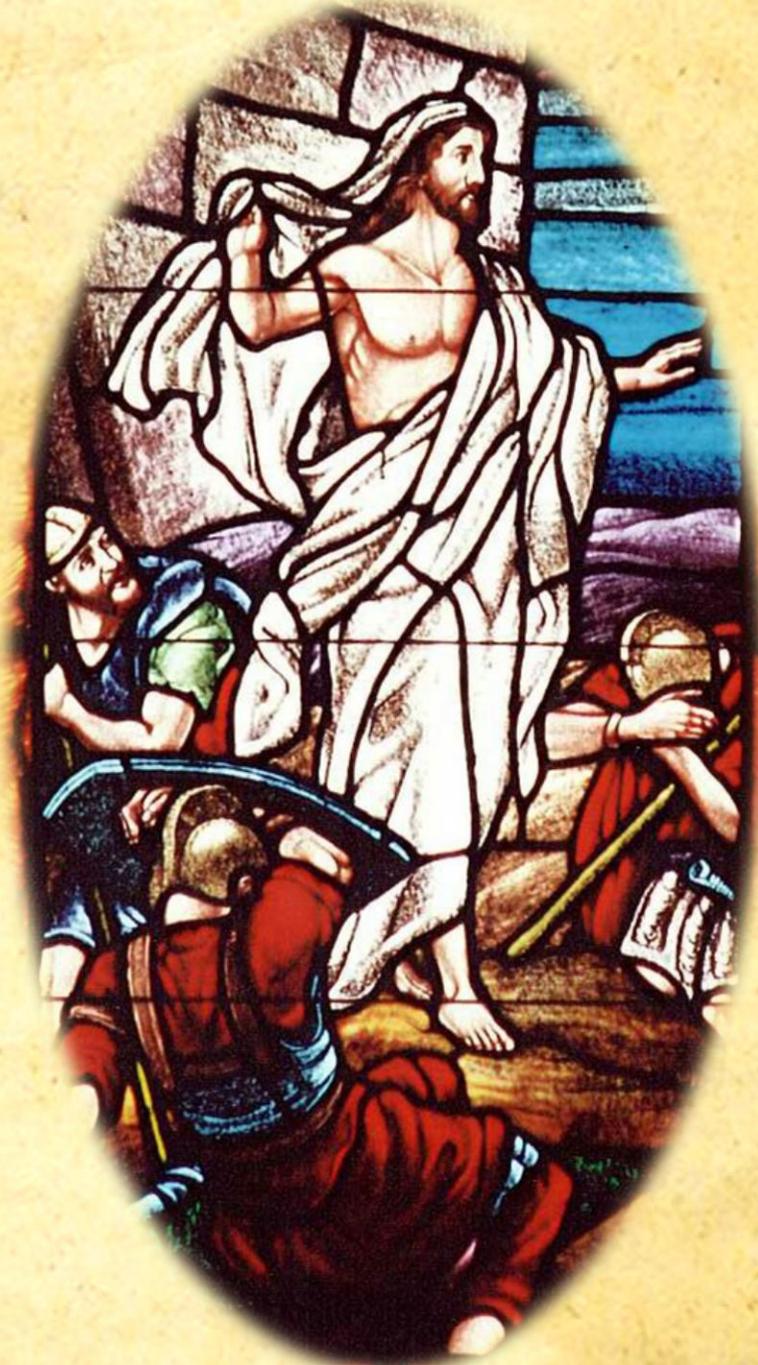


## *Chapter 16*

# RESURRECTION



“RESURRECTION” compliments of Austin Avenue United Methodist Church, Waco, TX

## INTRODUCTION

All of us have experienced times in our lives that we desperately wish to forget; when every aspect of our existence seemed to be filled with the superfluous, rather than simple beautiful acts of kindness; when a considerable portion of daylight was spent witnessing mean, trivial, and narrow acts of hurtfulness inflicted on the downtrodden in society, or perhaps to us personally. Yet, it is safe to say that nothing can be compared, or ever come close to what the Savior endured on the cross for mankind; all for the purpose of drawing us back to God the Father. It certainly provides new meaning to the Scripture from **John 15: 13 (NIV)**, **“Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”**, doesn’t it?

Even though the soldiers pierced the Lord’s side making sure he was dead, thus, causing us to be assured beyond doubt that his pain was over, the distorted sights and excruciating sounds of his suffering have been printed with indelible ink on our brains; causing them to play like a mournful song from a broken record without pause. If only we could partake of a draught called “Relief” that would serve as a thoroughwort, or boneset to the soul; a medicinal potion designed to erase the cruelty of the price our Jewish Messiah paid for our sin through no guilt of his own. Yet, having not the capacity to erase his torment, we must commit to memory his words to the Father, “Thy will be done”; a statement indicating his willingness, out of love, to become the Sacrificial Lamb of God; a gift of grace for all of us.

## JESUS REMOVED FROM THE CROSS

All who knew Jesus, including the women that had faithfully followed him every step of the way to the cross, witnessed the reaction of the crowd gathered around the crucifixion site as they internalized the entire event. Upon departing as an act of public bewailing, some individuals beat their breasts and released a blood curdling sound which was a familiar sign of mourning during Bible times. However, one of the most poignant reactions came from a centurion’s response when he stated, **“Surely this was a righteous man.”** (Luke 23: 47) (NIV)

Then, in order to follow the rules of the Law regarding the beginning of Sabbath, it was well known that the body of the crucified Lord must be promptly removed and buried. *(Jesus died at 3pm and was buried on the preparation day (the day before the Sabbath) before sunset, which would begin the Sabbath day.)*

Therefore, Scripture reads from John 19:38-42: (NIV) **“38Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away.”**

