

**Chronological Sequence of Appearances –  
And the Eleven, Cephas, and James discussed**

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## Chronological Sequence of Appearances

### 1. Kinds of appearances

Now the event of the risen Jesus' appearance to the Eleven, described in Luke, and the event of his appearance to the Galilean disciples, described in John, can be regarded as two different events (see my article "The Eleven (Luke 24,9.33 Acts 2,14) – Jesus appeared risen to the Officers of the Temple Prison" on [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info)), both also different from Jesus' appearance to Cephas and the twelve (see my article "Paul's Cephas is Caiphas – Author of 1Peter and Hebrews" on [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info)), the following chronological sequence of appearances can be drafted (see table 1).<sup>1</sup> This chronological sequence will be commented on and compared to the sequence drafted by two New Testament scholars, after we have looked at the kinds of appearances that took place.

#### *1) Physical bodily appearances on earth*

At these appearances one could see a physical Jesus, having "flesh and bones" (table 1: G).<sup>2</sup> This Jesus could walk (E and L),<sup>3</sup> break bread (E),<sup>4</sup> eat (G)<sup>5</sup> and drink,<sup>6</sup> and speak (E, G, H, J, K, L, M, N). And He could be held: e.g. the Galilean women clasped his feet.<sup>7</sup> These are all normal things for a normal human body. In at least two respects the risen Jesus was different. He could suddenly appear and disappear (E, G, (H), I, J)<sup>8</sup> and He could appear in different forms. He appeared as a gardener once, at another time He appeared as an unknown travelling companion on the way to Emmaus, and again, at another time, as a stranger on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias.<sup>9</sup> That Jesus was able to do this is attested literally in Mark 16,12: He "appeared in another form". But in most cases He appeared in his usual form, known to his disciples and other eyewitnesses from before his death and resurrection (G, (H), I, J, L, M, N), for in these cases He was recognized at once.

#### *Jesus' bodily ascension*

After forty days of appearing and speaking to his disciples<sup>10</sup> Jesus appeared to them for the last time. Then, "as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight".<sup>11</sup> While Jesus was lifted up, his disciples "were gazing into heaven as he went", and then two angels asked them "why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The sequence of events in the early morning of the resurrection has already been described in my article "The Eleven", mentioned above.

<sup>2</sup> "handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." (Luke 24,39)

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24,15 Matt 28,18

<sup>4</sup> Luke 24,30

<sup>5</sup> Luke 24,42-43

<sup>6</sup> Acts 10,41

<sup>7</sup> John 20,17 Matt 28,9

<sup>8</sup> John 20,19; Luke 24,31; Luke 24,36; (Luke 24,51); John 20,26

<sup>9</sup> John 20,14-15; Luke 24,15; John 21,4.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 1,3

<sup>11</sup> Acts 1,9

<sup>12</sup> Acts 1,9-11

The way in which Luke stresses the visibility of the whole event (“looking on”, “their sight”, “gazing”, “looking”, “saw”), and that a cloud took Him out of their sight, suggests that Jesus appeared in a physical bodily way, was lifted from earth in this bodily way (Benoit calls this a “levitation”)<sup>13</sup>, and was taken out of sight by a physical cloud. As far as we know from the New Testament, after this physical ascension Jesus no longer appeared in a physical bodily form on earth.

### *The so-called ‘theological ascension’*

Already during his first bodily appearance on the early morning of Easter Jesus told Mary Magdalene:

Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. (John 20,17)

According to Benoit this ascension is not the same as the final ascension on the fortieth day after Jesus’ resurrection, but theologically is “a return to the Father as a glorification in heaven at God’s right hand” and an integral part of his resurrection.<sup>14</sup> That Jesus was already glorified at the Father’s before the fortieth day and before his bodily appearance to the disciples on the mount in Galilee (see table 1, L), can be deduced from the fact that at this appearance Jesus said:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matt 28,18)

This is in accordance with Daniel’s description of his vision of the Son of Man (= Jesus<sup>15</sup>), who approached the Ancient of Days (= God) on the clouds of heaven, and to whom was given “dominion and glory and kingdom”.<sup>16</sup>

This ‘theological ascension’ must have taken place some time after Jesus had told about this ascension and glorification to Mary Magdalene and before He appeared to the disciples on the mount in Galilee.

### *2) Heavenly visions*

In Luke’s book Acts of the Apostles the first person to see a heavenly vision of Jesus was the deacon Stephen. This took place after Jesus’ bodily ascension on the fortieth day. After Stephen had defended himself before the Great Sanhedrin, he spoke:

Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. (Acts 7,56).

In this vision Jesus was seen in heaven and He was seen only by Stephen. Later on, Luke describes two visions of Saul, who would become the apostle called Paul. The first vision befell him on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus. Paul and his companions saw a bright light and Paul heard Jesus speaking to him, but his companions only heard the sound of the

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<sup>13</sup> R.E. BROWN, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 81:134 p. 1377

<sup>14</sup> P. BENOIT, *Jesus and the Gospel*, New York, 1973 1. p. 209-53; R.E. BROWN, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Englewood Cliffs, 1990, 81:134 p. 1377

<sup>15</sup> Matt 17,22-23

<sup>16</sup> Dan 7,13

voice.<sup>17</sup> That Paul actually also saw Jesus, was declared by Barnabas, speaking to the disciples in Jerusalem. Barnabas

declared to them how on the road he [Paul] had seen the Lord, who spoke to him. (Acts 9,27)

When Paul himself later describes this first vision, he speaks of a “heavenly vision” (οὐρανίῳ ὀπτασίᾳ).<sup>18</sup> So, it was not the same as the bodily appearances to the disciples, when Jesus stood right beside them. Paul saw Jesus in heaven. Nevertheless, during Paul’s heavenly vision there were extra-mental elements on earth such as the light and the sound, seen and heard by Paul’s companions.

The next person to receive a vision of Jesus was his disciple Ananias, living in Damascus. Jesus “said to him in a vision” (ἐν ὄραματι) that he should go and cure the blinded Paul.<sup>19</sup> In this vision it is not certain where Jesus was seen, in heaven or on earth, but it is probable that only Ananias saw Him.

After a while Paul returned from Damascus to Jerusalem. There, according to Paul’s words, Paul saw Jesus again:

When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, “make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem ...” (Acts 22,17-18)

In this case, too, it is not certain where Paul saw Jesus, but it is probable that Paul was the only one who saw Jesus, for he was in a trance.

As can be seen above, one can distinguish two kinds of appearances in Luke’s works: a) physical bodily appearances, with Jesus standing and walking on earth, visible and tangible to every person standing by, which appearances stopped after Jesus’ ascension on the fortieth day, and b) (heavenly) visions occurring after this day, when Jesus was only visible to the person that received the vision, and not to the persons standing by. The latter kind of appearance might also have occurred before Jesus’ bodily ascension, for Jesus was already glorified in heaven before his last ascension. For example, the way in which “Cephas” and “the twelve”<sup>20</sup> saw Jesus, was probably in a heavenly vision, for Jesus had promised them while He was in court that they would see Him as “the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power” (= on the right hand of God).<sup>21</sup> Thus, it seems that Jesus’ appearances can be interpreted as either of the two different kinds, with the exception of the appearance/vision that befell Saul on the road to Damascus, which, according to Craig, seems “one of a kind”, viz. a mixed form of heavenly vision with physical extra-mental elements.<sup>22</sup> But maybe there were more heavenly visions with extra-mental physicality, for according to Gundry “the

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<sup>17</sup> Acts 9,3-7 Acts 26,13-14

<sup>18</sup> Acts 26,19

<sup>19</sup> Acts 9,10-16

<sup>20</sup> 1Cor 15,5; that these men may have been the high priest Caiphas and the twelve counsellors of the Council of the Temple, who condemned Jesus to death at night, is discussed in my article *Paul’s Cephas is Caiphas – Author of 1Peter and Hebrews*, [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info), January 4, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Matt 26,64; Mark 14,26

<sup>22</sup> W.L. Craig concludes that it is “evident that although Paul’s experience involved visionary elements, such that Luke could refer to it as a “heavenly vision” (Acts 26,19), it cannot be characterized without further ado as purely visionary and subjective, for it is portrayed as involving extra-mental accompaniments, namely, the light and the voice” (W.L. CRAIG, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus* (Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, 1989 (Revised Edition 2002) p. 57. Craig also states that “in describing Paul’s appearance as a heavenly vision, Luke portrays it as one of a kind” (Craig, *Assessing*, p. 114)

heavenliness of a vision doesn't imply nonphysicality".<sup>23</sup> Anyway, Jesus' bodily appearances on earth stopped after the bodily ascension on the fortieth day.

