

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST

BIBLE TEXT : Mark 15:42-47; 16:1-20; Acts 1:1-11

LESSON 171 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)."

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Mark 15:42-47

⁴² And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

⁴³ Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

⁴⁴ And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

⁴⁵ And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

⁴⁶ And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

⁴⁷ And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid.

Mark 16:1-20

¹ And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

² And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

³ And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

⁴ And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Hope Gone

For hundreds of years the Jews had been looking for someone to come among them who would rise up and be a mighty king. They looked for one who would break the power of their oppressors and make them a free nation again. Then came Jesus working many miracles: healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding thousands of people on only five loaves of bread and a few fishes. Surely He could do anything; and there were some people who believed in Him and thought that now the Deliverer or Messiah had come.

But after only three years of going about doing good, among the people, He had been crucified; and they were still under Roman bondage. Of course, many people had been saved, their sins forgiven, and they were free in spirit; but they wanted to have a free government.

They were puzzled, and wondered, among themselves: Why had He let His enemies whip or scourge Him? Why had He followed them up Calvary's hill to be nailed to the cross? He had said He could call a legion of angels to help Him if He wanted to. Then why had He not come down from the cross? They had hoped to the end — but now He was dead.

Fulfilled Scripture

There was a man named Joseph of Arimatha who had been expecting God to set up a kingdom on earth, and he must have felt that Jesus was in some way connected with it, even though He had died. We have not heard him mentioned as a follower of Jesus, but at this time he was not ashamed to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus so he could give it a decent burial. Joseph was rich and owned a good tomb which he freely gave to Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" (Isaiah 53:9). The wicked were the thieves with whom Christ was crucified. and Joseph was the rich man in whose sepulcher He lay.

The Third Day

The chief priests who had condemned Jesus to death remembered that Jesus had said He would rise the third day. They did not really believe that He would, but they were afraid that some of the disciples might come and steal the body of Jesus and then say that He had risen. They wanted Pilate to be sure that the tomb was guarded past the third day so the Jews would not tamper with it.

The priests need not have worried about the disciples. They did not even remember that Jesus had said He would rise again. They were so sad that all they could think about was that their beloved Jesus was gone from them. In their grief they said: "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). And they felt that now it was all over.

The Promise of Life

Jesus had tried to warn His disciples that He would have to

⁵ And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

⁶ And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

⁷ But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

⁸ And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

⁹ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

¹⁰ And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

¹¹ And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

¹² After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

¹³ And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

¹⁴ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

¹⁵ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name

suffer and die; but He had promised them that He would live again. There had been the time after the Transfiguration, when He had told Peter, James, and John not to tell what they had seen until "the Son of man were risen from the dead" (Mark 9:9). They had talked among themselves: what did He mean by rising "from the dead"? Another time He had told them that He had power to lay down His life and take it up again; but such a thing had never happened before. How could they understand such a saying?

Jesus had told His disciples, too, that after He had risen He would meet them in Galilee. But the disciples did not go to Galilee to look for Him, for they never expected to see Him again.

Unbelief

Mary Magdalene and another Mary had watched Jesus laid to rest in the sepulcher of Joseph, and had gone home to prepare spices to use in anointing Him when the Sabbath was passed. They never once thought that He might be gone when they returned.

Imagine their surprise when they came on the first day of the week with their spices, and found the tomb empty! Jesus was gone; but there sat an angel to tell them: "He is risen; he is not here." There was the fine linen which Joseph had bought for Christ's grave clothes, so there was no mistake about this being the right place. The news frightened the women, and they could not believe.

Jesus had risen with a body that looked just like any human being. When He met Mary Magdalene in the garden and spoke with her, she thought at first He was the gardener, and she asked Him if He had taken the body of Jesus away. When He called her by name, then she knew He was her Lord. She hurried away to tell the other disciples that it was really true that He had risen from the dead, and she had seen Him. But they did not believe her.

