

Jesus' Two Appearances and Conversations With His Apostles John 20:19-31

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus appears to his disciples after his resurrection, giving them peace and commissioning them to spread the gospel, and shows Thomas the proof of his resurrection, leading him to believe and worship Jesus.

Scripture: John 20:19

Topics: "Faith", "The Resurrection of Christ"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the significance of Jesus' appearances to His apostles after His resurrection, focusing on the initial encounter with the disciples when Thomas was absent, and later, His personal interaction with Thomas. The sermon emphasizes how Jesus brings peace to fearful hearts and the importance of faith, especially in the face of doubt, as exemplified by Thomas's initial unbelief and eventual declaration of faith. Torrey highlights that true belief comes from the Word of God rather than physical evidence, and he encourages believers to share their experiences of Christ with others. Ultimately, the message underscores that faith in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God is essential for eternal life.

Transcript

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. Jesus Appears Unto the Disciples, Thomas Being Absent, vv. 19-25 To whom did Jesus finally appear upon the day of His resurrection? How soon after the return of the two disciples from Emmaus and their relation of Jesus' appearance to them was it? (Luke 24:35, 36.) In what state of mind were the disciples? Does Jesus often appear unto His disciples when they are afraid? (Matt. 14:25.) What word did He speak to banish their fear? Where was He standing as He said this? What does Jesus always bring when He stands in the midst?

When does He stand in the midst? (Matt. 18:20.) Of what promise was His coming and standing in their midst, turning their fear into peace and their sorrow into joy, a fulfillment? (John 16:22.) When will He banish all fear and sorrow forever? (Is. 25:9; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.) What fact is mentioned in connection with His appearing that shows that the nature of the body in which He appeared was different from that of the body in which He was manifested before His death and resurrection (v. 19)?

What was the first effect upon the disciples of the appearance and words of Jesus? (Luke 24:37.) What would be the first effect upon you if Jesus should appear today? Why were they terrified and affrighted? (Luke 24:37; compare Matt. 14:25, 26.) Why did they not recognize Jesus at once as their risen Lord? (Luke 24:25.) Were these the sort of men to imagine Jesus had risen again when He really had not, and out of their fancy weave a legend of His resurrection? How did Jesus treat their determined unbelief and hardness of heart? (Mark 16:14.)

Were they any more determined in their unbelief and slow of heart than we are? How does He regard our unbelief? What reason had they for believing Jesus really had risen and that it was He who now stood in their midst? (Mark 16:13; Matt. 16:21; 17:9; 20:19; Luke 24:44-46.) Have we as good reason for believing Jesus has risen from the dead as they had at this time? Is our unbelief any more excusable than theirs? What is the root of it all? (Luke 24:25; Mark 16:14; Heb. 3:12.)

Is unbelief, then, merely a misfortune to be pitied or a sin to be rebuked and repented of? What did Jesus do in order to overcome their persistent unbelief and convince them that beyond a question it was really Himself? (v. 20; compare Luke 24:38-40, 41-43.) What sort of an act on Jesus' part was this? Were the disciples convinced at last? What were the feelings of their hearts when at last unbelief gave way to faith? Would you be "glad" if you should see the Lord? Now that they were really convinced that it was He, what did Jesus say (v. 21)?

Why did Jesus repeat these words? Does He need to repeat His messages of comfort to us before we really grasp their significance? Was this a common form of salutation in those days? Did Jesus put any new and uncommon meaning into this old and common form of salutation? Had Jesus ever said anything to them about peace before this? (c. 14:27; 16:33.) Did Jesus merely say, "Peace be unto you" or did He actually impart peace as well? Having given them peace, what did He next give them (v. 21)?

Why did He give them peace before He gave them their commission? What must we first have in our own hearts before Jesus sends us forth? How did Jesus send them? (Compare c. 17:18.) How had the Father sent Him? (Is. 61:1-3; compare Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20.) What preparation was necessary before they could fulfill the commission which He gave them? (v. 22; compare Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 10:38.) When Jesus breathed upon them, did they actually receive the Holy Spirit at that moment or was it symbolical of the fitting He was afterwards to impart for the fulfillment of their commission just given? (Acts 1:5; 2:4; John 7:39; 16:7; Acts 2:33.)