*("Descent from the Cross" by James Tissot)*

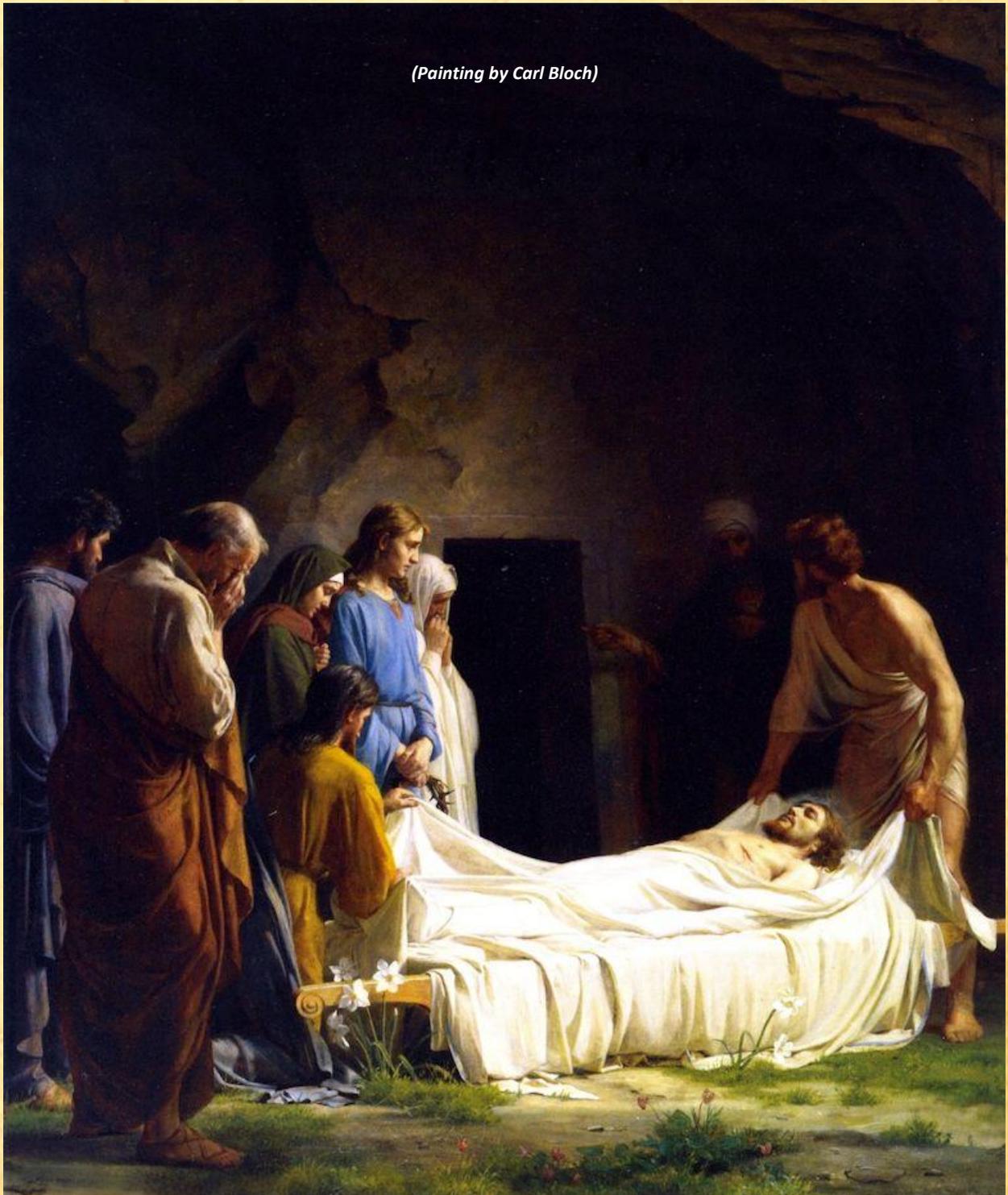


## LAI IN A TOMB

John 19: 39-42 (NIV) goes on to read:

39He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."

*(Painting by Carl Bloch)*



The act of anointing a body was done out of love and respect for the deceased. Also, at this point, it is important to refer back in Scripture to an event that happened to Jesus, prompting him to look ahead to the time of his own anointing, as well as the significance of it. John 12:1-8 New International Version (NIV) states: **12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took about a pint<sup>[a]</sup> of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.<sup>4</sup> But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, <sup>5</sup> "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.<sup>[b]</sup>" <sup>6</sup> He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.<sup>7</sup> "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you,<sup>[c]</sup> but you will not always have me."**

When one combines the Jewish customs regarding anointing of oil and spices with the above Scripture, great significance can be placed upon this happening that occurred at the residence of Mary and Martha; especially given the fact that it was just prior to Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Poor people simply did not have the financial means to own such costly oils and spices, and would have become acquainted with them only by either attending services in the Temple or watching royalty enter a village. These expensive oils and spices were used to consecrate religious objects or to anoint priests or kings only. However, the verse that indicated the entire house was filled with the fragrance after Mary anointed the feet of Jesus, serves as an example of the strength of their scent. Thus, it was well known that local village people knew when important officials were arriving due to the expensive fragrance that filled the air. Thus, although Mary anointed the feet of the Master through an enormous act of love, the words of Jesus added depth to the meaning. It was the very next day that he would ride on the back of a donkey into the city. Do you think the fragrance from his anointing still could be smelled by those present? I imagine so.

Did you also note Nicodemus, who had a previous interaction with Jesus, was named as the individual that brought the 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes? That was purposely mentioned because only a rich man would have the means to offer this mixture; as well as anointing Jesus as King of Kings.

Folks, it is important at this point to pause and focus on the actions of the women and their impact during and after the crucifixion of Christ. Although they did not possess the ability (due to society's views toward women) to speak in front of the legal council on his behalf, they never failed to be at his side; as shown in the painting above. However, according to the Jewish Law, everyone had to be at home by sunset due to the beginning of Sabbath; thus, causing them to depart in a state of deep sadness.

Since sunset was drawing near, are you able to picture in your mind the departure of those who loved the Lord as they embarked for home? How does one describe the impact of this horrific day on the human heart? Their souls must have been bruised beyond description! Have you ever been in such a state of shock that it was not possible to even react?

