

26-0624wc Neighborly Apologetics

Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar Series

26-0624wc - NA- 9-Jesus' Resurrection, Part 5, Dr. Del Tackett

This detailed summary by Grok / X, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

Del's site: deltackett.com, [Neighborly Apologetics Series Video link](#),

Class Resources: [NA-links](#), Our website: wschurchofchrist.org/education.php

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Neighborly Apologetics Summary

26-0624-Summary: 9 - Jesus' Resurrection, Part 5 (0:04 - 56:25)

Title: *Appearances of the Risen Jesus*, **Facilitator:** Scott Reynolds

Part 1 - (0:04 - 2:32) Opening Reflection on Thomas and the Purpose of the Appearances

Del opens by reading from John 20, recounting the familiar story of Thomas, who was absent during Jesus' first appearance to the ten disciples. A week later, Jesus appears again, graciously inviting Thomas to touch his wounds and commanding him to stop doubting and believe. Thomas responds with the profound confession, "My Lord and my God." Jesus then states that those who have not seen and yet have believed are blessed. This applies to all believers today who have not physically seen the risen Jesus but believe because of the evidence provided by God and the work of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. God has graciously supplied tangible evidences so that faith is not based on a hoax, conspiracy, hallucination, or merely spiritual resurrection. The session focuses on the physical resurrection of Jesus' body, which counters the significant modern charge that Jesus did not physically rise from the dead. This evidence strengthens the faith of believers.

(2:32 - 5:18) Review of Prior Evidence and Outline of Tonight's Accusations

The session briefly reviews the evidence covered in previous parts: Jesus' real death, his body being wrapped with spices and linen, burial in a sealed tomb guarded by soldiers, the earthquake on resurrection day, the angel rolling away the stone, the terrified guards fleeing, the women discovering the empty tomb and receiving angelic testimony, Peter and John examining the grave wrappings that appeared vacated by the body, and the soldiers reporting the empty tomb, which led to polemical responses. The polemic and creed will be addressed in the next session as critical elements when engaging skeptics. Tonight, four primary accusations regarding the appearances are outlined, with focus on the first three: (1) the appearances were hallucinations, (2) the appearances were due to mistaken identity, and (3) the resurrection was spiritual rather than physical, making the appearances spiritual only. The fourth accusation—that the appearances were part of a myth or legend—will be referenced but deferred. The appearances will be examined one by one, addressing how they counter these accusations, particularly mistaken identity.

(5:18 - 11:09) First Appearance: To Mary Magdalene

The first appearance discussed is to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, drawn from John 20. Mary stands weeping outside the tomb, stoops to look inside, and sees two angels in white sitting where Jesus' body had been. When asked why she is weeping, she says they have taken away her Lord and she does not know where he has been laid. Turning, she sees Jesus but mistakes him for the gardener. Jesus asks whom she is seeking. She pleads for information on where the body has been taken so she can retrieve it. Jesus then calls her by name, "Mary," and she recognizes him, addressing him as "Rabboni" (teacher) in Aramaic. Jesus instructs her not to cling to him as he has not yet ascended to the Father, but to go tell his brothers that he is ascending to his Father and their Father, his God and their God. Mary announces to the disciples that she has seen the Lord and relays his words. Del highlights the emotional depth—Mary's weeping and shock after witnessing the crucifixion and empty tomb—and notes the Scripture rarely details emotions so vividly. This appearance counters mistaken identity: an emotional Mary would not mistake a gardener who happens to know her name intimately, speak of ascending to the Father, and give specific instructions to the disciples. It is implausible that a gardener would impersonate Jesus in this way.

(11:09 - 13:01) Appearance to the Other Women

Jesus also appears to the other women (referred to as including Aunt Mary alongside Mary Magdalene). According to Matthew 28, they depart the tomb quickly with fear and great joy to tell the disciples. Jesus meets them, greets them, and they take hold of his feet and worship him. He tells them not to be afraid and to instruct his brothers to go to Galilee, where they will see him. This confirms Jesus showing himself physically to a group of women who had followed him. A map is referenced (to be used later for harmonization) suggesting this may have occurred outside the gate. The large contingent of women following Jesus is noted.

