

The Gospel of John | The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

II. THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST TO HIS DISCIPLES (John 20:19-31)

A. When Thomas was Absent (John 20:19-23)

1. The appearance of Jesus (John 20:19-20)
 - a. The fear of the disciples (John 20:19)
 - 1) On the first day of the week
 - 2) Meeting behind closed doors
 - 3) Assembled in secret for fear of the Jews (contrast Acts 4:31)
 - b. The comfort of the Saviour (John 20:19)
 - 1) He is not hindered by the closed doors.
 - a) He appeared in the midst of them.
 - b) His glorified body was not hindered by physical obstructions.
 - 2) He gave them a message of peace (John 14:27; John 16:33)
 - c. The joy of the disciples (John 20:20; John 16:22)
 - 1) He showed them His hands and side.
 - a) He was not a spirit (Luke 24:39); He had flesh and bones, though no mention is made of blood.
 - i. Some point to this passage as proof that Christ's glorified body contained no blood.
 - ii. Some point to the truth that just as Christ had a glorified body and that it contained no blood, so a believer's glorified body will be just the same, containing no blood.
 - (a) Christ had a glorified body of "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39)
 - (b) The life of the flesh (carnal) is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11)
 - (c) The life of the natural (carnal) flesh was in the blood, but that body is transformed in resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:44)
 - (i) The carnal flesh that gives us so much trouble will be transformed, instead we will have "spiritual" bodies like Christ. We couldn't die if we wanted to.
 - (ii) Christ now lives in "the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16)
 - (iii) "Being raised from the dead dieth no more" (Romans 6:9)
 - (iv) We shall be "in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5)
 - b) He proved His resurrection in a very powerful way (1 John 1:1-3).
 - 2) The disciples were glad (John 16:19-22; Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:41).

2. The provision of Jesus (John 20:21-23)
 - a. Their commission (John 20:21; Mark 16:15)
 - 1) He gives them His peace.
 - a) The message of peace (Acts 10:36; Romans 10:15; Ephesians 2:17; Ephesians 6:15); see connection with Holy Ghost (John 14:26-27)
 - b) The empowerment of peace (Romans 15:13, 33; Romans 16:20; Philippians 4:7, 9; Colossians 3:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)
 - 2) He gives them His commission (John 17:18).
 - a) As the Father sent Him
 - b) So sends He them
 - b. Their power (John 20:22; Luke 24:49)
 - 1) He breathed on them (Job 33:4; Isaiah 42:5).
 - 2) "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."
 - a) Bible students disagree with one another over the exact meaning here. Some think Jesus is referring to the day of Pentecost. However, this does not adequately explain the passage.
 - b) Evidently, the disciples received the firstfruits of the Spirit (Romans 8:23) before Pentecost. It is very likely those present were indwelt by the Spirit at this time.
 - c) Jesus sent the Holy Ghost.
 - i. When He was glorified (John 7:38-39)
 - ii. When He went away (John 16:7)
 - d) Consider the early (before Pentecost) results of their reception of the Holy Ghost.
 - i. They were filled with great joy (Luke 24:52); this comes from the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).
 - ii. They continually worshipped Jesus Christ (Luke 24:52-53); this is a work of the Spirit (John 4:24; Philippians 3:3).
 - iii. They joined together in unity (Acts 1:14 – "in one accord"); this is a work of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).
 - iv. They continued in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14); this is a work of the Holy Ghost (Jude 1:20; Ephesians 6:18).
 - v. They chose the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:23-26); the work of the Holy Spirit is to lead the children of God (Luke 4:1; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18).
 - e) Conclusion: although they had not received the fullness of His power, they had already received the Holy Ghost and were enabled by Him to do His work.

- c. Their authority (John 20:23)
 - 1) Their special apostolic authority (Matthew 16:18-19)
 - a) To determine which sins are *remitted*; that is, forgiven and not paid for immediately. To remit means to refrain from exacting or requiring payment for a debt.
 - b) To determine which sins are *retained*; that is, held to the person's account and paid for immediately.
 - 2) Two examples in the ministry of Peter
 - a) The case of Ananias (Acts 5:1-5)
 - b) The case of Simeon (Acts 8:17-24)

B. When Thomas was Present (John 20:24-29)

- 1. The doubts of Thomas (John 20:24-25)
 - a. His absence at the first appearing of Jesus to the disciples (John 20:24)
 - b. His rejection of the spoken testimony of the disciples (John 20:25)
 - 1) A common phenomenon (Mark 16:9-14)
 - 2) An illustration of the need for signs (Mark 16:17-20)
 - c. His demand for physical proof of the resurrection (John 20:25)
 - 1) To put his finger in the print of the nails
 - 2) To place his hand in the side of Christ
 - 3) Note: The demand of Thomas for physical proof is a blessing to those of us who do not have such proof. He did it for us.
- 2. Special outline on the Apostle Thomas as the Skeptic
 - a. Faithful in his service
 - 1) Called to be an apostle (Luke 6:12-16)
 - 2) Faithful in difficult times (John 6:66-68)
 - 3) Faithful to the end (Acts 1:13-14); tradition says that Thomas went west to Persia; perhaps as far as India. He is said to have died by being thrust through with a spear.
 - b. Dominated by his mind
 - 1) Elevated logic above the spiritual (John 11:11-16); took things literally and came to logical conclusions
 - 2) Elevated understanding above faith (John 14:1-6); tried to figure things out and needed to ask questions
 - 3) Elevated seeing above believing (John 20:24-29); had to have proof and had to see for himself
 - c. Genuine in his surrender
 - 1) He was ready to die for his Master (John 11:16).
 - 2) He desired to understand God's word (John 14:5).
 - 3) He was ready to proclaim his faith (John 20:28); although he was slow in coming to a place of faith, he was thereafter bold in his expression of that faith.

3. The appearance of Jesus (John 20:26)
 - a. After eight days
 - b. When Thomas was present
 - c. The doors being shut
 - d. Jesus stood in the midst of them.
 4. The invitation of Jesus (John 20:27; Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 13:6)
 - a. Get the proof you need.
 - b. Be not faithless, but believing.
 5. The confession of Thomas (John 20:28)
 - a. My Lord
 - b. My God – a testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ
 6. The blessing of faith (John 20:29; Hebrews 11:1)
 - a. Those who believe because they have seen
 - b. Those who believe though they have not seen – these receive a special blessing from Jesus (1 Peter 1:7-8).
- C. The Purpose of this Book (John 20:30-31)
1. Not to record all (John 20:30; John 21:25)
 - a. Many other signs were done.
 - b. Many signs were not written in this book.
 2. But to reveal Christ (John 20:31)
 - a. That you might believe
 - 1) That Jesus is the Christ
 - 2) That Jesus is the Son of God
 - b. That you might receive (John 1:12)
 - 1) Eternal life
 - 2) Through His name (1 John 5:13)