*The NIV Application Study Bible brings to light that four people were changed in the process of the crucifixion: (The criminal that died beside Jesus, a Roman centurion who proclaimed that truly Jesus was the Son of God, and Joseph and Nicodemus, members of the Jewish council who were secret followers of the Lord, had come out of hiding) Do you suppose there were others? Scripture states that*

*when Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple was torn from top to bottom; which meant mankind now had access directly to God without assistance from a priest. Although I had already accepted Christ as my Savior prior to writing this chapter, by focusing deeply into the event, the impact upon my heart was immeasurable. Then, when contemplating the meaning of the torn curtain in the Temple, a sense of freedom and self worth surged through every fiber of my being. It is a vivid example of the equality of each individual in the eyes of the Father, and shows how desirous he is to hear from us. His creation had now been restored back to him through his Son; the Sacrificial Lamb. The Second Covenant was undoubtedly in place.*

Now that the Jewish Sabbath has begun, leaving just us, dear readers, as the only people remaining at the tomb, it seems eerily silent, doesn't it? Visualize in your mind the three empty crosses that resemble ugly scars now standing like dark silhouettes in a silent lost world. Can you imagine the one in the middle still dripping with the blood of an innocent man that had been brutalized beyond recognition? In the moonlight, it is probably even possible to see the tracks of all those who attended either out of love or curiosity. My footprints are among them! Are yours?

Thus, at this moment in our chapter, as non Jews, let us find a quiet olive grove and use the Jewish Sabbath as a time of solitude and reflection. Since we have the advantage of knowing how things turn out, let us stay united in a time of prayer and remembrance, abiding by Jesus' request in the Upper Room.



***"REMEMBER ME!"***



*Because there is one loaf,  
we, though we be many, are one body,  
for we all partake of the one loaf.  
The bread which we break,  
it is a means of sharing in the body of Christ!*

*And the cup over which we give thanks, it  
is a means of sharing in the outpoured  
blood of Christ!*

***(Or use your own words)***

## RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

***Jerusalem's shadows, dark and lingering, with everyone fast asleep  
Not breaking the city's lazy slumber, God had promises to keep  
Just the morning star shone above His tomb, on this His resurrection day  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done; had unfolded without delay.***

(Painting by James Tissot)

***The gloriously ethereal angel is standing (floating?) in the antechamber of the tomb. This angel is clothed in classical draperies, and has a double set of quite realistic wings. Behind the angel is a large flat shape which must be the stone, now rolled away from the entrance. Inside the tomb itself two (four wing tips on the far left of the picture) other angels sit, waiting on Jesus.***

After searching repeatedly for a painting of the Resurrection, this beautiful ethereal rendering by James Tissot struck a chord; especially after researching many writings of scholars on this particular subject. I found some authors trying to approach it from a historical point of view with absolutely no success, while others went to great length at writing possible scenarios that reached the point of being ridiculous. Therefore, at this juncture in "My Jewish Messiah", the writer will lean totally on the



Holy Spirit the rest of the way home. During the process of determining the best path to follow in writing about the Resurrection, words my earthly father, a country preacher for over 60 years, wrote in the margin of his dog-eared Bible came immediately to mind. He said, "Anyone who thinks he can prove the existence of God historically will be sorely disappointed. It simply is not possible. Mankind must either believe or not believe! Faith is the only answer!"

Thus, when I studied the painting above, it spoke volumes to me about the wisdom of his statement. The painting allows the Resurrection to be God's business. If he had wanted us to see him at work in the tomb, it would have been available in great detail within the Bible. My earthly father loved the Lord with such great depth that when delivering a sermon or listening to the hymn, "Amazing Grace", he would close his eyes and lift his glowing face skyward in a state of total bliss. He could then be heard softly giggling with joy; a demonstration of faith at its best!

Do you recall reading John 2:19 (NIV) after our Lord had cleared the Temple and the Jewish leaders were questioning his authority to do this act? His answer let them know that he was greater than the Temple by stating, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days;" a statement his disciples did not understand at the moment, but would in just a short while. Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus was referring to his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

## John 20:1-9 New International Version (NIV)

### The Empty Tomb

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) *The large print will allow you to read this verse slowly, aloud, permitting it to sink into your mind.*

Due to the fact that the accounts of what occurred during Bible times were compiled into written documents much later than when they transpired, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John may differ in some aspects. One example that demonstrates this is Mary Magdalene discovering the empty tomb verses the three women named Mary finding it when bringing spices for anointing the body of Christ at the conclusion of Sabbath; or who provided the spices. Although some individuals use this as a reason to doubt God's Word, I do not! Since John's Gospel is written with the purpose of proving that Jesus is the Son of God, it was chosen for the above reading of the empty tomb.

As you read the description of the reactions of both Peter and John after receiving the declaration from Mary that the Lord's tomb was empty, did you find yourself present in the moment with them? Were you able to visualize them in a total state of grief and despair, slumped in dejected wilted lumps? Then, interpreting the words as she excitedly delivered the miracle of all miracles, did you enjoy their reaction as much as the writer? If I asked you who could run faster, would it be Peter or John? And.....run they did! THESE TWO DISCIPLES RAN LIKE THE WIND TOWARD THE RESURRECTION! The painting by Eugène Burnand from the 1800's allows you to thoroughly internalize the joy they felt and the love they had for the Lord.



**OH THAT WE ALL RUN TOWARD OUR RESURRECTED JEWISH MESSIAH WITH THIS EXURBANCE.**

As you read aloud the Scripture from John above, were you able to picture the folded strips of linen so neatly arranged? This certainly indicates everything was purposely done, sending the message that God was totally in charge, without the interference or help from mankind.

Also, it is important to note the last line in the Scripture above that stated the disciples did not realize that Jesus was to be raised from the dead. It is hard to believe that after spending considerable time in the presence of the Lord that they still did not get it, isn't it? Or, is it? Ladies and gentlemen, even though they had witnessed Lazarus being raised from the dead after three days by the Master himself, they still did not get it! Yet, let us stop and internalize how difficult the concepts of Jesus were for mere human minds to master. So much was unfolding around them, plus the abstractness of the spiritual messages Jesus was teaching had to be an astronomical amount of information for that rag-tag group of 12 to comprehend. Yet, in spite of their reactions of wonder and puzzlement, isn't it truly a marvelous thing to read how they preached the Lord's message of the kingdom later on; to the extent that they all met their demise except for John?