*Criticism: R.E. Brown*

One of the scholars, who wrote one or more studies on the resurrection, was the late Raymond E. Brown. In 1973 he wrote the short book "The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus",<sup>24</sup> probing the historicity of both concepts. As Brown was one of the leading scholars of the last decades, and is still often referred to, it is useful to see whether he brought evidence that could be used against the new interpretation of the appearance to the Eleven as an appearance to the temple's prison officers. Also the results of the more modern study by William L. Craig about the historicity of the resurrection<sup>25</sup> will concisely be compared to the results of my theses.

Concerning the kinds of appearances, Brown first states that it can not be ascertained whether Paul saw Jesus on the road to Damascus in a physical way or not.<sup>26</sup> Paul mentioned this appearance/vision in his letter 1Corinthians, in the so-called kerygma, which lists the appearances to Cephas, James, Paul, and others (1Cor 15,3-8).<sup>27</sup> After observing that Paul in the kerygma does not distinguish between kinds of appearances, Brown declares not only Paul's first vision but all of Jesus' appearances to be an "indescribable eschatological reality"<sup>28</sup>, and Brown did this to "reconcile" the appearances.<sup>29</sup> But it seems more reasonable to say that appearances need no reconciliation.<sup>30</sup> After all, divine appearances can be different from one another and describable too. Now, because Luke does distinguish kinds of appearances and John and Luke do describe a physical risen Jesus, Brown, for the only reason that Paul's citation of the kerygma in 1Cor seems to have been written before John's and Luke's Gospels were,<sup>31</sup> states that Luke and John presented "a too physical picture of the risen Jesus" and "employed the techniques of dramatization".<sup>32</sup> According to Brown, Luke's

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<sup>23</sup> P. COPAN AND R.K. TACELLI eds., *Jesus' Resurrection, Fact of Figment*, Downers Grove, 2000, p. 116

<sup>24</sup> R.E. BROWN, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, New York, 1973 (shortened as *VCBR*)

<sup>25</sup> W.L. CRAIG, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus* (Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, 1989 (Revised Edition 2002)

<sup>26</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 90-91 "we cannot simply *assume* that when Paul speaks of Jesus "appearing" to him or when he says that he "saw" Jesus (I Cor 9:1),<sup>156</sup> he means physical sight of a corporeal being."; note 156: "The partial ambiguity of our sources about the nature of "seeing..." ;

<sup>27</sup> 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,

that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1Cor 15,3-8)

<sup>28</sup> W.L. Craig rightly states that "a physical body is not beyond all description" (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 68).

<sup>29</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 89. Brown wants to "reconcile" two different appearances listed by Paul (Paul's vision and the appearance to the five hundred brothers) (BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 92).

<sup>30</sup> Craig states that "Paul himself gives no hint that he considered the appearance to him ... in any sense normative for the other appearances" (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 114).

<sup>31</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 85

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88-89. Brown (*ibid* p. 86) also uses Paul's statement that what is "sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1Cor 15,44) to claim that a spiritual body can not appear in a physical form. But the spirituality of a body can also be understood as the being able to suddenly appear and disappear in any kind of form, also a physical one. Craig attests how a 'spiritual body' has to be interpreted as a body "under the lordship

and John's descriptions of a physical risen Jesus stem from "apologetic developments"<sup>33</sup> and are not completely historical. So, Brown not only accused the evangelists of falsification, but he also forced the character of one appearance, even an appearance mentioned *after* the original kerymga – the heavenly vision of Paul did not belong to the original kerymga of 1Cor 15,3-7<sup>34</sup> – upon the character of the other appearances of the kerymga and on all the appearances of the Gospels.

But of course, the fact that Paul didn't explicitly distinguish between kinds of appearances in the kerymga, doesn't mean that there weren't any different kinds of appearances.<sup>35</sup> One of the most probable reasons why Paul did not distinguish between different kinds of appearances in the kerymga is that there was no need to do so – the apostles and Paul would already have preached about the various appearances from the start of their apostolate.<sup>36</sup> Another reason why Paul didn't distinguish between kinds of appearances in the kerymga probably was that the kerymga he had "received" and passed on was a fixed chronological and hierarchical sequence,<sup>37</sup> meant to convince people of the fact that Jesus had really appeared, namely, to some well known persons, and that He thus was alive. The kerymga was not meant to tell people in which ways He had appeared. And Craig states that Paul, in his letter 1Corinthians, in which he cited the kerymga, only took "pains to show that Christ appeared to him and commissioned him – not only the Eleven": Paul's authority was being called into question in the Corinthian church, and he wanted to show that Jesus' appearance to him "had the same kind of *significance* as it did to the disciples", which "does not mean the appearances all had the same *character*".<sup>38</sup> And finally, the 'physical pictures' of the risen Jesus in Luke and John may have been authentic pictures – and not too physical dramatizations, as Brown holds –, since they portray two different, yet both physical, appearances to two different groups of people: the Eleven of the temple prison (Luke) and the apostles from Galilee (John).

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and direction of God's Spirit" and not made out of spirit (CRAIG, *Assessing*, 95-99). Also Paul's statement that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1Cor 15,50) can be understood as 'something that is only flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' but something that is a spiritual body, sometimes possibly in a physical form, can. Craig states that "flesh and blood" is "a typical Semitic expression", meaning "mortal creatures": "Paul .. employs the expression "flesh and blood" to mean simply "people" or "mortal creatures"' (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 101-102). Craig explains that Paul's statement should be interpreted as "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a supernatural body"; "The contrast is not between physical body/non-physical body, but between naturally oriented body/spiritually oriented body"; "the natural body in the grave is miraculously raised and transformed into a supernatural body"; "The universe will be delivered from sin and decay, not materiality, and our bodies will be part of that universe" (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 105, 98, 103, 102).

<sup>33</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 85. Brown meant that the evangelists falsified the historical accounts to make them more convincing to people who didn't believe and who attacked the christian faith.

<sup>34</sup> In 1Cor 15 "vs. 3-7 is a tradition interrupted by v. 6b and appended with v. 8"; the tradition was a "smooth chronological and historical sequence of related events of a common subject, Χριστος (I Cor. 15:3)", and according to Craig it "was received by Paul as a unity" including the names of witnesses. This is defended by Craig against Fuller (W.L. CRAIG, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence of the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 6, 23, 24).

<sup>35</sup> This is also held by Craig, Crossan and Lüdemann and Gundry (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 373; J.D. CROSSAN, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994) p. 169; G. LÜDDEMAN, *What Really Happened to Jesus?*, trans. John Bowden (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), p. 10; R.H. GUNDRY, *Trimming the debate* in P. COPAN, *Jesus' Resurrection*, p. 115-116).

<sup>36</sup> apostles testifying implicitly to appearances: Acts 2,32.40 3,15 5,32 10,40-42; idem Paul: Acts 9,20.28 11,26

<sup>37</sup> 1Cor 15,3; This has been discussed in my article *Paul's Cephas is Caiphaz – Author of 1Peter and Hebrews*, www.JesusKing.info, January 4, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> P. COPAN, *Jesus' Resurrection*, p. 25. See also CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 55; with the term "the Eleven" Craig here probably intends to designate the Galilean apostles.

