

They Saw Him Alive

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: I Corinthians 15:5-11.

B. Everything hangs on whether Jesus physically and actually rose from the dead.

II. Christianity rests on eyewitness testimony.

A. Jesus appeared to Peter, the rest of the Twelve, then five-hundred, then James, and lastly Paul.

1. The women were actually the first witnesses, but a woman's account did not count at this time.
2. Jesus sought out Peter first and forgave him.
3. Jesus appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and then the disciples gathered.
4. There is no reference outside of this text for the sighting by the five-hundred.
 - a. There is no evidence that a mass hallucination could have taken place with five-hundred people.
 - b. The occasion may have been the Great Commission. (Matthew 28)
 - c. Most of these are still alive.
5. Jesus appeared to His half-brother, James.
 - a. James originally did not believe in Jesus.
 - b. In his letter, he refers to Jesus as Lord.
6. Jesus appeared to all the Apostles. (Acts 1)
 - a. Jesus disappeared from earth.
 - b. Jesus' relationship with His disciples was changed at this point.
7. Jesus' last appearance was to Paul.
 - a. Paul was the one who persecuted the church.
 - b. However, Jesus appeared to him causing him to be "untimely born."

c. He did not come to spiritual birth in a normal way—he characterizes it as a miscarriage. He viewed himself this way because the other Apostles came to know Jesus naturally and over time, but Paul’s was sudden and unexpected.

d. This may account for the difficult time that Paul had in his Christian walk early on.

e. Paul was not arrogant—he considered himself least of the Apostles for his former opposition to God. Paul credited the grace of God for his transformation.

f. We are filled with a risen Christ who is ready to release His quiet power to transform humanity from within.

B. Paul underscores that whether he preached or the other Apostles, their gospel was the same.

C. The power of the church is God’s might power through us.

Application questions:

1. Why is it difficult to argue against the resurrection based on this account?

2. How is the power of Jesus especially shown through Paul’s testimony?

3. How would you respond to someone who says that there are different versions of the gospel? Explain.