By breathing upon them, and thus assuming to be the One who imparts the Holy Spirit, whom did Jesus assume to be? (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; compare Ro. 8:9.) By reason of this Holy Spirit whom Jesus was to impart as a preparation for service what were they to have power to discern (v. 23)? Was it by virtue of any office which was to descend upon a line of successors or was it by virtue of the Holy Spirit which they were to receive that they were to be able to forgive and retain sins? (See context; compare Acts 13:9, 10; 8:20-23; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5; 2 Cor. 2:6-10.)

Whose sins do these apostles declare forgiven? (Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39.) Was the whole apostolic company present at this appearance of Jesus? Why was Thomas not there? Is it usually an indication that one is drifting away from Christ when he is absent from the gathering together of the disciples of Christ on the first day of the week? Ought Thomas to have been there? (Heb. 10:25.) Did he miss anything by not being there? What did he miss? What does one always miss who neglects the gathering together of Christ's disciples in His name? (Matt. 18:20.)

What did the other disciples say to Thomas as soon as they saw him? If "we have seen the Lord," what duty have we in the matter? (Compare v. 18; c. 1:41, 45; Luke 24:33-35.) Are you telling those who have not yet seen Christ how you have seen Him? What would you think of these disciples if they had not told Thomas? Did Thomas believe the testimony of the other disciples? Why not? Ought he to have believed? What reason had Thomas for believing? (Matt. 16:21; John 20:18; Luke 24:34; 24:13-33, context.)

What reasons had he for not believing? Are there any today who set up their own notions against the testimony of apostles, prophets, Jesus Christ Himself and the word of God? What lies at the bottom of all this? How does God regard this stubborn unbelief? (Ps. 78:21, 22, 31, 32; 106:23, 24.) What indication have we in the words of Thomas himself of an element of willfulness in his unbelief? What did Thomas demand as a condition of believing that what Jesus said would occur and what the disciples declared had occurred really had occurred?

Is it a good sign when one demands of God certain self-chosen proofs as a condition of believing His word? Who else did this same thing? (Matt. 27:42; 16:14.) Are such demands ever made today? Does God usually regard such demands? (Matt. 16:4.) Was it in keeping with the character of Thomas as revealed on other occasions to make this demand? (c. 11:16; 14:5.) Was Thomas the sort of man to believe on insufficient evidence in a resurrection that had not really taken place? What does the fact that such a man as he was at last convinced prove? 2.

Jesus Appears Unto Thomas, vv. 26-29 How long was Thomas left to grope in the darkness of his unbelief? Why did not Jesus appear to Thomas sooner? Where had Jesus bidden the disciples go? (Matt. 28:10.) Why did they remain in Jerusalem another week when Jesus had bidden them to go into Galilee? What evidence have we that their testimony had made some impression upon Thomas even if he had not accepted it? Was there any readiness upon his part to believe? Is there on the part of the average unbeliever any readiness to believe?

Would you be willing to accept the Bible and take your stand upon its truths, if it could be shown you with reasonable probability that it was God's Word? What occurred as they were all together there? How came Thomas to be there? What did Jesus say? What is His constant message when He comes and stands in the midst? (Compare vv. 19, 21.) What did He say to Thomas? What elements of Christ's character are revealed in this treatment of Thomas? (Compare Ps. 78:38; 103:13, 14; 1 Tim. 1:14-16.)

What had Thomas been, up to this time? What did Jesus wish him to become? What does Jesus wish every Christian man to become? Is it very important that he should? (Heb. 3:18, 19; 4:1, 2; 10:38, 39; Mark 16:16.) What was the effect upon Thomas of what he saw? Was Thomas right in addressing the risen Christ as, "My Lord and my God"? (c. 5:23; Ps. 45:6, 11; Is. 9:6; 25:9; 40:9-11; Heb. 1:6, 8, 10-12.) Did Jesus accept the titles that Thomas gave Him? If, then, He is not our Lord and our God, what is He?

If He is rightly our Lord and our God, of what sin are we guilty if we do not accept Him as such? Have you accepted Him as your Lord and your God? Had any of the other disciples up to this time attained to such a height of faith as Thomas here reached? Does it often happen that those who are most stubborn in their unbelief when they are at last convinced show a depth and strength of faith that those who believe more readily have not reached as yet? What did Jesus reply to the cry of Thomas?