In fact, now all the appearance Gospels can be totally harmonized<sup>39</sup> (this will be discussed in the following), they can also be totally historical and free of Brown's alleged "free dramatizations". The Gospel narratives, also those of Luke and John, can be just as authentic as Paul's kerygma, listing the appearances to Cephas, James, Paul and others.<sup>40</sup>

## 2. A chronological sequence of appearances

With the results of my article "The Eleven"<sup>41</sup> it is possible to draft a chronological sequence of appearances as shown in table 1. Special attention is given to the following issues:

### *The time of the theological ascension*

As already described above, according to Benoit there was a 'theological ascension', and it took place after the appearance to Mary Magdalene and before the appearance on the mount in Galilee. This ascension also meant the glorification of Jesus in heaven at God's right hand. Now, as this glorification was required before the Holy Spirit could be given – John said:

for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7,39)

– the glorification must have taken place before Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to his disciples in the Cenacle (I).<sup>42</sup> According to Gundry the word "therefore" (δε 'de') in John 20,19, which is the start of the description of Jesus' appearance to his disciples in the Cenacle, refers to the 'theological ascension' mentioned by Jesus while speaking to Mary Magdalene (John 20,17).<sup>43</sup> And Jesus' theological ascension probably already took place even earlier: immediately after his appearance to Mary Magdalene. For it is noteworthy that Jesus already spoke to the Men of Emmaus about entering into "his glory". He said

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? (Luke 24,26)

As Jesus speaks in the past tense of the necessity to suffer and enter into his glory, it is most probable that both the suffering and the entering into his glory had already taken place, and the necessity had been fulfilled, before He spoke to the Men of Emmaus (E). And if it is correct that Cephas and the twelve saw Jesus before James and all the apostles did, as the kerygma says (1Cor 15,5-7), and if they saw Him sitting on the right hand of Power, as Jesus had promised them (Matt 26,64), this is another substantial indication that Jesus' theological ascension took place right after his appearance to Mary Magdalene and before He appeared to Cephas (D), the Men of Emmaus (E) and the disciples (I) (see table 1). This is confirmed by

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<sup>39</sup> put in chronological order with any seeming contradictions explained

<sup>40</sup> Paul wrote 1Cor during his Third Missionary Journey in 54-57 CE and, according to Gundry, Mark's Gospel originated in the 50s or late 40s, Luke's in late 50s or early 60s and Acts in early 60s, under the assumptions that Luke used Mark, wrote Acts after writing his Gospel, and ended Acts before Paul's trial in Rome (c. 63 CE) because the trial is not described in Acts (R.H. GUNDRY, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 4th edition 2003, Michigan, 1970, p.129).

<sup>41</sup> *The Eleven (Luke 24,9.33 Acts 2,14) – Jesus appeared risen to the Officers of the Temple Prison*, www.JesusKing.info, December 20, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> John 20,22; This is also the opinion of R.H. Gundry (P. COPAN, *Jesus' Resurrection*, p. 117, note 14). The Cenacle is the room of Jesus' Last Supper before his death, in a house in the Upper City of Jerusalem.

<sup>43</sup> GUNDRY, *A Survey*, p. 290-291: "The "therefore" in 20:19 indicates that the ascension has taken place by evening (compare 7:39 with 20:17, 19-22)."

Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene in the present tense: "I am ascending (ἀναβαίνω) to My Father" (John 20,17 NA<sup>27</sup>).

#### *Cephas and James, and then the Eleven or the Galileans*

Jesus appeared to Cephas and James before He appeared to the Eleven or the Galileans, for the kerygma says about Jesus "that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, [...] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles" (1 Cor 15,5-7). It is impossible to say whether Jesus appeared first to the Eleven (G) or to the Galileans (I), for by the time the kerygma took shape (after Pentecost) both the Eleven and the Galileans were called "apostles" (Acts 9,26-27 Gal 1,18-19).

#### *Simon and the Men of Emmaus*

As the Men of Emmaus spoke with and recognized Jesus before His appearance to the Eleven and as He had appeared to Simon as well before the appearance to the Eleven,<sup>44</sup> it is impossible to discern whether Jesus appeared first to the Men of Emmaus (E) or to Simon (the son of Clopas) (F) or appeared to them at the same time.<sup>45</sup>

#### *The disputed verse Luke 24,51 = Acts 1,2 : a temporary ascension*

The verse Luke 24,51, which is found in the majority of important manuscripts of the Gospel text, is regularly absent from the Western textual witnesses, and therefore remains a textual problem. It was accepted in the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of Nestle as "part of the authentic text of Luke's Gospel".<sup>46</sup> After the description of Jesus' appearance to the Eleven, it reads:

While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. (Luke 24,51)

This verse has a parallel in Luke's verses Acts 1,1-2, which reflect what Luke had already described in his Gospel:

1 I composed the first discourse, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach, 2 until that day in which, having by the Holy Spirit charged the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up; 3 to whom also he presented himself living, after he had suffered, with many proofs; being seen by them during forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God; (Acts 1,1-3 Darby literal translation)

As Luke says that the being "taken up" was the last part of his "first discourse", which is his Gospel ending with Luke 24,51, the being "taken up" of Acts 1,2 must correspond to the being "carried up into heaven" of Luke 24,51.<sup>47</sup> The word "also" in Acts 1,3,<sup>48</sup> then indicates that Jesus not only charged the apostles on the first day of his resurrection, when He was taken up, as already described in Luke's Gospel, but also during the forty days that followed presented himself living to these same apostles with many proofs, as would be described in Luke's Acts (Acts 1,3b-8). The being "taken up" in Acts 1,2 thus was not the same as the final

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<sup>44</sup> Luke 24,13-31.34

<sup>45</sup> This phenomenon is called 'bi-location' and has been observed even in the life of mortal human beings such as Padre Pio.

<sup>46</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 98-99

<sup>47</sup> For the "taken up" took place on the last day of Luke's "first discourse", and Luke's Gospel described all things until the day of Jesus' resurrection and his being "carried up into heaven". Luke 24,51 then specifies that Jesus' being "taken up" of Acts 1,2 was not his suffering and death on the cross but an ascension into heaven.

<sup>48</sup> The word 'also' doesn't mean "also after his suffering", as opposed to 'before his suffering and death'. The NET Bible translates Acts 1,3 with "to the same apostles also, after his suffering, he presented himself alive".



ascension on the fortieth day in Acts 1,9 (J)<sup>49</sup>, for the ascension of Luke 24,51/Acts 1,2 took place on the first day of Jesus' resurrection.

So, the being "carried up"/"taken up" of Luke 24,51/Acts 1,2 must have been another physical, but temporary, ascension. The ultimate ascension can be distinguished from this temporary ascension by the way in which Jesus would return. After the temporary ascension before the eyes of the Eleven, Jesus re-appeared in the Cenacle by suddenly standing there, without visibly descending from heaven. Also, at the SeaS of Tiberias He simply stood at the shore, as a normal man and stranger.<sup>50</sup> After the ultimate ascension, however, angels tell the apostles that Jesus will return to the earth as He ascended: "on the clouds of heaven", but then "with power and great glory" to judge "all nations".<sup>51</sup>

#### *Sea of Tiberias then Mount of Galilee*

According to John Jesus first appeared twice to his disciples in the Cenacle (I and J) and then for the third time at the Sea of Tiberias (K):<sup>52</sup>

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias [...] This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. (John 21,1.14)

Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the mount in Galilee (L)<sup>53</sup> must have taken place after the appearance to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (K), for otherwise Jesus, at the Sea of Tiberias, would not have appeared to his disciples for the third time but for the fourth time at least.

