

JESUS' FIRST AND SECOND APPEARANCES TO THE ELEVEN

BIBLE TEXT : John 20:19-31; Luke 24:36-49

LESSON 250 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 20:19-31

¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

²⁰ And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

²⁶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

²⁷ Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Lord from Heaven

The Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth to live among men and to teach them about Heaven. No man has ever seen the throne of God with his natural eyes; no one can come back from the dead to tell us what the hereafter is like. So Jesus took upon Himself the form of man, a body of flesh and blood, and came from Heaven to live among us to explain how we must prepare for that Home above.

While Jesus was on earth He told the people that He was the Son of God. Very few believed it. But those who did, Jesus saved. When Peter answered the Lord's question with this statement, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), Jesus told him that flesh and blood (or a natural man) had not showed that fact to him, but the Father in Heaven.

Jesus came, too, to give Himself as a Sacrifice for sin. That meant that He would have to die for our sins — not for His own, for He had no sin — and rise again to make sure our salvation.

Proved to Be the Son

How could Jesus prove that He was the Son of God? He was a great Teacher, but there had been other great teachers and preachers who had taught the people many good principles of life. How was Jesus different? There had been times when God had spoken out of Heaven and had said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; but very few had heard that Voice, and some of those who heard had thought that it was but thunder.

Paul explains to us how Jesus proved that He was the Son of God: He was "declared to be the Son of God with power,... by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). Jesus had said, "I have power to lay it down [his life], and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). He proved by His bodily resurrection — coming forth from the grave in His body — that He was the Son of God.

Slow to Believe

Jesus did rise from the dead, but did people believe it? It was hard for His closest followers to believe that Jesus was alive in the flesh. Jesus had told them many times that He must suffer, and be put to death by cruel hands. The disciples could understand that, because other great prophets in bygone days had been martyred. The disciples were "exceeding sorry" when they heard that their good Friend and Leader would have to die that way.

When Jesus told them about His death, He added, "And the third day he shall rise again." Those words the Apostles could not understand. Peter, James, and John once reasoned among themselves, wondering what He could mean by coming back from the dead. That Jesus would literally come back to them in the body after He died never seemed to enter their mind.

unto him, My Lord and my God.

²⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Luke 24:36-49

³⁶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

³⁷ But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

³⁸ And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

⁴⁰ And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

⁴¹ And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

⁴² And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

⁴³ And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

⁴⁴ And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might

Alive Again

The time came when Jesus was put to death. What a disappointment to the disciples! Their Friend was gone, as was also their hope for a righteous kingdom on earth.

Then came Easter morning when the bands of death were broken, and Christ, in the flesh, left the grave. In a glorified body He went up through the stone of His tomb, conquering every power that had bound Him. The angel came to roll the stone away, to show the women that the grave was empty. The graveclothes, yards and yards of expensive material that had been tightly wound about Him, were there; and the linen napkin that had been placed over His head remained where His head had lain. But the body of Jesus was gone!

The priests bribed the soldiers to say that while they slept someone had stolen the body away. (Poor guards they would have been, indeed, if that were so.) If someone had stolen the body, would he not have taken the graveclothes, too? The body was gone, that was sure. Where was it?

Mary Magdalene found out first. Jesus appeared to her and spoke with her. Then the other women saw Him; and Peter, and the disciples on the way to Emmaus. He looked like any other man. He was strong and healthy, with new life in Him — not a weak invalid from the tortures of the cross when His Blood had flowed from Him. He walked for miles along the road to Emmaus as He explained the Old Testament Scriptures about Himself to the disciples. They asked Him to come in and eat with them; and as He took bread and blessed it, their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus — Jesus, alive in the flesh, and yet with a glorified body which vanished from their sight.

Among the Eleven

They quickly returned to Jerusalem to a meeting place of the Apostles to tell them the good news. While they were excitedly talking about this strange thing that had happened, Jesus stood among them, and spoke to them: "Peace be unto you." Those were among the last words which Jesus had said to them before He was crucified: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). No one else would have used those words. Jesus wants His people to be happy, and He knows that He is the only giver of peace. One cannot find peace through great riches, through good health, through fame, nor worldly pleasures. The angels had heralded at His birth that He was the One who would bring peace. But so few men ask Him for it!

