

ENCOUNTERING THE RISEN LORD

Over the last week and during the course of the next two weeks, I have, and I will be looking at the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection in my Devotions I send out via WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. Traditionally, scholars have recorded about 15 such events.

1. Early Resurrection morning to Mary Magdalene near the tomb (Mark 16:9, John 20:11-18)
2. To the other women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
3. To Peter (Cephas) near Jerusalem later that day (Luke 24:34, 1Corinthians 15:5)
4. To two disciples going to Emmaus that day (Mark 16:12, Luke 24:13-31)
5. That evening at Jerusalem to the apostles except Thomas (Mark 16:14, John 20:19-25)
6. Eight days later at Jerusalem to all the apostles especially Thomas (John 20:26-29)
7. To seven disciples fishing on Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-13)
8. To eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-18)
9. Over 500 disciples at once --location uncertain (1Corinthians 15:6)
10. To James --location uncertain (1Corinthians 15:7)
11. To the apostles (and probably others) during forty days prior to his ascension (Acts 1:2-3)
12. At the Mount of Olives near Bethany at his ascension (Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:6-12)
13. After his ascension, to Stephen the martyr (Acts 7:55-56)
14. To Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6, 1Corinthians 15:8-9)
15. To John on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9-19)

Each event has something unique to teach us, however today I want to look at the common and united theme of the resurrection encounters. As we consider all the Resurrection Encounters, what can we learn from them?

Firstly, THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST GIVE CREDIBILITY TO THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION.

If there were only a few recorded incidences of encounters with the risen Christ, people could have reason to doubt the truth of the event.

There is a lot of debate on the Internet and in Scientific and Religious circles about the mathematical probability of the Resurrection. The answers go from 1:1(157 Zeros) to ZERO.

Every Tom, Dick and Harry has some theory to “prove” or “disprove” the truth of the Resurrection.

He is my contribution:

1. The greater the number of people that saw the Resurrected Lord, the greater the possibility is that it is true.
2. The greater the number of people that can't produce a Physical Body of Jesus, even after every effort was made to ensure that the body would not be stolen, the greater the possibility is that it is true.
3. The greater the number of occasions the Resurrected Lord appeared, the greater the possibility is that it is true.
4. The greater the number of people who were willing to die because of this truth, the greater the possibility is that it is true.
5. The greater the effect of this truth on the world, the greater the possibility is that it is true.
6. The greater the impact of this truth has on me personally, the greater the possibility is that it is true.

I don't have some magical formula. I only have about 40 years of study of the Bible truths and my DEEP HEARTED BELIEF.

While I believe there is enough historical, mathematical, logical and scientific evidence to prove the Resurrection, in the end it is a matter of FAITH. You can either choose to BELIEVE or you can choose to IGNORE. Like someone once said, "If I am wrong, I lose nothing, HOWEVER, if you are wrong, you lose everything"!! I'm not willing to take that risk. I believe it takes more faith to IGNORE than to BELIEVE. YOU CHOOSE!!

Secondly, THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST ARE WONDERFULLY INDIVIDUAL.

While Jesus did meet with groups of people, there always seemed to be personal element to the encounter.

For Mary Magdalene, it was assurance

For Peter, it was forgiveness

For the two disciples going to Emmaus, it was EVIDENCE

For the Disciples without Thomas, it was inner peace

For the Disciples with Thomas, it was about true faith

For the seven disciples fishing on Sea of Galilee, it was conviction

For the Disciples on a mountain in Galilee, it was commission

For over 500 disciples at once, it was undeniable PROOF

For James, his brother, it was surrender

At the Mount of Olives near Bethany at his ascension, it was preparation

For Stephen the martyr, it was vindication

For Saul on the road to Damascus it was calling

For John on the island of Patmos it was Revelation

JESUS ALWAYS MEETS US AT OUR POINT OF NEED. Every testimony is unique. Don't try to copy other believers encounters with Christ. There may be many similarities, BUT JESUS WANT TO MEET YOU!

Thirdly, THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST ARE NOT NORMALLY WHAT WE EXPECT.

When Jesus met with the different people, they seldom follow a pattern we would expect.

Some are comforting, Some are convincing, Some are confronting, Some are convicting.

God works through HIS WORD – The Bible is the truth

God works through HIS WORKS – Life circumstances or miracle

God works through HIS WITNESSES – Preaching or Testimony

God works through HIS SPIRIT – Inner conviction

Fourthly, THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST RESULT IN CHANGED LIVES.

Every person that met the RISEN LORD lives were changed.

The Disciples became Missionaries of the message of Jesus.

James, the brother of Jesus, became the Leader of the Jerusalem Church

Paul, previously known as Saul, went from being the chief persecutor to being to one who was most persecuted!!!

I want to make a bold statement,

**“IF YOUR LIFE DOES NOT CHANGE AFTER YOU
ENCOUNTER CHRIST,
YOU MOST LIKELY HAVEN’T ENCOUNTERED CHRIST”.**

Fifthly, THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST RESULT IN COMMISSIONED LIVES.

The MESSAGE of the RISEN LORD almost every time he met with somebody was: GO TELL SOMEBODY ELSE.

To Mary – Go tell the disciples

To the Disciple – You will be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, World

To Peter – “FEED MY SHEEP”

To Paul – TELL the Gentiles

CONCLUSION

**The final Encounter is with John on the Island of Patmos.
HIS MESSAGE**

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!!