*(A Theological Examination Based on 1 Corinthians 15:5)*

A question often raised by Bible readers is this: *Did Jesus appear to Judas Iscariot after His resurrection?* This question usually stems from 1 Corinthians 15:5, where the Apostle Paul writes:

> *"...and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve."* (1 Corinthians 15:5, NIV)

Given that Judas Iscariot was originally one of the Twelve Apostles, it may seem puzzling at first that Jesus appeared to "the Twelve" even though Judas had already died by suicide (Matthew 27:5) before the resurrection occurred.

Let's unpack this both theologically and biblically.

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Understanding the Term "The Twelve"

In the New Testament, the phrase "the Twelve" (Greek: *hoi dōdeka*) functions as a title for the core group of apostles

appointed by Jesus during His earthly ministry (Luke 6:13-16). It became a collective label, often used even when fewer than twelve were physically present (see John 20:24, where Thomas was absent, yet the group is still referred to as the Twelve).

Importantly, “the Twelve” does not always imply the literal presence of all twelve original members at every appearance or event. It denotes the apostolic office and authority, not just a headcount.

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What Happened to Judas?

According to the Gospels, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and was overcome with guilt. In Matthew 27:5 (NIV), we read:

> *“So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.”*

His death occurred before the crucifixion was complete, and certainly before the resurrection. Therefore, Judas did not witness or partake in any post resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Why Does Paul Say Jesus Appeared to “The Twelve”?

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, is summarizing the resurrection appearances of Jesus to substantiate the truth of the Gospel. Here’s the passage in context:

> *1 Corinthians 15:3–6 (NIV):*
> 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
> 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
> 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.
> 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time...

This mention of “the Twelve” must then refer to the apostolic office after Judas’s replacement that is, after Matthias had been chosen.

Matthias Replaces Judas

The Book of Acts records how the apostles, under divine guidance, selected Matthias to replace Judas in the apostolic ministry:

> *Acts 1:24–26 (NIV):*
> 24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen
> 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”
> 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

With Matthias added, the apostolic number was restored to twelve. Therefore, when Paul mentions Jesus appearing to “the Twelve,” he is referring to this restored group, not to the original Twelve including Judas.

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> • *Judas Iscariot did not see the resurrected Jesus. He died*

> *before Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 27:5).*
>
> - *The phrase “the Twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:5 is a title referring to the apostolic group not a literal reference to the original twelve individuals.*
> - *By the time of Paul’s writing, Matthias had been officially recognized as Judas’s replacement (Acts 1:26), and was likely included in the group referred to as “the Twelve.”*
> - *Therefore, 1 Corinthians 15:5 is not a contradiction, but a theological and ecclesial recognition of the complete apostolic band, restored after Judas’s fall.*

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No, Jesus did not appear to Judas Iscariot after His resurrection. Judas was no longer among the living at the time of Jesus’ post resurrection appearances. The reference to “the Twelve” in 1 Corinthians 15:5 should be understood in the context of the restored apostolic circle, which included Matthias in place of Judas.

Maranatha  The Lord is coming.

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