead more quickly than Peter and came to the tomb first, and bending down he sees the winding sheets lying there, but he did not enter. And so Peter comes following after him and entered the tomb; and he sees the winding sheets lying there, And the kerchief that had been on his head not lying together with the sheets, but apart, folded up in a place of its own. So the other disciple, the one having come first to the tomb, also entered, and he saw and had faith; for as yet they did not know the scripture: that it is necessary for him to rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away home again.

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping. As she was weeping, then, she bent down into the tomb, and sees two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say to her, "Madam, why are you weeping?" She says to them: "They took away my Lord and I do not know where they put him."

Saying these things, she turned back around and sees Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus says to

her, "Madam, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" She, thinking that he is the gardener, says to him, "My lord, if you have carried him off, tell me where you put him, and I will take him away." Jesus says to her, "Mary." Turning, she says to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus says to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and tell them: I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

Mary the Magdalene comes to the disciples, announcing: "I have seen the Lord," as well as the things he told her. When, therefore, it was early evening of that first day of the Sabbath-week, and where the disciples were the doors had been sealed for fear of the Judaeans, Jesus came and stood in their midst and says to them, "Peace to you." And, saying this, he showed them both his hands and his side. Thus, on seeing the Lord, the disciples were overjoyed.

So [Jesus] again said to them, "Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you." And, saying this, he breathed upon them and says to them, "Receive a Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you let go, they are let go; those you hold fast, they have been held fast."

But one of the Twelve, Thomas (which meant "Twin"), was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my hand into his side, I will most certainly not have faith."

And eight days later his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. The doors being sealed, Jesus comes and stood in their midst and said, "Peace to you." Then he says to Thomas, "Bring your finger here and look at my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and cease to be faithless, but be faithful instead." Thomas answered and said to him, "My LORD and my GOD." Jesus says to him, "You have faith because you have seen me? How blissful those who do not see and who have faith."

Of course, Jesus performed many other signs as well before the disciples, which have not been recorded in this book; but these ones have been recorded so that you might have faith that Jesus is the Anointed, the Son of God, and that in having faith you might have life in his name.

### 1 Corinthians 15:3–8; 19–22; 35–50 (~55 CE)

*The Apostle Paul's first letter to the community in Corinth is considered one of his early and authentic writings. It is far earlier than any gospel accounts, and it contains this brief summary of the gospel:*

For, among the very first things, I delivered to you what I had also received: that the Anointed died because of our sins, in accord with the scriptures, and that he was entombed, and that he was raised on the third day in accord with the scriptures, and that he was *seen* by Cephas, then by the Twelve; thereafter he was *seen* by over five hundred brothers at one time, of whom the majority remain till now, though some have fallen asleep; thereafter he was *seen* by James, then by all the Apostles; and last of all, as if by a miscarried baby, he was *seen* by me also.

...If we have had hope in the Anointed only within this life, we are the most pitiable of men. But now the Anointed has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For, since death comes through a man, resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in the Anointed all will be given life.

...But someone will say, "How are the dead raised, and with what kind of body do they come?" Ridiculous man, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies; and, whatever it is you sow, you are not sowing the body that is going to come into being, but a naked grain— perhaps of wheat, or of something else; but God gives it a body as he has willed, and to each one of the seeds a body of its own. Not all flesh is the same flesh; rather, indeed, one is that of human beings, another is flesh of beasts, another is flesh of birds, and another is flesh of fishes. Both heavenly bod-

ies and earthly bodies— but the glory of the heavenly is different, while that of the earthly is different again. One glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. Thus also the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in perishability, it is raised in imperishability; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a psychical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a psychical body, there is also a spiritual. So it has also been written, "The first man Adam came to be a living soul," and the last Adam a life-making spirit. But not the spiritual first, but rather the psychical, the spiritual thereafter. The first man out of the earth— earthly; the second man out of heaven. As the earthly man, so also those who are earthly; and, as the heavenly, so also those who are heavenly; and, just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man. And I say this, brothers: that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does perishability inherit imperishability.