Let us now continue the story by reading the words from John 20: 10-18 (NIV):

**“10Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. 11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don't know where they have put him.” 14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” 16Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). 17Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” 18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her. “**

Did you note above the different reactions to the news? Any thoughts as to why the disciples went back to where they were staying? What would you have done next? However, when you stop and realize how significantly Jesus had changed the life of Mary Magdalene, it is understandable that she would continue to search for him, isn't it? When we allow Jesus to change our lives to this extent, the news of the kingdom is just too good to keep to ourselves. Additionally, isn't it wonderful that Jesus still demonstrates that both men and women have an equal place in his heart by making sure Mary is the first to see him in his resurrected body? Then, read carefully Mary's response of her mission to locate the Lord. Her loyalty is truly overwhelming! This woman's life was so changed that she would go to every length possible to make sure his body was buried properly. She was lost and found by the hand of Christ! Now, her Lord's earthly body was lost and she wanted to be sure it was found!

*“Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!*

*I once was lost, but now I'm found! Was blind, but now I see.”*

*By Alexander Andreyevich Ivanov (1806 - 1858)*



### **EYE WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST**

Let us begin this section on eye witnesses of the Resurrected Christ with a quote from the footnotes as found in the Life Application Study Bible (NIV).

**“Since the resurrection of Christ is the center of the Christian faith. Because Christ rose from the dead as he promised, we know that what he said is true---he is God. Because he rose, we have certainty that our sins are forgiven. Because he rose, he lives and represents us to God. Because he rose and defeated death, we know we will also be raised.”**

**Apostle Paul, when giving instruction concerning the Resurrected Christ stated the following regarding the appearances of our Lord after he had been raised from the dead:**

1 Corinthians 15: 3-8

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that He appeared to Cephas<sup>a</sup> and then to the Twelve. 6After that, He appeared to more than **five hundred brothers at once**, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8And last of all He appeared to me also, as to one of **untimely birth.**” (Unfortunate that Paul didn’t include women in this listing, too!)

Furthermore, Paul when writing to the Corinthians 15: 14-18 (NIV) gets even more explicit regarding the importance of the resurrection to Christians by stating: “<sup>14</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. <sup>15</sup>More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup>For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. <sup>17</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.”

Therefore, since the resurrection is the centerfold for us as Believers, let us now take a look at some of the appearances of the Resurrected Jesus:

**(Believers on the Road to Emmaus)** Supper at Emmaus by Matthias Stom, c 1633–1639. Note the "breaking of bread" as the precise moment of the disciples' recognition.



On the same day the tomb was found empty, two disciples of Jesus were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, talking about what had transpired when Jesus fell into step beside and inquired about their discussion. Asking them to explain it to him, with dejected faces, they shared their disappointment by stating the things that had happened as follows: Luke 24:19-27 New International Version (NIV)<sup>19</sup> **“What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”**

**<sup>25</sup> He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**

Note the underlined portion of Scripture that is also highlighted above? Due to the Jewish teachings for generations regarding the belief that Israel would be redeemed (New Exodus), Jesus had repeatedly run into this roadblock during the entire three years of his ministry. People could not understand the concept of a spiritual, rather than an earthly, kingdom.

Also, did you note the response of the Risen Savior? After all the suffering he had just endured, can you sympathize with the Lord? Yet, our patient Jewish Messiah explains it all again to them.

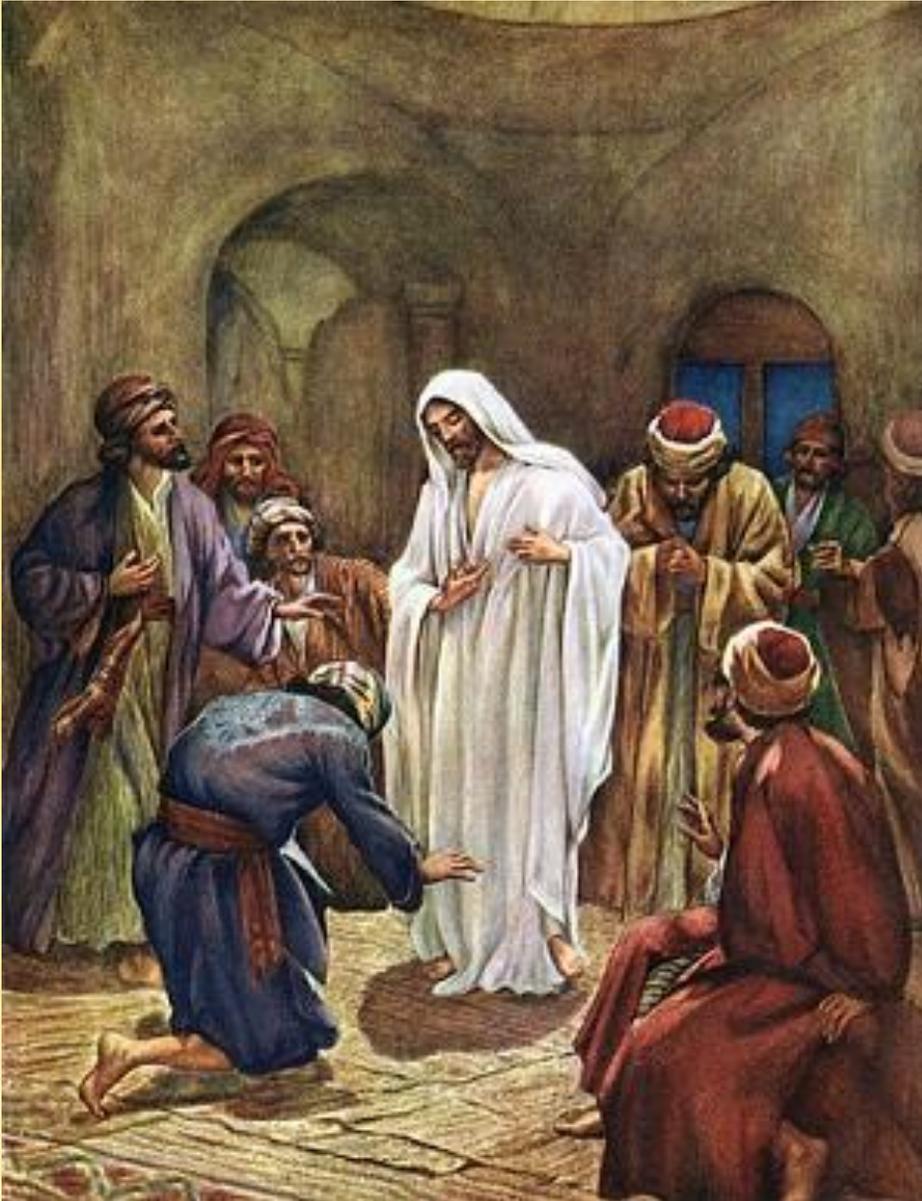
After having been invited to stay with them, Luke 24: 30-31 (NIV) takes us to the very heart of the matter with the following words: **“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.”** (Note the breaking of bread; meaning his body broken for them?) Look again at the painting above and allow this moment to penetrate deeply.