Later that day, while two of the disciples were walking to Emmaus, Jesus walked along the road with them and talked with them; and then He stopped and ate with them. He was not a spirit but was Jesus, alive, in the flesh. When He asked the blessing upon the food before they ate, they recognized Him. He vanished from their sight, and they went back quickly to Jerusalem to tell the Apostles that they had seen Jesus alive. But the people they told did not believe!

The Disciples Upbraided

Jesus was sorry that no one would believe — not even His Apostles — until they had seen Him alive. He had told them that He would have to die, but that He would rise the third day. When Jesus met with the eleven, He asked them why they did not believe the things He had said. And what about the things the prophets had written about Him? Could not they believe that? Did they have to be shown before they could believe? Jesus told Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). That blessing is upon all God's children today who have not seen Jesus in the flesh and yet have believed that He died for our sins and rose again.

Christ's Commission

Jesus told His disciples that He had finished the work that the Father had given Him to do on earth, and that He would soon go to Heaven to be with the Father. After He was gone they would have to preach all that He had preached: repentance and forgiveness of sin. They must teach the people that Jesus loved

shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

¹⁹ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

²⁰ And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Acts 1:1-11

¹ The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

² Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

³ To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

⁴ And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

⁶ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

⁷ And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

them, and that they had to believe on Him in order to be saved. They must believe that Jesus had died as an atonement for their sins and had risen again.

The disciples would not be alone when they went preaching — in Jerusalem, to the people who had put Jesus to death; in Samaria, among the people who were hated of the Jews; in all the country round about; and to the strangers in the uttermost parts of the world. Jesus would go with them and work with them, "confirming the word." That meant that He would bless their ministry and save souls and heal sick people in answer to their prayers, just as He had promised.

Signs Following

Jesus said: "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Many people say today that the days of miracles are past; that miracles happened in the early days to establish the church, but that today there are none because there is no need for them. But Jesus said: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." If (those signs are not following our Christian living, it must be that we do not believe; and "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6).

If sick bodies are not being healed in answer to our prayers, and if sinners' lives are not being changed through our ministry, there must be something wrong with our faith. The Apostle James wrote: "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). In other words you say you have faith; prove it by your works according to God's promises. God's Word cannot fail, and His promises are to those who believe.

Jesus prayed for His disciples that their faith would not fail. If we keep reading the Bible and praying to Jesus, He will give us the faith that will accomplish things for God. We must have our sins forgiven first; then when our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence that God hears us when we pray, and we will receive the answer. "These signs shall follow them that believe," were among the very last words of Jesus. He then commanded them to return to Jerusalem to wait for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which would make them witnesses with power wherever they went. Their faith would be increased so that the signs would follow their preaching.

Into the Cloud

All was now finished For forty days Jesus had walked with them, and had given them many proofs that could not be doubted that He was really alive, the very same Jesus who had died on the cross. Out there on the Mount of Olives, while the disciples watched, Jesus was taken up into a cloud up to Heaven — and He was gone.

The disciples stood there in amazement, watching the place where Jesus had disappeared. Were their hopes to be shattered again? Had the One they loved so well gone forever? Suddenly two angels stood among them and said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." That was a promise that He would come again, and the disciples were satisfied. No doubt they remembered now that Jesus had said: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3).

Jesus is saying that to us as Christians today. He is in Heaven

⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

preparing a place for us, and preparing us for that place; and one day soon He is going to come again and take His people into Heaven where they will enjoy all the wonderful blessings He has prepared for those who love Him.

In the meantime, we must be diligent in our work for the Master, proving our faith in Him by the works that we do.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who crucified Jesus? and why?
- 2 Who buried Jesus? and what prophecy in Scripture did he fulfill?
- 3 How do we know that the two Marys did not believe that Jesus would rise again?
- 4 How did Jesus feel about the way the disciples received the news that He was alive?
- 5 Name some instances when Jesus appeared after He arose.
- 6 What were some of the last words of Jesus?
- 7 Who would receive the blessings that Jesus promised?
- 8 How did Jesus leave this world?
- 9 What was the message of the angels who met the disciples on Mount Olivet?