- **seen** (*horaō*): To see with the eyes. to see with the mind, to perceive, know. To see, i.e. become acquainted with by experience, to experience. To see, to look to; to take heed, beware; to care for, pay heed to. "I was seen, showed myself, appeared"
- **psychical/spiritual body**: The distinction is between a *sōma psychikon* (a body literally "ensouled," "animated," or "animal," given life by *psychē*, the "soul" or organic "life-principle") and a *sōma pneumatikon* (a body that is of a "spirited" nature, or constituted from or made to live entirely by deathless spirit, *pneuma*). As is even more clear in the succeeding verses, this is also a distinction between earthly and heavenly origin; and, as is clearest of all in v. 50, resurrection for Paul is not a simple resuscitation of the sort of material body one has in the fallen world, but a radically different kind of life.

## Galatians 1:11–2:1a (~50 CE)

The following is the account Paul himself gives of encountering the resurrected Christ (the tradition in Acts comes much later and sometimes contradicts the accounts in Paul’s own letters):

For I apprise you, brothers, that the good tidings proclaimed by me are not of human origin; for neither did I receive it from, nor was I taught it by, a human being— by way, rather, of a revelation from Jesus the Anointed. For you have heard of my conduct when I was inside Judaism: that I persecuted and besieged God’s assembly with such extravagance, and was progressing in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, being exorbitant in my zeal for my ancestral traditions.

But when God, who had set me apart from my mother’s womb and had called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might proclaim the good tidings regarding him among the gentiles, I did not immediately take counsel with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had been Apostles before I had, but instead departed into Arabia, then returned to Damascus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him for fifteen days; but I saw no other of the Apostles except James, the Lord’s brother. And the things I write to you— see!— before God, I am not lying. Then I entered the climes of Syria and Cilicia. And I was not known by face to the assemblies of Judaea that are in the Anointed. And they heard only that “The one formerly persecuting us now proclaims the faith that he besieged.” And they glorified God in me.

Then, after fourteen years...

- **reveal** (*apokalyptō*): To uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; disclose, make bare. To make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown.

## Comparing Accounts in the 4 Gospels:

John	Luke	Matthew	Mark ( <i>long</i> )
MM at tomb. No spices.	MM, Joana & M mother of James. Spices.	MM & other Mary. No spices.	MM, M mother of James, Salome. Spices.
		Earthquake	
Stone taken away.	Stone moved, 2 men seen, remind women of prophecies.	Stone moved, 1 angel, tells women J gone. Apostles to meet him in Galilee.	Stone moved by 1 young man. J gone. Apostles to meet him in Galilee.
		Guards faint	
MM reports to Peter & Beloved Disciple that J’s body removed.			
	Women report to Apostles, disbe- lief	Women fright- ened & joyful, run to Apostles, report	Terrified women flee not saying anything
		See J on the way	MM sees J, re- ports to Apostles, disbelief.
	Emmaus. J ex- plains prophecies. J seen by Peter.		Appearance to 2 disciples. They report disbelief.
Peter and BD go to tomb, BD believes, both go home.			
		Women report to Apostles	
MM sees 2 angels			
		Guards tell priests: body stolen	

<b>John</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark (long)</b>
MM sees gardener = J, tell Apostles J going to Father.			
Appearance to Apostles in Jerusalem	Appearance to Apostles in Jerusalem, touching and eating, J explains prophecies		<i>Appearance to Apostles in Jerusalem, rebuke.</i>
Mission + Holy Spirit in Jerusalem	Mission + Holy Spirit, stay in Jerusalem		<i>Mission (and promise of Spirit) in Jerusalem</i>
Thomas absent			
Thomas present			
<b>Ch 21:</b> <i>Sea of Galilee, J unrecognized, Peter confirmed</i>		Appearance to Apostles in Galilee: belief and disbelief. Mission.	
	Ascension from Bethany  <b>Acts:</b> <i>Ascension from Mount of Olives, 40 days on.</i>		<i>Ascension from Jerusalem.</i>

## Resources used

- *New Testament History and Literature* by Dale B. Martin (Yale)
- *The New Testament* translation/notes by David Bentley Hart
- *The Resurrection* by Geza Vermes