Luke goes on to share the reaction of the men upon witnessing the Resurrected Savior by letting us know that, wasting no time, they went back to Jerusalem, found the 11 disciples, and told them the good news.

#### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples Behind Locked Doors**

Then, while the two disciples were telling the other disciples about their encounter with the Lord, Jesus himself suddenly stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you.”** (Luke 24: 36) NIV Scripture goes on to state that the disciples, thinking they had seen a ghost, were startled and frightened! Luke 24:37-43 New International Version (NIV) offers a vivid description of the happening by stating:

<sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."<sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish,<sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.



By William Brassey Hole – "Resurrected Jesus Appears To His Disciples"

Did you note as you read the Scripture the reaction of the disciples? Then, Jesus who understands us better than we know ourselves was so familiar with the minds of his beloved followers that he allowed time for the shock of seeing him in his resurrected body to sink in. Pause for a moment and contemplate how the transcendence (*being able to go in and out of rooms by not passing through a door*) of Jesus alone must have impacted them. In spite of their joy and amazement, they still needed additional proof and observed him eating a piece of broiled fish. John 20: 21-23 adds even more information to this event by stating: "Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. And with that he

breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Let us all stop and internalize how patient and understanding the Lord is of his creation. Isn't it a wonderful thing to know he understands our doubts and fears we experience on our journey?

Since Jesus recognized that Thomas was not only absent, but had expressed doubts about his appearance to the other disciples, at just the right time, he appears. Enjoy John 20:24-31 New International Version (NIV) as Thomas' eyes are opened and his doubt washed away!

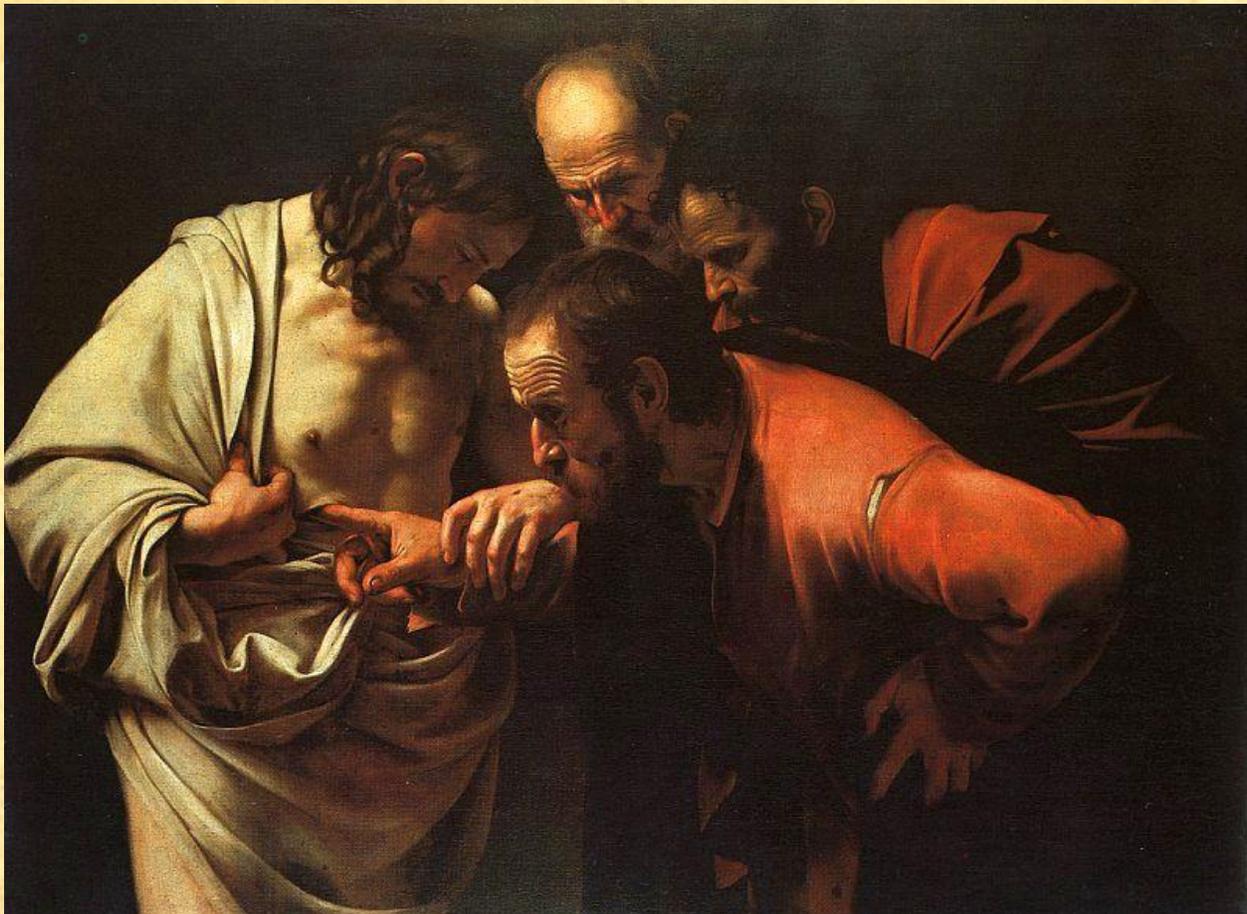
### Jesus Appears to Thomas

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; *blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" (That means us!)