#### *Mark: the Men of Emmaus are not believed*

In table 1 the data of the long ending of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16,9-20) are interpreted as parallels of the data of the Gospel of Luke and Acts. The appearance to "two of them, as they were walking into the country", in Mark, most probably is the same as the appearance to Cleopas and his fellow traveller on the way to Emmaus, in Luke (E).<sup>54</sup> The appearance to "the Eleven themselves" in Mark seems a parallel of the appearance to "the Eleven" in Luke (G).<sup>55</sup> The only difference is that Mark says the Eleven did not believe the women, or the Men of Emmaus, and Luke says that the Eleven tell the Men of Emmaus that the Lord had risen indeed and had appeared to Simon. But this is not a contradictive difference. Both statements can be true, for the Eleven may have believed in the appearance to Simon and not believed in the appearance to the Men of Emmaus: first they may not have believed the women and then they may have believed the message that Jesus had risen and had appeared to Simon. But after this, when the Men of Emmaus told their story, that Jesus had appeared to them too, the Eleven may not have believed them, for instance because the appearance to Simon had taken place in the same time-span as the appearance to the Men of Emmaus. While they were discussing this, Jesus suddenly appeared and the Eleven were "startled and frightened",<sup>56</sup> probably because they had a wrong idea of what had been meant with a 'risen' Lord. Probably they had interpreted Simon's message that Jesus had "appeared" to him (ωφθη = "showed

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<sup>49</sup> Acts 1,9-11

<sup>50</sup> John 21,4

<sup>51</sup> Acts 1,11 Matt 24,30 25,31-32

<sup>52</sup> John 20,19-29 21,1-23

<sup>53</sup> Matt 28,16-20

<sup>54</sup> Luke 24,13-31 Mark 16,12-13

<sup>55</sup> Mark 16,14 Luke 24,33-36

<sup>56</sup> Luke 24,36-37

himself” Luke 24,34 NA<sup>27</sup>), as a resurrection to a normal human earthly life, in which a person can not show up in two different places at the same time, at Simon’s and at the Men of Emmaus’.<sup>57</sup> But a normal human body cannot appear by suddenly standing in their very midst either, and so, from that moment, they were “startled and frightened and supposed that they saw a spirit”, and Jesus had to prove to them He wasn’t a spirit by eating “a piece of broiled fish”.<sup>58</sup>

So, there is no contradiction between Mark’s and Luke’s appearance Gospels.

*Mark: Jesus’ speaking, His ascension, and the disciples’ preaching*

The last three elements of Mark’s second ending (Jesus’ speaking, Jesus’ ascension, the disciples’ preaching) are interpreted as parallels of Acts 1,3-7,4 (see table 1: M, N, P), because the last element – the going forth and the preaching everywhere (P)<sup>59</sup> – can only be associated with the events that happened in the church after Pentecost. Before that time the Eleven had been obliged to “stay in the city” to wait for the receiving of the Spirit, as Jesus had commanded them,<sup>60</sup> and they didn’t go forth preaching “everywhere” yet. And the Galileans were only in Galilea. This parallel (P) leaves room for two interpretations of Mark’s preceding element (N), of Jesus being taken up into heaven:

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16,19)

The easiest parallel of this being “taken up into heaven” with Luke and Acts, is with Jesus’ visible bodily ascension on the fortieth day after his resurrection (Acts 1,9) (N). Then Mark’s element which says that Jesus had spoken to his disciples before being taken up into heaven, is a parallel of the verse in Acts that says that Jesus was “appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God” (M).<sup>61</sup> In this case Mark’s sequence ‘appearances – speaking – ascension – preaching’ explicitly includes the speaking phase which lasted forty days and which was important to the brand new disciples of the Eleven, who were temple officers, just as it was important to Mark himself, who probably was a specific temple officer too.<sup>62</sup> The other possible parallel of Mark’s verse 16,19 – of Jesus being “taken up into heaven” – is with the verse Luke 24,51, which says that Jesus was “carried up into heaven” immediately after his first appearance to the Eleven (H). But this parallel is improbable because Mark says the disciples went forth, preaching everywhere, and then there would have been no distinct time for Jesus’ appearing and speaking to the Eleven about “the kingdom of God”, as Acts 1,3 says.

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<sup>57</sup> The Greek word used for “appeared” in the Eleven’s description of the appearance to Simon (Luke 24,34), is the verb *ωφθη* (*ōphthē*), which also occurs in Acts 7,26, where it is translated with “showed himself to” and which describes how Moses “showed himself” to some Hebrews, of course when Moses was still normally alive.

<sup>58</sup> Luke 24,36-43

<sup>59</sup> Mark 16,20

<sup>60</sup> Luke 24,49

<sup>61</sup> Acts 1,3

<sup>62</sup> The discussion of this thesis about John Mark is in my article *John Mark – Author of the Gospel of John with Jesus’ mother*, [www.JesusKing.info](http://www.JesusKing.info), November 4, 2008.

William L. Craig

Also without knowing about the new interpretation of the Eleven as temple officers, some New Testament scholars, such as Craig, have harmonized the appearance Gospels by interpreting the Easter evening appearances of Luke and John as taking place in Jerusalem before the Galilean appearances of John and Matthew.<sup>63</sup> This is the most natural harmonisation, simply following the texts. This sequence is expressed in fig. 1. In his book “Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus” Craig builds a strong case for the historicity of the appearances and for the above mentioned sequence of appearances.<sup>64</sup> The only difference with the sequence of this article (see the red arrows in fig. 1) is that Craig assumes that the Eleven are the same as the Galilean disciples, and thus that the appearances to the Eleven and the Galilean disciples were one and the same appearance, and that the ascension in the face of the Eleven was the same ascension as the one taking place in the face of the disciples on the fortieth day. Craig explains the difference in time by interpreting the description of the teaching and ascension in front of the Eleven in Luke 24,44-53 as a “foreshortened or telescoped account”, in which the ascension of the fortieth day is drawn near in the story and only *seems* to have taken place right after the first appearance on the first day.<sup>65</sup> In this article’s sequence the appearance to the Eleven and also the ascension in their sight took place on the first day of the resurrection, just as Luke’s story says.

Raymond E. Brown

Other scholars, represented here by Brown, have held that all major appearances to the Galilean apostles – both all those in Jerusalem and the one on the mount in Galilee –, and the appearance to the Eleven, are basically one and the same appearance. This is not a natural reading of the Gospels. To arrive at this conclusion the following disputable steps had to be taken (see fig. 2, the red text):

1) The rejection of the second appearance to the disciples in the Cenacle

At the first appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples in the Cenacle Thomas was absent (John 20,19,24-25). According to Brown the second appearance to the disciples in the Cenacle, now including Thomas (John 20,24-29), is not historical, but is a “free dramatization” in which Thomas is only the personification of doubt.<sup>66</sup> No evidence of any kind is given here.<sup>67</sup>

2) The rejection of the verses John 21,1 and 14

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias [...] This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. (John 21,1.14)

These verses clearly tell us that the appearance of Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee was his third appearance to his disciples, the first two appearances being the ones in the

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<sup>63</sup> CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 223-225

<sup>64</sup> Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, 1989 (Revised Edition 2002)

<sup>65</sup> CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 197

<sup>66</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 107

<sup>67</sup> Craig holds: “the story is not simply a dramatization of the doubt motif ... The story also contains a Christological statement which constitutes the climax of the gospel.” (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 202)

Cenacle behind closed doors, described in John 20.<sup>68</sup> Brown rejects the historicity of the verses 21,1.14 and interprets them as non-historical additions made to connect the additional chapter John 21 to the original Gospel of John that ended with chapter 20. The argument used for this rejection – that leads to Brown’s conclusion that this third appearance was actually a first appearance – is the assumption that Jesus should have been recognized at once if this was the third appearance to his disciples. According to Brown the fact that they didn’t recognize Him at once would indicate that this was a first appearance, for, according to Brown, “hesitancy is elsewhere associated with initial appearances (Luke 24,37; John 20:25; Mark 16:13, 14).”<sup>69</sup> But both these claims – that they should have recognized Him at once on a third appearance, and that hesitancy occurred in first appearances – are incorrect.