(13:01 - 16:51) Appearance on the Road to Emmaus

The third appearance examined is to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, a significant and lengthy encounter often cited regarding recognition issues. Jesus joins them unrecognized, discusses the events of the crucifixion and reported resurrection, and explains the Scriptures. When they break bread together, their eyes are opened, they recognize him, and he vanishes. They reflect that their hearts burned while he opened the Scriptures to them. They immediately return to Jerusalem, find the eleven, and learn the Lord has risen and appeared to Simon. They share their experience of how he was known in the breaking of the bread. Del explains that God, who created the stars by speaking, can open or close eyes; Jesus may have veiled himself or supernaturally prevented recognition until the right moment. This counters mistaken identity claims involving grief or heat-induced error—the impersonator would need to vanish supernaturally, explain the Scriptures powerfully, and be recognized in the breaking of bread. It is the longest recorded post-resurrection appearance.

(16:51 - 19:57) Appearance to the Ten Disciples and to Peter

That same evening (first day of the week), Jesus appears to the ten disciples (Thomas absent, Judas gone) in a locked room where they gathered for fear of the Jews. He stands among them and says, "Peace be with you," followed by further dialogue and eating with them. This counters mistaken identity, as an imposter would need to appear magically in a locked room. A map reference points

to the possible upper room location near traditional Calvary and Gordon's tomb. An amazing private appearance to Peter (Simon/Cephas) is noted, mentioned in Luke 24 and the 1 Corinthians 15 creed ("He appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve") but not detailed in the Gospels. Peter, ashamed after denying Jesus three times, likely stayed separately in the lower city due to his guilt. Jesus appearing to him alone is fitting given Peter's anguish and restoration.

(19:57 - 24:26) Appearance to the Eleven with Thomas

A week later, Jesus appears again in the locked room, now with Thomas present. He stands among them despite locked doors, says "Peace be with you," and specifically addresses Thomas: "Put your finger here and see my hands; reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas confesses, "My Lord and my God." This appearance strongly refutes mistaken identity or impersonation, as it requires an imposter to enter through locked doors, invite physical examination of crucifixion wounds (nails and spear), and elicit Thomas's profound confession. The testimony makes such accusations untenable.

(24:26 - 26:20) Appearance by the Sea of Tiberias and to the Eleven on the Mountain

Continuing with one of Del's favorite appearances, the session moves to Galilee as described in John 21. After these events, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. The disciples had been fishing all night without success. Jesus instructed them to cast the net on the other side of the boat, resulting in such a large catch that they could not haul the net in. They then ate fish together with the risen Jesus. This account powerfully counters the hallucination accusation, as it would require a group hallucination experienced simultaneously by multiple men. It also challenges the idea of a merely spiritual resurrection, since this spiritually raised Jesus is eating physical fish with the disciples. Next, the appearance to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee from Matthew 28 is covered. The disciples went to the mountain as directed, saw Jesus, and worshiped him, though some doubted. Jesus declared that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him and then gave the Great Commission.

(26:20 - 29:01) Appearances to More Than 500 and to James

The session references the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15, which states that Jesus appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom were still alive at the time of writing, though some had fallen asleep. This will be examined in more detail in the next session on the creed. The appearance to such a large group simultaneously makes mistaken identity, hallucination, or a merely spiritual resurrection extremely difficult to maintain. The creed's verifiability is highlighted, as living witnesses could be consulted, directly countering claims that the appearances were myth or legend. Myths do not develop when eyewitnesses who can testify to the facts are still present. Another significant appearance noted in the creed is to James, not detailed in the Gospels. Jesus' brothers, including James, were initially skeptical and not believers. Yet the resurrected Jesus appeared to James, leading to his radical transformation. James became a pillar of the church, a change inexplicable by mere spiritual concepts or hallucinations but fitting a genuine physical encounter with the risen Lord.

(29:01 - 31:55) Final Appearances Before and at the Ascension

As the period between the resurrection and Pentecost (about 40-50 days) draws to a close, Jesus appears to the eleven in or near Jerusalem or Bethany, as recorded in Acts. While staying with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father—the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which would come soon, in contrast to John’s water baptism. Finally, just before his ascension on the Mount of Olivet (recorded in Luke 24 and Acts), Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, lifted up his hands and blessed them. While blessing them, he was carried up into heaven. They worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, continually blessing God in the temple. In Acts, as they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. Two men in white robes appeared, asking why they stood gazing into heaven, essentially urging them to act on what they had witnessed. Additional appearances are noted, including to Saul (Paul) as one untimely born, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians. John also indicates many more appearances over the period.