### The Purpose of John's Gospel

<sup>30</sup> *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. “

*The Incredulity of Saint Thomas by Caravaggio*



Let us now compare the reactions of the disciples to the message and teachings of Jesus while in the Upper Room to the post resurrection era. Do you recall when eating the Passover meal with the Lord, how anxious, and filled with perplexity the disciples were when trying to understand the spiritual concepts discussed? Words that would probably fit their emotions now would be: jubilation, amazement, wonder, exultation, ecstasy, rapture, and merriment. (Can you add to this list?) Also, think about the approach Jesus used as compared to the one in the Upper Room.

Ladies and gentlemen, when John wrote that Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, it gives an indication of the level of instruction and the preparation for delivering the good news of the kingdom after his ascent received by this group of disciples. This intense training along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, offer logic to the expertise, tenacity, and courage displayed as they carried the news of the kingdom far and wide; no longer as disciples, but as apostles of the Savior.

### ***(Jesus Appears to the Disciples While Fishing)***

John 21:4-14 New International Version (NIV)

**“<sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.<sup>5</sup> He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.<sup>6</sup> He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom**

**by James Tissot**



**Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.<sup>8</sup> The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.<sup>[a]</sup>**

**<sup>9</sup> When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”<sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.<sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.<sup>13</sup> Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.<sup>14</sup> This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.”**

*"Jesus Eats Breakfast With His Disciples" by James Tissot*



Don't you absolutely love Peter's reaction when he sees Jesus? He seems to always be running **toward** the Lord, doesn't he? How Jesus must have loved him! Did you also notice the fact that all the disciples knew who he was this time?

### Restoration of Peter

John 21:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

### Jesus Reinstates Peter

<sup>15</sup> When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."<sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.



*Christ's Charge to Peter, 1515. By Raphael*

At this point, Peter, being like all of us, must be walking under a very dark cloud called “guilt” because of having denied knowing Jesus earlier. Due to our own numerous mistakes, isn’t it wonderful to read the conversation that occurred between the Lord and Peter? Also, did you catch the fact that Jesus asked him three times; a number that matched exactly Peter’s earlier denials. Then, each time, Jesus would give him the same directions. “Feed my lambs.” Although there are only three words in this command, they are so powerful that we are included in them. This is exactly what Christians are required to do as Disciples of Christ. In no uncertain terms, Jesus was asking for a commitment from Peter; a request that transformed Peter from a fisherman into an evangelist.

### Ascension of Jesus

Acts 1:3-11 NIV **3** After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. **4** On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” **6** Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **10** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. **11** “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”



*Ascension Of Jesus Rembrandt...*

Study the painting by Rembrandt above, noting the reactions of those watching Jesus ascend back to the Father. Do you see the dove at the top? Does it remind you of the description we have been given of God's words when his Son was baptized, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased?" Think about how anxious God the Father is to have his Son back at his side; his right side, that is!

Did you notice the question the disciples still asked him about restoring the kingdom to Israel? Conditioned responses are terribly hard to change. Generation after generation, the Jewish people had been teaching their children that God would restore the kingdom to Israel, just like it was during the time of King David. Man was thinking only in earthly terms rather than the Spiritual kingdom that Jesus proclaimed. Even after they had seen the Resurrected Savior, this question emerged from the lips of his disciples.

Then, let us try and wear the sandals of the disciples! Oh, my! Have these men been on an emotional roller coaster or what? What are they thinking now? I must believe the time Jesus spent with them after his resurrection totally prepared them for the journey ahead. It is stated many times in sermons that whatever transpired before the ascension of Jesus, along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, transformed these ordinary men into extraordinary evangelists. They were on fire for Jesus!

### The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

Our Great Promise Keeper, Jesus/God, instructed his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit arrived; a direct connection to the Trinity. (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit) Not only did Jesus need to leave in order to prepare a place for all his Believers, but also to remove his physical presence so the message of the kingdom could spread throughout the world. After Christ was taken up into heaven, through the Holy Spirit, he would be present everywhere. The Holy Spirit is the power of our Christian lives; our counselor that refreshes and guides us in developing a closer relationship with Jesus; so much that we become a reflection of him. Power from the Holy Spirit transforms us beyond the ordinary into the realm of the unimaginable, unprecedented, and remarkably bizarre.

Thus, in good and perfect time, the Holy Spirit arrived 50 days after Passover, Pentecost was also called the Feast of Weeks; a major annual festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops. Jesus was crucified at Passover time and he ascended 40 days after his resurrection. The Holy Spirit came 50 days after the resurrection, ten days after the ascension. (NIV Study Application Bible)

**THEREFORE, LET US SUCINCTLY STATE IN A LOUD AND CLEAR VOICE THAT JESUS DID NOT LEAVE US ALONE. HE IS EVER PRESENT IN OUR LIVES. OUR JEWISH MESSIAH SAID HE WOULD NEVER LEAVE US ALONE.....AND HE FULFILLED THAT PROMISE THROUGH THE ARRIVAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!**





Acts 2:1-13 New International Version (NIV)

### The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues<sup>[a]</sup> as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>[b]</sup> 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

