



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #350
The Eternal Ministry of Jesus in Heaven
The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church

Jesus' Twelfth Resurrection Appearance: to Paul on the Road to Damascus
I Cor 15.8-9; Acts 9.1-9, 26.14-18

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1 After months of persecution, Saul was still breathing out non-stop threats and murder against the Lord's disciples. Going to the high priest, 2 he asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he spied out any believers there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might bind them permanently as prisoners and drag them to Jerusalem.

3 As he was nearing Damascus on his journey, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. 4 After falling down to the ground he heard a voice say to him,

Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I AM Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

(Acts 26.16-18) "I command you to get up and stand on your feet. I have made myself visible to you for this purpose-- to appoint you as my servant and as a witness of what you have seen, and will see of me. 17 I will deliver you from your own people and from the Gentiles.

I, myself, am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive full forgiveness of sins and an eternal inheritance among those who have been permanently dedicated to me by their faith in me.'

6 "Now I command you to go into the city, and you will be told what you must keep on doing."

7 The men traveling with Saul had stood there unable to speak for they had been hearing the sound but were not seeing anyone.

8 Saul rose up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could not see anything. So taking him by the hand, they led him into Damascus. 9 For three days he remained blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

Paul's testimony: I Cor 12.8-9

“Last of all, like a person of abnormal birth, he (Jesus) appeared even to me also. For I am the last of the apostles, and am not worthy to be to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Near Damascus, On the Road From Jerusalem
Timeline	Six Years After Jesus Ascended
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	Jesus' Eternal Ministry in Heaven
	The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church
Title:	Jesus' 12th Resurrection Appearance: to Paul on the Road to Damascus

Today's reading highlights the massive transition in Jesus' ministry created by his ascension, and the difference it makes for us.

We have seen that Paul made an official list of major male witnesses to the resurrection in I Cor. 15.1-11. These included the appearances to Peter (#4), the Twelve (#6), 500 brethren at one time (#8), James (#9), and to all the apostles (#10, #11). These all occurred during the forty days of Jesus' post-resurrection ministry. Then, Paul included himself in the same witness list.

However, Jesus' appearance to Paul (then called Saul) occurred six years AFTER his ascension! In other words, the same Jesus that appeared numerous times during the forty days prior to the ascension revealed himself six years later, in the same manner, after he had entered his eternal heavenly ministry. This is why Ananias said to Saul:

""Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road..." Ananias used the word for "see" that has been translated "appeared to you" here. Paul saw the resurrected Jesus in the same way that the other apostles saw him over the 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension. This is therefore the 12th resurrection appearance of Jesus in the gospel record.

As we have seen repeated in past DAILY JESUS NEWS postings, the ascension of Jesus did not take him further away from us. It spiritualized his presence with us in an invisible state through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. However, the ascended Jesus still has the ability to show himself visibly on earth.

As far as we know, it has only occurred once in 2000 years, for a special reason, to the apostle Paul. However, the point is that Jesus is fully alive with us in his invisible presence, in the same way as his physical, visible presence, because he ascended. So much so that Paul included Jesus' appearance to him from heaven in the same category as the Lord's appearances during his final forty days on earth.

This is why we include the rest of the Scriptural witness to the life and ministry of Jesus after his ascension--fifteen more readings-- in the DAILY JESUS NEWS. All post-Pentecost believers in Jesus, who

make up 99.9999999999% of all the membership of the universal church, relate to the ascended Jesus, in the same way that Paul and Luke did. Jesus is just as alive and active in the world today as he was in his flesh and blood body during his 40 months of ministry--he is simply invisible in the world since his ascension. The eighteen DJN readings that make up this final stage of Jesus' eternal life show us so much about the Jesus in whom we have believed, and in whom we live--even as he lives within us.

This also highlights the connection between studying the Complete Scriptural Life of Jesus--including the content of the four gospels--and our relationship with the ascended Lord. He is the SAME Jesus, then and now.

Jesus' first words to Saul accented this point. **"Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute me?"** Saul was persecuting Christians. What he did not realize was that those Christians were in union with the living, invisible, ascended Jesus, so much so that when Saul touched Christians he was actually touching Jesus' own body. Saul was persecuting Jesus directly because he was invisibly one with all of his disciples, living as our Head in heaven. No wonder Paul was the New Testament writer who spoke so much about the church as the "body" of Christ.

We also see in this reading that Jesus had total knowledge of everything about Paul, and Ananias. The fact that the Lord had ascended into the spiritual order of reality did not mean he was distant from the earth. He told Ananias exactly where Paul was. He told him what Paul was doing (praying and fasting). He knew exactly what he was going to accomplish from heaven through Paul on earth, including all the suffering that awaited the apostle. Jesus knew that he would heal Paul's blindness, and fill him with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew everything that was going on, because he was invisibly part of it all--even though Saul had no clue that this was true. Even Ananias was not totally sure Jesus had all the facts when he commanded the elder believer to go straight to the number one persecutor of the church.

If you have a red-letter New Testament, you will see patches of red in the Book of Acts, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. These are what we will be covering in the remaining DJN readings. They are a critical portion of the life and words of Jesus, for they show us the Lord with whom we relate to today.

APPLICATION:

Like the conversion of James and the shift in the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, the complete transformation of Saul from the foremost persecutor of the church, to the most prolific apostle and servant of Jesus in history is another powerful historical proof of Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus is just as one with you in his ascension as he was one with Paul after his conversion. Jesus has perfect plans laid out for your life and ministry, just as he had for Paul. They involve both suffering, and great glory. The glory is more than worth the suffering, for it will be eternal glory for God, and you.

How will you recommit yourself to Jesus' plans for your today?

How will you rely on Jesus to fill and strengthen you in new and greater ways?