The reason why Jesus was not recognized at once at the Sea of Tiberias was, apart from the fact that He stood on the shore at a considerable distance from the boat on the lake, that He appeared in another form than his earlier earthly form. That He was able to appear “in another form” has been shown above and has literally been attested in Mark 16,12. And what proves that Jesus was at the lake in another form is the fact that, even after the disciples had arrived at the shore, they still could not *see* that it was Jesus for they “knew” it (because of the miraculous catch of fish) and “none of the disciples dared ask him”.<sup>70</sup>

And the “hesitancy” at initial appearances to which Brown refers,<sup>71</sup> does not concern the recognition of Jesus: in Luke 24,37 the Eleven are only unsure whether the Jesus they did recognize, was a ghost or a living man; in John 20,25 there is hesitancy about Jesus’ identity, but it is not expressed by the group of disciples that had seen Jesus, but only by the apostle who had not seen Jesus yet and was *not* seeing Him yet either: Thomas. When Thomas finally sees the risen Jesus too, he recognizes Him at once too, even as his Lord and God.<sup>72</sup> And in Mark 16,13-14 the Eleven don’t believe the eyewitness accounts, but they, just as Thomas, do this *before* having seen Jesus themselves. When they actually see Jesus they also recognize Him immediately.<sup>73</sup> So, in these cases of initial appearances there is no hesitancy associated with the recognition of Jesus at all. Also in Jesus’ first appearance to the women on Easter morning He is recognized at once, and the women “took hold of his feet and worshiped him”.<sup>74</sup> In fact, only at two of the initial appearances Jesus was not recognized immediately: Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb “turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus”,<sup>75</sup> which seems to imply that she only could ‘know’ it was Jesus and couldn’t ‘see’ it was Him, probably because He appeared in another than his usual form. Mary Magdalene was simply “supposing him to be the gardener” (John 20,15). And the Men of Emmaus did not recognize Him because “their eyes were kept from recognizing him”<sup>76</sup> in a supernatural way. To them He simply was a “stranger”(AV), a “visitor” (RSV) (παροικεω) (Luke 24,18 NA<sup>27</sup>). So, at these two initial appearances there was no “hesitancy” or doubt either, but only a temporary impossibility to recognize Jesus from his looks.

So, Brown’s arguments for changing a third appearance into a first appearance are invalid.

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<sup>68</sup> John 20,19-29

<sup>69</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 105

<sup>70</sup> John 21,4.7.12

<sup>71</sup> Note that Brown here first tries to use the fragments of Luke, John and Mark as evidence, but later rejects the appearances of Luke, John and Mark as unhistorical: Brown seems to have the same view as he says that critical scholars tend to have, viz. that only Matthew’s appearance story was historical (BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 109-110).

<sup>72</sup> John 20,26-28

<sup>73</sup> Luke 24,37

<sup>74</sup> Matt 28,9

<sup>75</sup> John 20,14

<sup>76</sup> Luke 24,16; their eyes were only opened after Jesus had broken the bread (Luke 24,31).

3) The interpretation of the appearance on the mount in Galilee in Matthew as a first appearance

The appearance on the mount is also interpreted by Brown as a first appearance to Jesus' disciples.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matt 28,16-18)

Here the doubt of some of the disciples is a reason for Brown to conclude that this was a first appearance: "there would have been no doubt if the disciples had already seen Jesus in Jerusalem and knew of his resurrection".<sup>77</sup>

But, as already said, doubt did not occur at the initial appearances. It is true that no longer could there have been doubt about Jesus' resurrection and about his ability to appear in bodily form, but the doubt on the mount was not about these concepts. The proof that the doubt only concerned the recognition of Jesus from his looks is that when some disciples were in doubt, Jesus approached them ("came") and started to speak to them.<sup>78</sup> Apparently the bodily Jesus was at a considerable distance initially, which may have caused the uncertainty about his identity in some disciples. And it is exactly this doubt which proves this was not a first appearance, for someone who doubts already knows it *could be* Jesus. So, the appearance on the mount may have been a fourth or later appearance, just as the Gospels imply.

4) The rejection of Acts 1,9-11 (the final ascension) and the acceptance of the (disputed) verse Luke 24,51 (the temporary ascension)

In Brown's discourse the disputed verse Luke 24,51, describing an ascension, is not only assumed to be historical, but it is even claimed to describe the one and only ascension of Jesus.<sup>79</sup> Doing this, Brown rejects the historicity of the undisputed verses Acts 1,9-11 about Jesus' last and bodily ascension on the fortieth day. The period of forty days of appearances, as attested to in Acts, is also rejected by Brown as unhistorical, and both this period and the final ascension are understood as just a choice of Luke's "to describe the eschatological in the categories of time", and "as an attempt to fill in the time between two datable events, approximately fifty days apart: Jesus' death at Passover time and the charismatic manifestation at Pentecost"; the period of forty days in Acts in Brown's eyes was chosen by Luke to parallel the biblical period of forty years in Exodus.<sup>80</sup>

There is no evidence for the validity of this interpretation,<sup>81</sup> and there is also the objection that there was no reason for Luke to describe an unhistorical ascension after an unhistorical period of forty days in the Acts (1,3.9), for Luke had already described an ascension in the beginning of his book, in Acts 1,2, referring to the first day of the resurrection. It would be illogical for Luke to describe two ascensions just to "fill in the time". But it was not Luke who chose to "fill in the time", but Jesus who chose to instruct the brand new apostles of the Eleven

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<sup>77</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 105

<sup>78</sup> Matt 28,18

<sup>79</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 103

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 103-104

<sup>81</sup> In fact, Brown, in his later, concise, article on the resurrection and appearances in the New Jerome Biblical Commentary (Englewood Cliffs, 1990, 81-134), seems to accept more appearances and two distinct (kinds of) ascensions: he sees an ascension as "the terminus of the risen Jesus' frequent appearances" after a longer period after the resurrection, and a theological ascension on the first day of the resurrection as "an integral part of the resurrection" (paragraph 134, p. 1377).

thoroughly during forty days and to give the two distinct kinds of apostles the same Spirit and have them act together only on the fiftieth day (Pentecost). And Brown's observation that the angel at Jesus' empty tomb has different messages in Mark and in Luke – respectively, that the disciples and Peter should go to Galilee (Mark)<sup>82</sup> and that the women should remember how Jesus in Galilee had predicted that He would “be delivered into the hands of sinful men” and die and arise (without mentioning the order to go to Galilee) (Luke)<sup>83</sup> – does not necessarily mean that Luke wanted to “erase any mention of appearances in Galilee”, as Brown holds.<sup>84</sup> Luke may only have left out the message to the disciples and have chosen to describe only the message to the women, because the command that the Galilean apostles were to go to Galilee, would not be interesting to the Eleven of the temple prison – to whom the women were going and on whom Luke's resurrection Gospel is focusing – but a prediction of his deliverance into the hands of sinful men and of his death and resurrection would. And Luke's text indeed says that the women actually did go and tell this message to the Eleven,<sup>85</sup> to whom it was important to hear that Jesus' death, in which effectuation they had co-operated, had been predicted by Jesus himself. Thus, after the Eleven finally started to believe the women, they may have started to see their part in Jesus' passion and death as something that was part of a divine plan<sup>86</sup> and maybe not totally their responsibility, although they were “sinful men”. And when Jesus appeared to them He “opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead [...]”” (Luke 24,45-46). So, Jesus comforted and instructed them.

##### 5) The neglecting of differences in appearance-ascension order and in the Spirit giving moment

Now of all the major appearances in the Gospels only four have survived in Brown's interpretation. One of Brown's problems left is that the appearance to the Eleven (in Luke) is followed by an ascension, but the appearance to the disciples in the Cenacle (in John) and to the disciples on the mount in Galilee (in Matthew) aren't. In order to be able to equate these three appearance narratives, Brown, referring to Benoit, introduces the theological ascension as part of the “one eschatological act of God”, comprising Jesus' resurrection and ascension and the giving of the Spirit; Brown sees such a theological ascension before the mount appearance (Matthew) and also implies it before the first Cenacle appearance (John).<sup>87</sup> But, although the other major appearance (Luke) isn't preceded but followed by an ascension – not a theological but even a visible one –, Brown nevertheless sees each of these three combinations of an appearance and ascension as one and “the same basic appearance to the Twelve”.<sup>88</sup> The difference in the order of the appearance and the ascension doesn't seem to matter in Brown's view. His explanation is that “variations in place and time may stem in part

<sup>82</sup> Mark 16,7

<sup>83</sup> Luke 24,6-7

<sup>84</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 102

<sup>85</sup> Luke 24,9 “and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.”