The Apostles were terrified when they saw Jesus — even after they had been told He was alive and had been seen and recognized by some. They thought they were seeing a spirit, or a ghost.

Jesus was disappointed that they had so little faith; but though He reproved them for their unbelief, He did what He could to prove to them that it was truly He, standing before them in the body. He asked them to feel His flesh, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He showed them the nailprints in His hands and feet. Oh, how wonderful that their very own Jesus was alive again! But could it really be possible! They were overjoyed — but still they wondered. Nothing like this had ever happened before. Jesus wanted them to be sure that He was alive, because that proved that He was the Son of God. That was the foundation upon which He was building His Church.

understand the scriptures,
⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

⁴⁸ And ye are witnesses of these things.

⁴⁹ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Our Hope

We want to make sure that we know that Jesus rose from the dead. There are many religious people today who do not believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God. They say He did not rise in the body, that He is alive only in the spirit as all other people who have died — or that He lives only in the faith of His followers. But that is not what the Bible teaches. We want to know the truth, for it is the truth that makes us free: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" . (Romans 10:9).

Sorrow Turned to Joy

Jesus did one more thing to prove that He was in the flesh: He asked for food; and right in front of them He ate some broiled fish and a piece of a honeycomb. How wonderful! No ghost or spirit would ever eat food. Now they began to understand some of the things Jesus had said to them before He was crucified. "Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:22). There were dark days ahead for the Apostles. They would be persecuted for Jesus sake, and would suffer martyrdom; but that joy and peace that Jesus gave them would always be in their hearts.

Thomas' Doubts Destroyed

Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared the first time to the eleven. When he was told what had happened, he would not believe. We call him Doubting Thomas; but did he doubt any more than the others? None of them had believed until they had seen Jesus with their own eyes.

On the following Sunday night the Apostles were again gathered behind closed doors. This time Thomas was with them when Jesus appeared in their midst. Jesus greeted them as He had the week before: "Peace be unto you." And then He looked right at Thomas and said: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." He knew the very words Thomas had said, just as He knows everything we say. He answered Thomas' doubts with his own words. All Thomas could say was, "My Lord and my God." Jesus told Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

We today who believe that Jesus rose from the dead are blessed. We have not seen Him with our eyes, but we know Him because He has forgiven our sins, and eternal life has begun in us.

True Witnesses

These men with whom Jesus met and ate were Peter, James, John, Thomas, and the others who were going to be preachers in all lands to tell the story of Jesus. So firmly did they believe that Jesus had risen in the flesh that their whole ministry centered around it.

In Peter's first sermon he told those religious Jews, who knew the Scriptures, that God had promised David an heir "according to the flesh" to sit upon his throne. Peter said that David was speaking of the resurrection of Christ. He added, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

Eight years later Peter preached of Jesus to Cornelius and

others: "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10:40).

Peter and John were willing to be put into prison for preaching about the resurrection. When they were threatened because of the subject of their sermons, they answered, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

The Firstfruits

Jesus proved by His resurrection that He was the Son of God. He was also the "firstfruits of them that slept," or whose bodies have died.

The firstfruits spoken of in the Book of Leviticus were the first ripe of all fruit and grain. A ceremony was held at the opening of the harvest, to thank God for His bounty; and the firstfruits were dedicated to the Lord. The rest of the grain and fruit were the same, but that was saved for the use of the people.

Jesus was the first to rise from the dead in a glorified body. In the first resurrection, all His saints will come back from the graves. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:17),

QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Jesus tell His disciples about His death?
- 2 What did He say would happen after He died?
- 3 What happened to the body of Jesus after He was put into the tomb?
- 4 **When did Jesus appear to the eleven?**
- 5 **What was the first thing He said to them?**
- 6 How did He prove to them that He was not a ghost?
- 7 What did Jesus prove by rising from the dead?
- 8 What was the main theme of the Apostles' sermons after Pentecost?
- 9 What does it mean to us that Christ was the "firstfruits of them that slept"?