(31:55 - 32:27) Summary of All Appearances and Their Weight

Del relists the appearances to emphasize their cumulative weight: to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, to the ten in the locked room on the first night, to Peter (probably alone), to the eleven in the locked room eight days later, to seven disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, to the eleven on the mountain in Galilee, to more than 500 at one time, to James (radically transformed), to the eleven in Jerusalem, and to the eleven on the Mount of Olives. Plus additional unreported appearances over the 40+ days, including to Paul. This overwhelming testimony of Jesus appearing to many people in different locations, times, and circumstances demonstrates God’s gracious provision of evidence to strengthen faith.

(32:27 - 36:50) Addressing the Accusation of Hallucinations

The session directly addresses the four accusations. First, the claim that the appearances were merely hallucinations. Del shares a personal story of his father’s strokes, where he hallucinated people in the forest that no one else could see, illustrating that hallucinations are individual, internal experiences not shared by others. One cannot experience another’s hallucination. Group hallucinations, especially involving multiple people at different times and places—including Mary Magdalene, the ten, the eleven, and over 500 simultaneously—are irrational. The disciples were in fear and hiding, not in a state of wishful expectation. Many, including soldiers and James, were hostile or skeptical. This accusation can be gently challenged with questions about how multiple people could share identical hallucinations, preparing believers to engage neighbors graciously with evidence from Scripture.

(36:50 - 39:47) Addressing the Accusation of Mistaken Identity

The second accusation—that the appearances were due to mistaken identity—is countered by examples already discussed. References include Hugh Schoenfeld’s claims in "The Passover Plot" that the disciples were yearning and mistaken. However, this would require not only group hallucinations but repeated instances, including the 500, plus supernatural elements like vanishing, entering locked rooms, and physical interactions. The Mary Magdalene account is revisited: it is implausible for an emotional woman to mistake a gardener who knows her name intimately, speaks of ascension to the Father, and gives specific instructions. The Emmaus road encounter,

while initially strange due to non-recognition, is explicable by Jesus supernaturally veiling their eyes temporarily (as the God who spoke the world into existence, walked on water, and raised the dead could certainly do) until the moment of revelation in the breaking of bread and Scripture explanation.

(39:47 - 44:07) Addressing the Accusation of a Spiritual Resurrection and the Myth/Legend Claim

The third accusation—that the resurrection was spiritual rather than physical, making appearances spiritual manifestations—is noted as personally relevant, as some (including Jehovah’s Witnesses) hold this view. It struggles with the empty tomb and requires explanations like God destroying the body. However, Scripture shows Jesus eating with disciples (first night and by the Sea of Tiberias), Thomas physically touching the wounds from nails and spear, women holding his feet in worship, and the disciples witnessing his bodily ascension into heaven with a cloud. These physical interactions are incompatible with a non-physical resurrection, which would reduce Jesus to a metaphysical force rather than the real resurrected person described throughout the New Testament and Revelation. The fourth accusation (myth or legend) is briefly referenced for the next session, noting the early creed, living witnesses, and the polemic. Historian Dr. Sherwin White observed that even two generations is insufficient time for legend to develop around such events.

(44:07 - 56:25) Closing Song Reflection and Prayer

Del closes by returning to the first appearance to Mary Magdalene, his favorite, and plays the song "I've Just Seen Jesus" by Sandi Patty and Larnelle Harris. The lyrics powerfully capture the emotion and reality of the resurrection from the witnesses' perspective: the certainty of Jesus' death, the sealing of the tomb, the encounter with the risen Lord, the transformative impact ("I've just seen Jesus... And I'll never be the same again!"), and the shift from despair to joy. Additional verses continue from Mary Magdalene's viewpoint. Dr. Tackett then offers a closing prayer, thanking God for the preserved testimony of the cross, the empty tomb, and the resurrected body, affirming the full assurance of Christ's identity and God's promises. He prays for encouragement for all participants through the Word and the Spirit's guidance into truth, for God's glory. The session ends with thanks, an invitation for questions via follow-up email, and anticipation for the next gathering. Marc Fey thanks Dr. Tackett and everyone for attending.