<sup>86</sup> Simon Peter later preached Jesus as “delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” and as killed by “lawless men” (Acts 2,23). Here Peter may have referred to the Roman soldiers and/or to the ‘hyperetai’ of the temple prison. If the ‘hyperetai’ were Rechabites, as I argue in my article *The Eleven (Luke 24,9.33 Acts 2,14) – Jesus appeared risen to the Officers of the Temple Prison* (www.JesusKing.info, December 20, 2008), they weren't original Jews but only Nethinim, and thus not necessarily under the Jewish law. “The Rabbinites held them (the Nethinim) in the lowest repute--beneath a bastard, though above a proselyte--forbade their intermarrying with Israelites, and declared them incapable of proper membership in the congregation” (EDERSHEIM, *The Temple*, ch. 4, p. 60-61).

<sup>87</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 104

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106

from the evangelists themselves who are trying to fit the account of an appearance into a consecutive narrative”.<sup>89</sup> So, again, he accuses at least one of the evangelists of changing around the historical order. And the fact that John describes a giving of the Spirit on the evening of Easter, and Luke describes a giving of the Spirit only fifty days later, on Pentecost, is again neglected by Brown by seeing also these two different events – an appearance and a Spirit giving, respectively, – as one eschatological and timeless event, which Luke tried to describe “in the categories of time”.<sup>90</sup>

But, as Pope Paul VI stated, the eschatological act(s) of God interacted with historical time, for their perception took place in time, in the real time of the eyewitnesses.<sup>91</sup> Thus, the order and time in which the appearances and the ascensions and the Spirit givings took place was irreversible in the eyes of these eyewitnesses, who were the sources of the traditions which resulted in the irreversible descriptions of the Gospel texts. The chronological order as already proposed in my article – first the appearance to the Eleven and the temporary ascension, then the appearance to the Galilean apostles in the Cenacle and the Spirit giving to these apostles in the Cenacle,<sup>92</sup> and then the Spirit giving to the new assembled group of apostles, viz. the Eleven plus the Galileans, on Pentecost – is the most simple way in which the major appearances can be harmonized.

#### 6) The implying of contradictive speaking by Jesus

Of course, even after interpreting an ascension and a giving of the Spirit as events out of time, Brown still could see that there were many differences between the words Jesus spoke during the different appearances. For instance, Jesus, according to John’s Gospel, breathed on the ten Galilean disciples and gave them the Spirit immediately, saying “Receive the Holy Spirit”, and He told them that they received the Holy Spirit to forgive sins.<sup>93</sup> To the Eleven (the temple’s prison officers) Jesus told that they had to wait in the city for the reception of the Spirit, which would give them “power from on high” to go and preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations.<sup>94</sup> Brown interprets these commands that “differ in their wording”, as one and the same command but spoken by Jesus in “some type of intuitive communication”: “the category of “speaking” *may* be inadequate to describe the unique and eschatological encounter with the risen Jesus”.<sup>95</sup>

But when Jesus spoke in the appearances He spoke to people living and hearing and understanding in time. And the commands did not only differ in their wording but – more importantly – they differed in their meaning. The two commands described above actually were contradictive. And one can not imagine Jesus as speaking or communicating contradictive to Himself, for “the Son of God, Jesus Christ, [...] was not Yes and No; but in him it is always Yes” and “he can not deny himself”.<sup>96</sup>

#### 7) The exclusion of reasons for the sequence ‘first Jerusalem - then Galilee’

The only reason given by Brown for the equation of the three major appearances – the Jerusalem appearances of John and Luke and the Galilean appearance of Matthew – is that to

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 106

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 104-105

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 126

<sup>92</sup> or first the appearance and spirit giving to the Galileans and then the appearance to the Eleven and the temporary ascension

<sup>93</sup> John 20,22-23

<sup>94</sup> Luke 24,45-49

<sup>95</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 107-108

<sup>96</sup> 2Cor 1,19; 2 Tim 2,13

Brown there is no explicable reason<sup>97</sup> why there should be a command that the disciples should go to Galilee, if they would see Jesus first in Jerusalem anyway.<sup>98</sup> According to the hypothesis offered by Brown “the basic appearance did not take place in Jerusalem on Easter Sunday – if it had taken place and they had been commissioned to a missionary endeavour, their subsequent return to their homes and occupations in Galilee would be difficult to explain”.<sup>99</sup> The places of the appearances in Jerusalem, described by John and Luke (and Mark), in Brown’s hypothesis are seen as stemming “not from historical tradition, but from the evangelist’s attempt to supply a setting”.<sup>100</sup> So, again Brown accuses the evangelists of falsification. Brown offers the frequently accepted hypothesis that only the appearance to Simon Peter and other disciples at the lake (as a minor appearance) and a following major appearance to the disciples (either in the Cenacle or on the mount in Galilee), are historical (Brown states that critical scholars tend to favour Galilee).<sup>101</sup>

But Jesus could commission the Eleven to a missionary endeavour and still, on the same day, send the command to the Galilean disciples to go to Galilee, for the Eleven weren’t the same men as the Galilean apostles, but the temple’s prison officers.

And the reason why Jesus appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem, despite his command that they should go to Galilee, may have been that these Galilean disciples did not immediately obey this command but hid in the Cenacle and stayed in Jerusalem for at least eight days, as John depicts (John 20,19-26).<sup>102</sup> And the reason why Jesus wanted the disciples to return to Galilee may have been that He wanted to treat the two different groups of apostles (the original Galilean men and the temple officers of Jerusalem) in a different way. In the appearance on the mount in Galilee Jesus gave the doctrinal authority to the Galilean apostles<sup>103</sup> and not to the temple officers, who instead had been commissioned to a missionary endeavour but still had to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come.<sup>104</sup> Another reason why Jesus wanted the original apostles to return to Galilee may have been that He wanted to start anew with these eleven Galileans who had abandoned Him during his passion in Jerusalem. Jesus’ prediction that they all would forsake Him, had immediately preceded his prediction that they would see Him in Galilee:

And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." (Mark 14,27-30)

And after Jesus’ resurrection the angel commanded the Galilean women to tell “the disciples and Peter” that they would see Him in Galilee,<sup>105</sup> thus implicitly referring to Jesus’ prediction of the falling away of the disciples and Peter – each in their own way –, and of his going

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<sup>97</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 110

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108; But Craig sees the possibility of “an appointed place and time” for the appearance (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 212).

<sup>100</sup> BROWN, *VCBR*, p. 92-93 (and 106: “... variations in place and time may stem in part from the evangelists themselves who are trying to fit the account of an appearance into a consecutive narrative”.)

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109-110

<sup>102</sup> Also Craig holds: “If Jesus did appear to the Twelve in Jerusalem as Luke and John state, then he could have given further instructions for a rendezvous with the disciples in Galilee. ... One cannot rule out that Luke and John narrate one event and Matthew quite another” (CRAIG, *Assessing*, p. 201).