*"The Pentecost" by El\_Greco*

Peter Addresses The Crowd



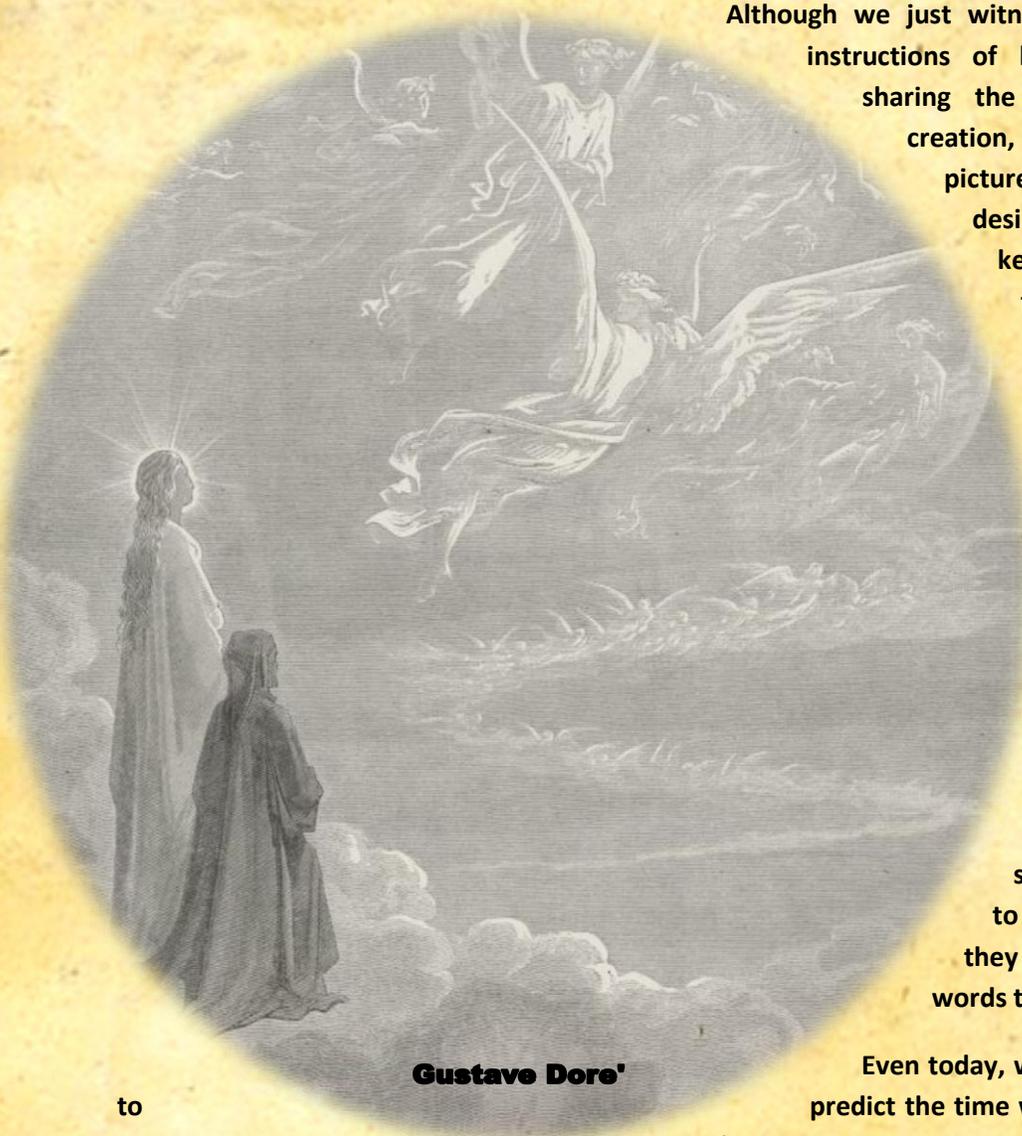
Remember the last words Jesus said to Peter were, “FEED MY LAMBS”? Ladies and gentlemen, do you also recall Peter being, the disciple, the rough around the edge fisherman from Galilee; the one that denied knowing Jesus three times; the exuberant individual that always ran to the Lord like a large fun loving puppy? This same man that had appeared so unstable during the ministry of Jesus delivered the most powerful, Spirit-filled message ever heard; one that deeply moved many of the Jews attending the Festival of Thanksgiving. He reached back to Psalms and even quoted from the exodus to explain that Jesus was truly the Son of God; the

long awaited Messiah. As you read the Scripture from Acts 2: 14-40 on your own, you will see that Peter had been transformed into a dynamic speaker. When our Lord observed Peter, he did not see what man visualized, but looked at the very heart of this sweet man; the rock, the very foundation on which the church would be built.

*Preaching at Pentecost” by Benjamin West “Peter Preaching at Pentecost” by Benjamin West*

## RETURN OF CHRIST

Although we just witnessed Peter following the instructions of his Lord and Master by sharing the good news with God's creation, have you been able to picture in your mind how desirous the disciples were to keep him by their side forever? Also, we have learned how difficult it was for the twelve faithful followers of Jesus to internalize the fact that the Lord was talking about a Spiritual kingdom, rather than the teachings that had been handed down through generation after generation by their Jewish ancestors. Thus, it seemed when Jesus spoke to them about his return, they immediately connected his words to the restoration of Israel.



**Gustave Doré'**

to  
by designing  
Jesus was very clear in Mark 13:26-27 New International Version (NIV) when he stated:<sup>26</sup> **“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.”** Then, he continued to explain this even more clearly to his disciples by saying, **“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,<sup>f</sup> but only the Father.”** **Matthew 24: 36 (NIV)** Ladies and gentlemen, this message is not only for the disciples, but also for us!

