

VI. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

John 20

A. THE THINGS SURROUNDING THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

1. First of all, we are told who visited the sepulcher, what they found, and how they responded (1-10).
 - a. On the first day of the week or Sunday Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher (1). The other gospels state that Mary the mother of James and Salome also came with the other women later to the sepulcher (Mark 16:1; Lk. 24:10).
 - b. After Mary Magdalene saw the open tomb she left and the other women also came and found that the stone was taken away (Matt. 28:2; Jn. 20:1).
 - c. Mary Magdalene ran and told Peter and John who ran to the sepulcher and found the linen clothes and the napkin wrapped together in a place by itself and then went to their homes (20:2-10). The placement of the linen clothes and napkin folded and apart from each other presents additional proof that the body of Jesus were not stolen away.
2. Secondly, we are told how Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and what He instructed her to do (11-18).
 - a. Mary Magdalene had returned to the sepulcher and looked in. There she saw two angels who asked why she was weeping (11-13).
 - b. She then turned and saw Jesus but did not recognize Him. When Jesus asked why she was weeping she thought He was the gardener (14-15).
 - c. Then Jesus called Mary by name and she realized it was He (16).
 - d. At this point Mary began to hold on to the Lord Jesus. But He rebuked her and instructed her to go and tell the other disciples (17-18). Notice while the other women were going to tell the disciples Jesus appeared to them and they held His feet and worshipped Him (Matt. 28:9,10).
3. Next, we are told how Jesus appeared to His disciples while Thomas was absent and what He instructed them to do (19-25).
 - a. That Sunday evening Jesus appeared to His disciples, spoke peace to them, and spoke of their commission (19-21).
 - b. Jesus then breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (22). This no doubt refers to
the authority which they were given for the ministry they would have and not His person (note Jn. 7:39).

- c. Jesus also gave them the authority to declare whose sins would be forgiven (23). This authority is based upon a person's reception or rejection of the gospel message.
4. Then, we are told how Jesus appeared again to His disciples with Thomas being present (26-29).
 - a. Thomas had stated his doubts about Jesus being alive and what proof he would have to have (24).
 - b. But when Jesus appeared the second time and presented Himself, Thomas also believed (26-28).
 - c. Jesus then pointed out a certain principle (29). Some people insist upon some sign and demand proof before they will believe, but those who simply believe the Lord's Word will be blessed.
 5. Finally, John testified concerning these and other miracles which Jesus had done and why he recorded these particular miracles (30-31).
 - a. From verse 30 we can see that God's revelation is selective. So then John did not record all the miracles which Jesus did.
 - b. John did record eight miracles that others would believe on the Lord Jesus and receive eternal life.

QUESTIONS WHICH WE MAY APPLY TO OUR LIVES

1. What evidence for believing in the resurrection of Jesus is given by the grave clothes and napkin in verse 20:6,7? _____

2. What arguments can you give which militate against the two ascension theory? _____

3. What is significant about Jesus calling Mary by name in verse 20:16, and how does this apply to us personally? _____

4. What arguments can you give against the church being formed as an embryo in verse 20:22?

5. The Bible states that only God can forgive sin. Based upon this fact how does verse 20:23 apply to a person's life? _____

6. What turned Thomas' doubt about the resurrection of Jesus into faith in this fact? _____

7. What was the one thing that changed the lives of the apostles and gave them courage to suffer and die for the Lord? _____
8. How did the individuals mentioned in this chapter respond when they saw the Lord? How can we learn from their examples ? _____

9. How can we apply verse 20:29 in light of what some people must have to believe?

10. What was John's purpose in writing of the miracles of Jesus in this gospel account? _____

EXPOSITORY NOTES

20:16,17 Some hold the view that Jesus was fulfilling His role as High Priest on the Day of Atonement and having offered the sacrifice had to present His blood on the mercy seat in heaven. This necessitates Jesus' ascension and return between His first meeting with Mary and His second meeting as recorded in Matt. 28:9. This position holds to a two ascension theory.

Notice in the first place, Jesus' rebuke to Mary "touch me not" is a present imperative which calls for the cessation of an action which is already in progress. This literally means "stop clinging to me." For I am not yet ascended was meant for Mary to carry the message to others rather than to cling to Him at this time and also to assure her not to worry about His leaving to be immediate. The fact that Mary was clinging to Jesus would have prevented the High priestly type from being fulfilled because anyone touching Him would have defiled Him. In the second place, Jesus had no blood to present. He presented that blood for us on the cross when He suffered for our sins. To argue that the blood had to be presented in heaven negates John 19:30 and views our redemption as incomplete. But the Scriptures point out that the resurrection of Jesus is the proof that the work of redemption had been completed on the cross (Rom. 4:24,25).

20:21,22 From these verses some hold that this is the beginning of the church in embryonic form and that it was born on the Day of Pentecost. They contend that the disciples were given the Holy Spirit at this time. This act must be viewed as an anointing of the Holy Spirit as at other times in the Old Testament for specific purposes and must not be viewed as

indwelling which occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Notice the disciples received an emblem of the Holy Spirit or clothing, as it were, for protection and authority but not His person (compare Jn. 7:38,39; 14:17,26).

To militate against the embryo argument, there is no reference that the church was born at Pentecost. The disciples had no power until Pentecost (Acts 1:8). Also there is no record of witnessing and growth of the church prior to Pentecost.

20:23

The Roman Catholics and some others have taken this verse to mean that Jesus gave His apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins or to retain sins. This has been used by the Catholics as the right to grant absolution and prescribe penance for forgiveness of sins. The Scriptures state that only God can forgive sin (Luke 5:21).

This verse must be viewed however, in connection with the preaching of the gospel. When a person believes the message, his sins are forgiven and when a person rejects the gospel, his sins are retained. Therefore, on this basis the disciples and others have the right to declare this fact about their sin.

Notice the verbs Afeontai (“they are forgiven”) and Kekratantai (“they are retained”) are perfect tense verbs and mean the results of some action having taken place. In other words what was “declared” to be by the apostles on earth would be what had already taken place in heaven. But the basis for such action and declaration was an individual’s response to the gospel message.