

Lesson 22
John 20
Jesus' Resurrection

Memory verse: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)

The resurrection is an essential part of the gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1–8) and a key doctrine in the Christian faith. It proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 2:32–36; Rom. 1:4) and that His atoning work on the cross has been completed and is effective (Rom. 4:24–25). The empty cross and the empty tomb are God’s “receipts” telling us that the debt has been paid. Jesus Christ is not only the Saviour, but He is also the Sanctifier (Rom. 6:4–10) and the Intercessor (Rom. 8:34). One day He shall return as Judge (Acts 17:30–31).

From the very beginning, the enemies of the Lord tried to deny the historic fact of the resurrection. The Jewish leaders claimed that the Lord’s body had been stolen from the tomb. This statement is absurd, for if the body was stolen by His followers, how did they do it? The tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers and the stone sealed by an official Roman seal. Furthermore, His disciples *did not believe* that He was to be raised from the dead; it was His enemies who remembered His words (Matt. 27:62–66). They certainly would not have taken the body! The last thing they wanted was anyone believing that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. If His friends could not steal the body, and His enemies would not, then who took it?

Perhaps the disciples had “visions” of the risen Lord and interpreted them as evidences for the resurrection. But they did not expect to see Him, and that is not the land of psychological preparation from which hallucinations are made. And how could more than five hundred people have the same hallucination at the same time (1 Cor. 15:6)?

Did the followers of our Lord perhaps go to the wrong tomb? Not likely. They carefully watched where He was buried (Matt. 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55–57). They loved the Master and were not likely to get confused about His resting place. In fact, as the women approached the tomb, they were worried about who would roll back the heavy stone (Mark 16:1–3), so they were acquainted with the situation.

As to the foolish argument that Jesus did not die, but only swooned and was later revived, little need be said. It was proved by many witnesses that Jesus was dead when His body was taken from the cross. Later, He was seen alive by dependable witnesses. The only logical conclusion is that He kept His promise and arose from the dead.

But the glorious truth of the resurrection was not understood immediately by even His closest followers. It gradually dawned on these grieving people that their Master was not dead, but alive! And what a difference it made when the full realization of His resurrection took hold of them! But wherever people were confronted with the reality of His resurrection, their lives were transformed. In fact, that same transforming experience can be yours today. As you see in this chapter the changes that took place in the lives of people, ask yourself, “Have I personally met the risen Christ? Has He changed my life?”

Scripture Reading: John 20: 1- 31

To learn in this lesson: 1) Truth of the Resurrection 2) Jesus Transforms Lives 3) From Death to Life in Jesus

Discussion Questions:

1) What can we learn from the experiences of Mary Magdalene, Peter and John in their comprehensions of the truth of the resurrection at the tomb (verses 1 to 18)?

2) How did our Lord transform His disciples’ fear into courage and commissioning (verses 19 – 25)?

3) How can people be moved from a state of unbelief, from death to life in Jesus Christ (verses 26 to 31)?