

# The Post-Resurrection Appearance Of Jesus In Galilee

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The early post-resurrection appearances of Jesus took place in and around Jerusalem. That was where He was crucified and that was where He arose from the dead. These early appearances to His disciples were personal, intimate, and dramatic. No reasonable person could or would deny them. They were conclusive and decisive for their faith. All of their doubts were gone--*anceled*.

But what about Jesus' disciples in Galilee? Most of His ministry had been in Galilee. Thousands of Galileans heard Him, witnessed His miracles, believed on Him and followed Him.

The events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion were very public at a time when Jews from everywhere were in Jerusalem for the Passover. News of His crucifixion must have reached Galilee. What a profound effect that must have had on His disciples there: disappointment, dashed hopes, unanswered questions.

Did at least a few Galileans remain in and around Jerusalem to hear the reports of Jesus' resurrection? If so, did they carry these reports back and share them on their return? We do not know.

Whatever the case, Jesus had many disciples in Galilee and it was imperative that He show Himself alive to them.

He had already planned for this. During the Last Supper He said to His disciples, "After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee" (Matthew 26:32).

Then, at the empty tomb the angel directed the women, "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you" (Matthew 28:7; also Mark 16:7).

Immediately the women ran to tell His disciples. On the way Jesus Himself met them, greeted them, and repeated the command: "Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (Matthew 28:10).

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them" (Matthew 28:16).

They knew that this trip was not for their benefit. They did not need this additional appearance of Jesus to convince them of His resurrection. That was already settled back in Jerusalem. This was for the benefit of Christ's Galilean disciples.

Now, this was not an easy journey. Galilee was over seventy miles straight north. It would take a little time to prepare. They would be on the road at least two and perhaps three days. When they did arrive in Galilee, they would have to spread the news. "Jesus is going to appear at a specific time at a specific place on a specific mountain. Tell everybody. Be there."

Who came? We find the answer in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. After mentioning Jesus' appearance to Peter and the disciples, Paul stated: "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" (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Out of all the Galileans who had followed Jesus, five hundred-plus heard the news and were willing and able to gather at the appointed time and place.

"And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted" (Matthew 28:17).

Who doubted? Certainly not the eleven disciples. Even "doubting" Thomas would never doubt again after putting his fingers into the now-healed but still open nail holes in Jesus' hands and shoving his hand into the hole in Jesus' side. The few doubters were among the Galileans.

But why would even *they* doubt? First, the group was worshiping Jesus at some distance, and the people at the outer edges would have had the most difficult view. Also, ophthalmology and optometry were unheard of. Cataract surgery and corrective eye-glasses would be many centuries in the future.

*Then something happened that most people overlook.* "Then Jesus came and spoke to them" (Matthew 28:18).

"Then Jesus came..." Jesus came "up close and personal." What a dramatic, electrifying moment it must have been as they watched Him approaching! No doubt eyes opened wider, hearts beat faster, and here and there subdued gasps could be heard in the awed silence.

What would be their natural response to Jesus' presence? In a moment like that people would naturally tend to get as close to Him as possible. Those in the outer edges would press forward. Five hundred people could stand comfortably in an area sixty feet wide and forty feet deep, or even less. No one would be more than thirty or forty feet away.

It was in that moment and to those disciples that Jesus gave the Great Commission that we read in Matthew 28:18 - 20: "All authority has been give to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

As did the eleven disciples, those five hundred-plus Galileans also had the proof, the message, and the divine commission to go and make disciples.

Not counting divine revelation, how did the apostle Paul know that over two hundred and fifty of these Galileans were still alive about twenty-five years later?

They were a unique group--"The Five Hundred." They were known and recognized in the early Church. As long as they lived they carried a special status. They must have been on some kind of formal or informal "roster." When one of them died, the fact was noted. That is a most reasonable explanation for the fact that Paul knew them, knew that some had died and that the majority were still alive when he wrote First Corinthians.

Fast forward to the Day Of Pentecost. Who were the one hundred and twenty in the upper room, tarrying for and receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? The people on the outside knew. They said, "Look are not all these who speak Galileans?" (Acts 2:7).

Why were these Galileans in Jerusalem? For one thing, it was an annual feast of the Jews. That would be an occasion for them to be there. But why were these particular Galileans in the upper room? They were part of the "Five Hundred" (perhaps plus other Galileans who by now had become believers). They had seen and heard Jesus on the mountain in Galilee. They had personally been given the Great Commission. The disciples must have told them of the Lord's command to tarry in Jerusalem until they are "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; also Acts 1:4 - 8), and they wanted to be there when it happened.

They knew that they must have the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the Great Commission. So must all believers.