<sup>103</sup> “Go, [...] teaching them [all nations] to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matt 28,19-20 RSV)

<sup>104</sup> Luke 24,46-49

<sup>105</sup> Mark 16,7



before them to Galilee. By making the original apostles go to Galilee it seems Jesus wanted to call them anew to be his apostles. The first calling of the apostles, at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, took place in Galilee and it started with a miraculous catch of fish on the lake and then Jesus told Simon Peter and Andrew and James and John to follow Him and that henceforth they would be catching men, and they left their boats and followed Him.<sup>106</sup> In the new calling in Galilee, after the apostles all had fallen away, there was also a miraculous catch of fish first, on the same lake, and now Peter left the boat by himself and went to Jesus who then commissioned him to be the shepherd of his flock (of men) three times.<sup>107</sup> In this way especially Peter, who had denied Jesus three times when He was a prisoner in the hands of the high priests,<sup>108</sup> got called anew to be the leader of the church.<sup>109</sup> And the reason why Simon Peter went fishing in the first place, when he had returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, was probably not only that he might as well do some work while waiting for Jesus' appearance. Peter must have heard that the angel at the tomb had insisted that the women should tell "the disciples and Peter", that they would see Jesus in Galilee.<sup>110</sup> So, Peter may have hoped to see Jesus alone, not with the other disciples. The fact that, originally, Simon wanted to go fishing on his own – only after he had announced that he would go fishing, some others decided to join him, maybe against Simon's intention<sup>111</sup> –, may then be explained by this hope to meet Jesus alone, not accompanied by the other disciples, so he could talk to Him privately about his denial. Besides the beloved disciple, who had been present in the courtyard of the high priest,<sup>112</sup> none of the rest of the disciples may have known of Peter's denial of Jesus in the high priest's courtyard. That it was important to Peter to talk with the risen Jesus alone and that the beloved disciple, who was in the boat with Peter, knew this, is shown by the fact that the beloved disciple told Peter "it is the Lord" as soon as he recognized Him, as standing on the shore, and by Peter's immediate jumping into the water in order to arrive first at the shore where Jesus was.<sup>113</sup>

A possible reason, offered by Brown, why the disciples later returned from Galilee to Jerusalem is that they wanted to celebrate the feast of Pentecost in the temple of Jerusalem. But of course they may also have simply been told to do so by Jesus in order to assemble both kinds of apostles, those of Galilee and those of the temple prison, in Jerusalem. So, there were enough reasons for the different appearances of Jesus in the different locations.

It is important to note now, that Brown has repeatedly been rejecting (or 'eschatologizing') substantial biblical data, of which some seem problematic as long as the Eleven and the Galilean disciples are equated. But the distinct appearances can easily be harmonized, leaving intact the biblical differences and the biblical order of these appearances and other events, when the Eleven and the Galilean disciples were two different groups of people.

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<sup>106</sup> Luke 5,4-11

<sup>107</sup> John 21,6-7.15-17

<sup>108</sup> John 18,17-27

<sup>109</sup> John 21,15-17

<sup>110</sup> Mark 16,7

<sup>111</sup> John 21,3

<sup>112</sup> John 18,15-16

<sup>113</sup> John 21,7

### 3. Conclusion

After the brief discussion of Craig's sequence of appearances and the more elaborate discussion of Brown's appearance equation theory it appears that there aren't any arguments in them against the literal interpretation of the major appearance texts of the Gospels as appearances to the group of the Galilean apostles in the Cenacle and on the mount in Galilee, and to the group of the Eleven (= the temple officers) in the temple. The conclusion of this article is the same as Craig's and even Brown's: Jesus was raised by a bodily resurrection, which is now assured by the full compatibility and thus possible historicity of all post-resurrectional narratives in Gospels and Acts, harmonized in a simple chronological sequence which follows the natural, historical, course of the narratives.

### 4. Discussion of the Eleven, Cephas, and James the Just

One might say of the proposed interpretations of the appearance Gospels and of the kerygma that they are hypothetical, but one certainly can't say that they are impossible. In fact, it appears that each of the two main interpretations of my last articles – on the Eleven (= prison officers), and on Cephas (= Caiphas) – can be defended independently from each other. Their only common issue is the interpretation of Paul's words about his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem (Gal 1,18-19), but the two main interpretations each have a large independent amount of evidence, even without the argument of this issue. Having observed this independency, it seems even more important to stress the following: also the identification of James the Just as the people's head representative in the temple can be defended independently from the other theses. But this identification of James solidly locks the Eleven, Caiphas, and James together in their meeting with Paul (Gal 1,18-19) (see fig. 3). The identifications confirm each other reciprocally.

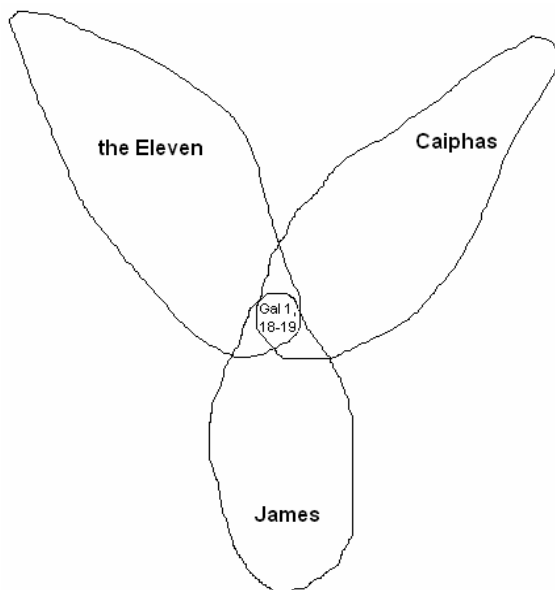


Fig. 3 The evidence for the Eleven, Cephas, and James

And when the interpretation of ‘the Eleven’ as the prison officers also appears to be able to harmonize the morning and evening appearance Gospels as they are, without having to reject the historicity of any elements in them, and if the interpretation of ‘Cephas’ as Caiphas also appears to be able to harmonize Paul’s kerygmatic list with John’s Gospel and to harmonize the other biblical data in Acts, Galatians and 1Corinthians, this is also substantial evidence for the accurateness of the interpretations.

It may be superfluous to say, but the old interpretation of the appearances to Cephas and the twelve, and the appearances to Simon and the Eleven, as identical to the appearances to Simon Peter and the other ten Galilean apostles is not only hypothetical – it has never been proved –, but it leaves many conflicting data unexplained. But the very historicity of the above mentioned temple institutions and of Jesus’ appearances to them, especially to Cephas and the twelve and to the Eleven, in fact also strengthens the historicity of Jesus’ appearances to his Galilean apostles, to which the temple appearances contrast: we don’t see one big blurred picture any longer, but three distinct sharp pictures, as represented in table 1.

In John 14,21-24 we hear Jesus say to his disciples:

21 He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

It may seem as if Jesus told his apostles that He would not appear (as the risen Jesus) to any person who didn’t belong to his disciples. But in Jesus’ answer to Judas we hear that ‘manifesting Himself’ (with the Father) to someone means to “come to him and make our home with him” (John 14,23). This kind of manifesting Himself is not the same as showing Himself risen in an appearance, which He thus may have done to some people who didn’t belong to his disciples. And thus Jesus may have appeared risen to his prison guards and to his judges, as He had promised them in court. Of course this doesn’t preclude the possibility that Caiphas (later) did love Jesus.

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## Abbreviations

AV	Authorized Version
CE	Christian Era or Common Era
NA <sup>27</sup>	Nestle-Aland 27th edition of the Greek text of the New Testament
NIV	New International Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version

		A	(B)	C	D	E	F	(I)?	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	(O)	(P)	Q
Galileans	John 20-21	App. to Mary Magdalene	theological ascension "ascending to My Father"								App. in Jerusalem to 10 disciples, receive the Spirit on 1 <sup>st</sup> day	App. in Jerusalem to 11 disciples incl. Thomas on 8 <sup>th</sup> day	3 <sup>rd</sup> app. at Sea of Tiberias, Galilee						
	Matt 28			App. to the Galilean women on the way										App. on Mount in Galilee to 11 disciples "all power"					
Pricers	Luke 24 + Acts					App. to Cleopas and another man on the way to Emmaus	App. to Simon (of Clopas)		App. in Jerusalem to the Eleven, must wait for the Spirit	carried up into heaven (Luke 24,51) = taken up (Acts 1,2)				Appearing + speaking to them for 40 days	Last bodily appearance (in Jerusalem) + bodily ascension	Pentecost (also the Eleven receive the Spirit)			
	(Mark 16, 9-20)					App. to two in the country			App. in Jerusalem to the Eleven					after He had spoken to them	taken up into heaven, sat down at right hand of God			they went forth, preached everywhere	
Temple leaders	1Cor 15				App. to Cephas, the twelve, the five hundred, and James														(App. to Paul (heavenly vision) on way to Damascus)
DAY 1												"40 days"				DAY 40	DAY 50		