How can one rationally believe without seeing? (Ro. 10:17.) Have we any instances in the Bible of those who believed on the bare Word of God without seeing? (Luke 1:38, 45; Heb. 11:8, 17-19, 30.) What is faith? (Heb. 11:1, R. V.) What does Jesus say of those who believed on the bare word of God without

seeing? Do you know this blessedness of believing without seeing? Is Jesus pleased with those who will not believe without seeing? (c. 4:48.) Has one who will not believe the truth unless he is fairly compelled to a real love for the truth? 3.

Why John Wrote His Gospel, vv. 30, 31 Does the Gospel of John contain a record of all the miracles wrought by Jesus? Why did John write those signs which he did? What were the two things about Jesus that John desired men to believe? What will be the result of a heart faith that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"? Can one who does not believe this have life? (Mark 16:16; 1 John 5:10-12; John 3:16, 18, 36.) What is the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? (1 John 2:22.)

In what is it that we get the life that comes to the one who believes? (31, R. V.; compare Luke 24:47; Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39.) If this Book was written that men might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing" they might "have life in His name," what is the best Book to put in the hands of those we wish to have believe and receive life? For what purpose did John write his first epistle? (1 John 5:13.)

CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus (1). what He is: The Christ, 31; the Son of God, 31; my Lord and my God, 28; divine, 22; compare Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; human, 20, 27. (2). His relation to the Father: Sent by the Father (subordination), 21. (3). His resurrection body: The same body that was crucified, 25; changed body--closed doors no hindrance, 19, 26. (4). His great activity and power: Did many signs which are not recorded, 30; compare 21:25. (5). Jesus and His disciples: Appeared to His doubting and frightened disciples, 19; compare Luke 24:36-43; Mark 16:14; stood in their midst, 19; appeared to them again, 26; always appeared on the first day of the week, 19, 26; his constant message to them: "Peace be unto you," 19, 21, 26; showed unto them His hands and His side, 20; He gave them peace, 19-21; a commission to others the same that He Himself received from the Father, 21; the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the commission, 22. (6).

Jesus and Thomas: Pardons his neglect and wandering and unbelief and appears to him after eight days, 26; shows to him the proof demanded, the print of the nails and the pierced side, 25, 27 (wondrous patience, long-suffering, compassion and condescension); invites Thomas to put his finger into the nail print, his hand into the side, 27; bids Thomas to be not faithless but believing, 27; gently rebukes the reluctance of Thomas' faith and holds up to him the blessedness of a faith that rests upon the bare word and does not ask to see, 29. (7).

Jesus and Life: Life is in His name, 31, R. V.; faith in Him as the Christ, the Son of God, the condition upon which the life is to be had, 31. 2. The Disciples Afraid of their enemies, 19; gathered together by a common fear, a common hope and a common love, 19; gathered together on the first day of the week, 19, 26. What happened to them: Jesus stood in their midst, 19; compare Matt. 18:20. How they received their Lord: At first doubted and were terrified and affrighted, 20; compare Luke 24:37; then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord, 20.

What they received from Christ: A sight of Himself, 19, 20, 26; peace, 19, 21, 26; the same commission which He had received from the Father, 21; power of the Holy Spirit, 22; discernment to remit and retain sins, 23; gladness, 20; life, 31. What they did about it: Told to Thomas of the blessing which they had themselves received, 25. 3. Thomas Faithless, 27; not with the other disciples at the first appearance of Jesus to them (Why not?), and misses the blessing, 24; hears the testimony of the other disciples, 25; rejects the testimony of the other disciples (Why?), 25; demands to see in Jesus' hands the print of the

nails and to put even his finger into the print of the nails, and to put his hand into His side before he will believe the fulfillment of the word of Jesus or the testimony of the apostles, 25; compare Matt. 27:42; is with the disciples at the second appearing of Jesus (Why?), 26; sees the Lord, 26, 29; sees the print of the nails and the hole in Jesus' side, 27; believes, 28; worships--cries "my Lord and my God," 28, (from the deepest depths of stubborn unbelief vaults to the highest height of faith); believed because he saw, 29. 4.

Faith (1). Why believe? Jesus commands it, 27. (2). What to believe: Jesus is the Christ, 31; Jesus is the Son of God, 31. (3). The ground of faith: Not sight, 29; the written Word, 31. (4). The result of believing: Life in His name, 31; joy, 20; blessedness, 29.

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