Even today, we often hear people trying to predict the time when our Savior will return formulations or trying to use world events. Yet, Then, in order to remove any worry from their minds as to their future security, he assured not only the twelve, but also all future Believers with these magnificent words from John 14: 1-4 **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and**

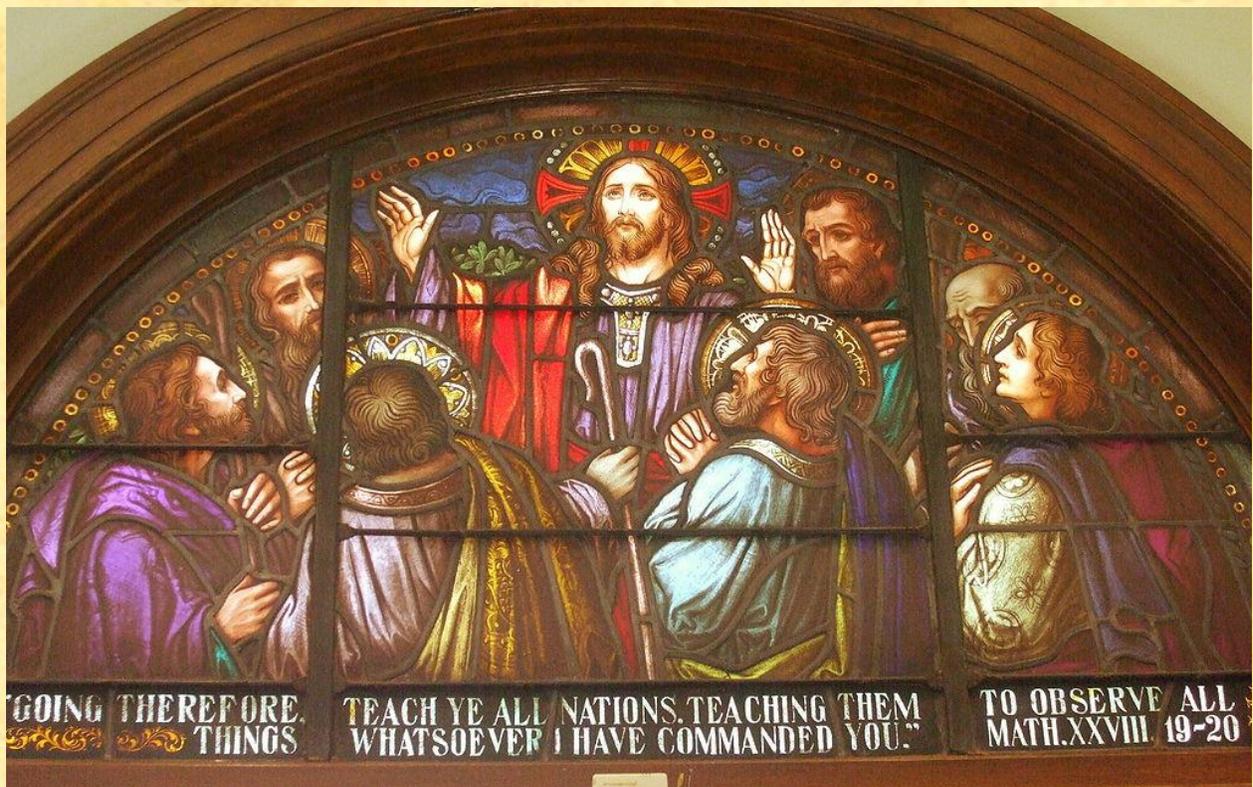
prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

### MISSION OF BELIEVERS

Do you recall from earlier Scripture when the angels asked the disciples why they continued to stand looking up at the sky after the ascension of Christ? In short, they were asking, “Don’t you remember the command from your Savior called “THE GREAT COMMISSION” from Matthew 28: 16-20 (NIV)?

### **The Great Commission**

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



*The Great Commission, stained glass window, Cathedral Parish of Saint Patrick in El Paso, Texas.*

As followers of the Resurrected Jesus, we, too, are directed to not only be disciples of his, but to follow the same commanded : “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Consequently, that does not mean we spend our time looking at the clouds just waiting for the return of Christ. Nor, does it imply that our hours be devoted to developing formulations in an effort to calculate the time and date of the event, either. Ladies and gentlemen, as Christians, we are to strap on the sandals of Jesus and walk along the highways and byways, not only delivering the message of the kingdom, but also touching the lepers we encounter; meaning ministering to the downtrodden in society; individuals that have a precious place in the heart of our Lord. When Jesus teaches his disciples about GENEROUS GRACE in Matthew 20: 16, they are told clearly that God showers his blessings down as he desires. Just because an individual has worked longer as a Disciple, or dresses better, and resides in a higher economic strata as viewed by society’s standards, these same principles do not apply to the Almighty’s rules. The Great Commission is totally about service to our fellowmen. After all, not one individual can earn, or deserves, eternal life; meaning we are all equal in the eyes of God. As Paul Enns states in the “Moody Handbook of Theology”: *“Grace may be defined as the unmerited or undeserving favor of God to those who are under condemnation.”*



Heiligenkreuz abbey ( Lower Austria ). Cloisters - Statue of Christ washing the feet of saint Peter ( 18th century ), by Giovanni Giuliani.

# GO YE!

Sources:

*Life Application Study Bible (NIV)*

*Guidance of the Holy Spirit through Prayer*



**GROWING IN THE WORD**



**1) Begin and/or end your time together by singing or saying: It Is Well With My Soul (Lyrics below)**

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blessed assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, with my soul,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

**2) Spend some time discussing your feelings on the different versions of the happenings in Scripture. Do you allow it to cause doubt? How can you explain it to others; especially new Believers?**

**3) Discuss the reason/s for the disciples having difficulty dealing with the mission of Jesus as a Messiah being that of restoring Israel verses establishing a Spiritual Kingdom as promised by God. Does this challenge still exist today?**

**4) Discuss the difference between the manner in which Jesus instructed his disciples before his resurrection and after?**

**5) Peter kept running toward Jesus. How can we practice the same pattern in our Christian journey?**

**6) Which eye witness account touched your heart the most? Why?**

7) What is the visual image you have in your mind of Jesus? Why do you feel there are so many different artistic renderings of our Lord? Join us in the next chapter as we bring this to light.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Let us use the chorus from the beautiful hymn, "Because He Lives" as our closing prayer.

*Because he lives  
I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives  
All fear is gone  
Because I know  
He holds the future  
And life is worth the living  
Just because he lives  
AMEN!*