Table 1 Chronological sequence of appearances based on this study

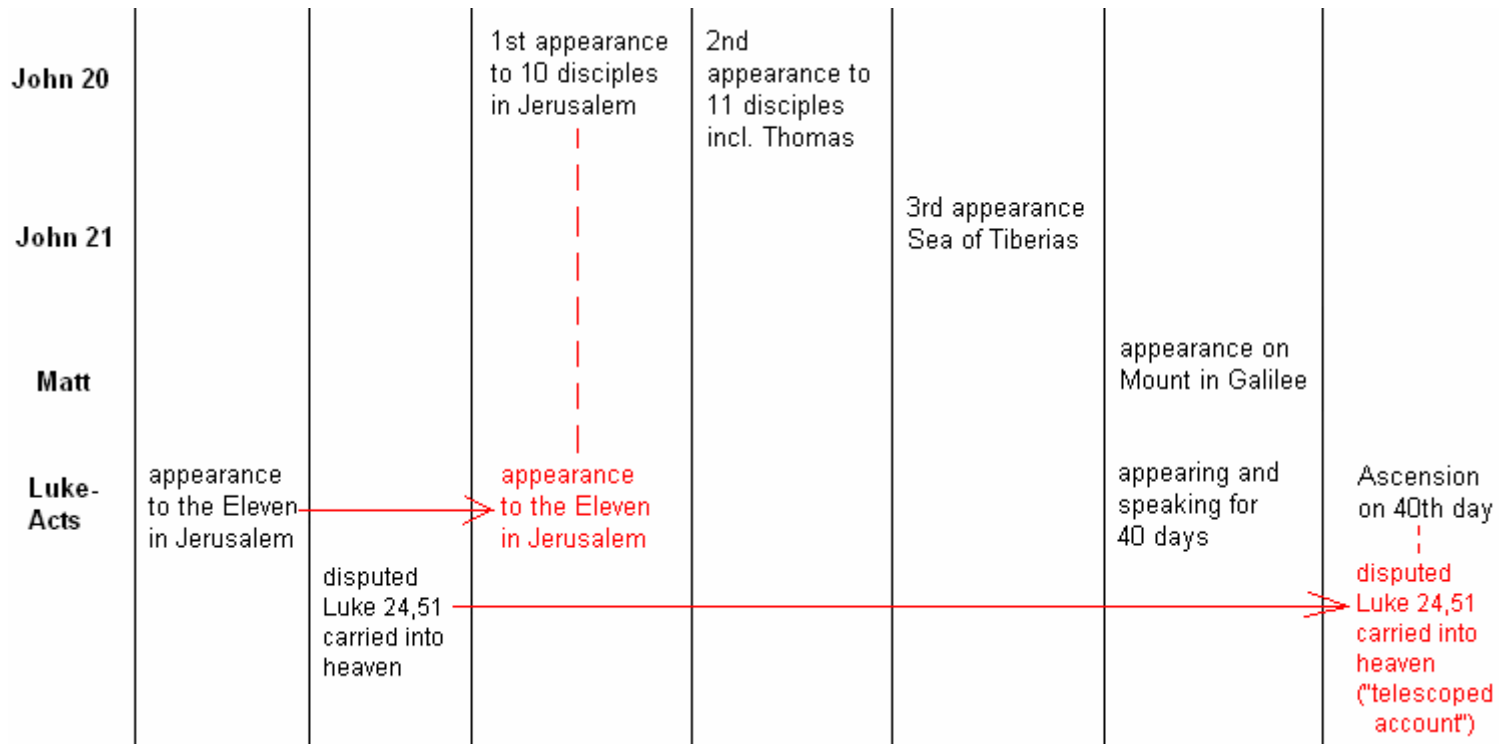


Fig. 1 Craig

A schematic representation of the sequence of appearances as has been defended by W.L. Craig.

The black text represents the sequence based on the new interpretation of the Eleven;

the red arrows and texts represent the differences (with my sequence) as have been defended by Craig, before he knew of the new interpretation of the Eleven.

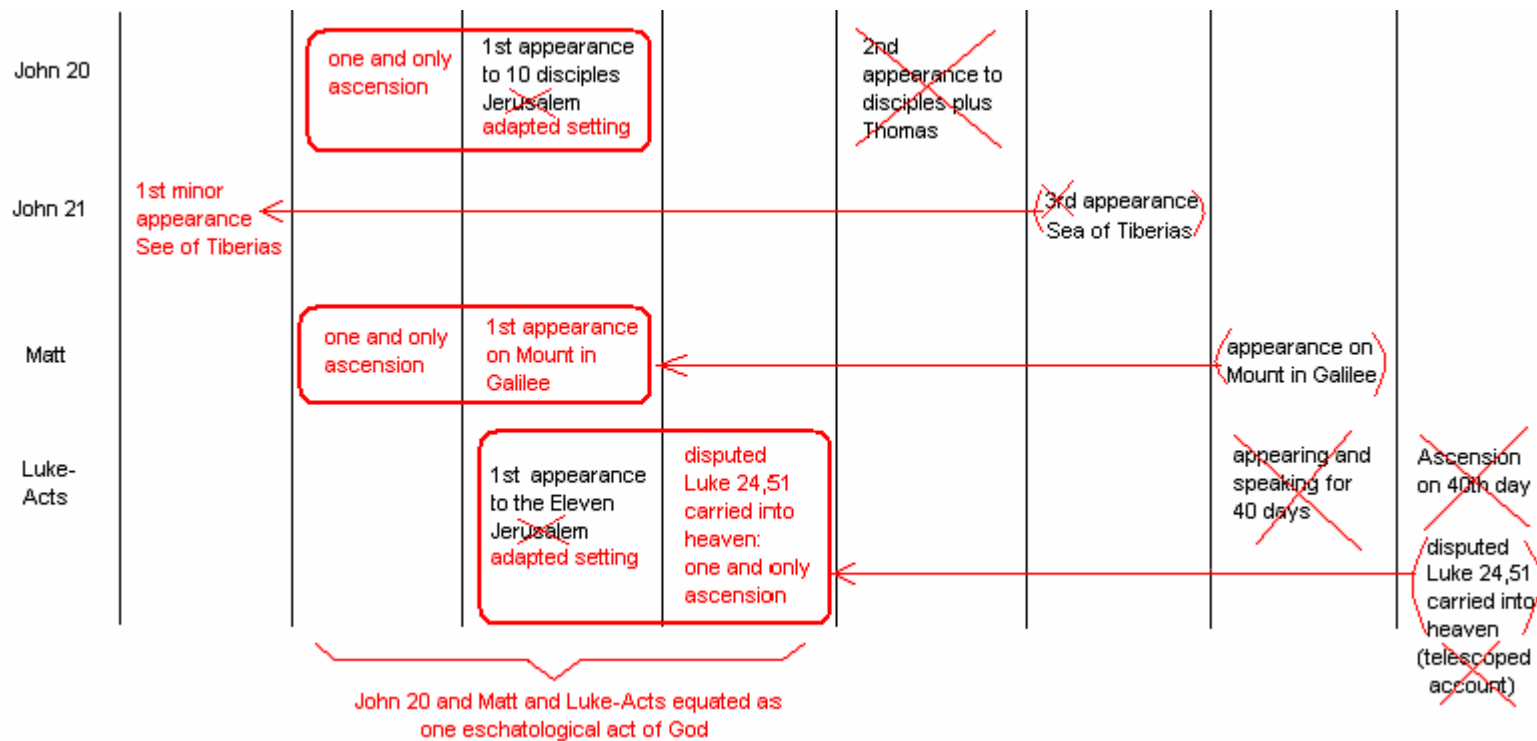


Fig. 2 Brown

A schematic representation of the disputable appearance equation hypothesis as has been defended by R.E. Brown. The black text represents Craig's sequence; the red arrows, lines and text signify the procedures pertaining to Brown's hypothesis.