

The Plan

- A. The Empty Tomb
- B. Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearances

The Goals

1. Describe the two contrasting responses to the empty tomb.
2. Identify Jesus' various appearances following His resurrection.

A. THE EMPTY TOMB

Goal 1. Describe the two contrasting responses to the empty tomb.

Read John 20:1–10. Before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples several times that He would be put to death and would later come back to life. But when Jesus actually died, the disciples did not seem to remember what He had told them about His resurrection.

From the other Gospel writers, we learn that Mary Magdalene went with some other women to the grave where Jesus had been buried. They were going to put spices on the body, according to the custom. But to their astonishment, the great stone that had been put in front of the tomb had been removed. The tomb was empty! Mary ran quickly to tell the disciples while the other women remained at the tomb. When Mary Magdalene returned to the grave, an angel told them that Jesus was alive again.

Peter and John went to see for themselves, and they found the tomb empty except for the cloths in which Jesus' body had been wrapped. Mary thought Jesus' enemies had stolen His body. But Peter and John knew that thieves would not take the time to unwrap the body and neatly roll the cloth that had been on Jesus' head. What had happened to Jesus? Thoughtfully they returned to the house where they were staying in Jerusalem.

Application

1 Why did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb where Jesus had been buried?

- a) She wanted to see if Jesus was really dead.
- b) She wanted to put spices on the body.
- c) She wanted to talk to the gardener.

2 What did she find when she reached the tomb?

- a) The tomb was open and empty.
- b) Joseph and Nicodemus were anointing the body.
- c) The enemies of Jesus had stolen His body.

- 3** When Peter and John went to the grave, they saw
- a)** soldiers and asked what had happened.
 - b)** the gardener and asked where Jesus' body was.
 - c)** Jesus' grave clothes in the empty tomb.
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B. JESUS' POST-RESURRECTION

APPEARANCES

Goal 2. Identify Jesus' various appearances following His resurrection.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Read John 20:11–18. Sometimes people are so sad over the death of a loved one that they cannot seem to remember the Word of God. Even the message the angels had given the other women at the tomb, the good news that Jesus was alive, had not convinced the disciples. They needed to meet Jesus personally to know that He really was alive. So Jesus appeared to the disciples many times during His resurrection. For forty days He spoke to them about the kingdom of God.

Jesus comes to us, too, and lets us know that He is alive. He turns our tears to joy and sends us to share the message with others. Mary was the first to see the risen Christ and to receive His message. Every believer should share the wonderful message of Christ with wisdom and propriety. It is important to understand how and when to speak to people. That alone makes the difference in whether people will accept or reject the gospel.

Application

- 4** When Jesus came to Mary in the garden, He told her to
- a)** stop crying.
 - b)** go back home.
 - c)** go and give His disciples a message.
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Jesus Appears to His Disciples

Read John 20:19–23. That same day Jesus showed himself to His disciples, who had locked themselves in a house, afraid that the enemies of Jesus would attack them next. When they saw Jesus, they could not believe He really was alive. Jesus showed them His hands and side as proof that it was He, not a ghost. Then the fulfillment of what the prophets had said about the Messiah was before them.

Jesus said again that He was sending them just as the Father had sent Him. They would receive the Holy Spirit to aid them in the work He was giving them. We learn from the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts that the disciples received the Holy Spirit about fifty days later on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus still gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him and who want to be used in His service.

By obeying Jesus' command and preaching the gospel, the disciples reached numbers of people. Many countries and peoples from all walks of life believed in the Savior. Had the disciples not shared the gospel, people would never have known of Jesus' salvation.

Likewise, many people are waiting for you to share God's message. Perhaps you are the only messenger that they may ever know. What a great opportunity is before us!

Application

- 5** What did Jesus tell the disciples?
- a)** They should hide.
 - b)** He was sending them as the Father had sent Him.
 - c)** They should go home.
- 6** What special help did Jesus promise for the work He was giving the disciples to do?
- a)** Money to preach the gospel
 - b)** Joy
 - c)** The Holy Spirit
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Jesus and Thomas

Read John 20:24–31. Thomas would not believe what the other disciples had seen. He doubted their experience and said he would have to see for himself.

Many people today think that Christians are deceived. Such critics have to find out for themselves. Maybe their eyes will not see Jesus, but He will speak to their hearts. Then like Thomas they can proclaim God's truth. In John 20:27–29, Jesus said to Thomas,

“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John's Purpose in Writing

Read John 20:30–31. Of all the wonderful things that John had seen Jesus do and heard Him say, he wrote in his Gospel those that would help us understand that Jesus is the Son of God. John testifies, “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Application

- 7** Memorize John 20:31.
 - 8** What is the purpose of John's Gospel?
 - a)** To let us know that Jesus is the Son of God
 - b)** To tell everything that Jesus did
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Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

Read John 21:1–14. The disciples went back to Galilee according to Jesus' instructions. One night Simon Peter and

some others went fishing. They worked all night but did not catch anything. Jesus told them to put their nets down in the water on the other side of the boat. They did and caught so many fish that they could hardly pull the nets in.

Application

- 9** That the disciples suddenly caught a school of fish is a result of
- a)** their obedience to Jesus' words.
 - b)** their skill as fishermen.
 - c)** their fishing in the right spot.
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Jesus and Peter

Read John 21:15–19. Peter had said three times that he did not know Jesus; now the Lord asked him a question three times. Peter had said that even if the others went away from Jesus, he would never leave Him. But he had failed when the test came. So Jesus asked him thrice, “Do you truly love me more than these?” (v. 15). Peter was ashamed of the way he had acted and was sorry for what he had done. Yet Jesus chose Peter, who was faithful till the last day of his life, to become the foremost leader among the apostles.

We understand from Jesus' acceptance of Peter that he was forgiven for denying the Lord. He was to be a shepherd to take care of those who would believe in Jesus.

Jesus and the Other Disciple

Read John 21:20–24. John, who wrote this Gospel, did not want to mention himself by name. He was the disciple that Peter was talking about when he asked, “Lord, what about him?” (v. 21). Jesus told Peter that it was not for him to know what John would have to do or what would happen to him. Peter was to follow Jesus faithfully without worrying about what others would do.

God does not call all people to do the same thing. We cannot decide what we will do by what we see others doing. Neither can we say others should do a certain thing because of what we feel God wants us to do. Let us pray for God's will in our own lives and in the lives of other Christians also.

Application

10 What did Peter want to know?

- a) How he could feed sheep when he was a fisherman
- b) What would happen to John

11 Ask God to help you do His will.

Conclusion

Read John 21:25. In the Gospel that John wrote, you have learned that Jesus is the Word. Through Him God speaks to you. Jesus is the Son of God who shows you what God is like. He is the Lamb of God who died to take away your sins. Jesus is the way to heaven and the light of the world; you do not have to walk in spiritual darkness. Jesus is the bread of life that will satisfy your hungry soul. He is the truth who saves you from error and uncertainty. He is the Son of Man who knows you and understands your needs. He is the Good Shepherd who cares for you. He is the resurrection and the life who gives you abundant life now, victory over death, and eternal life in the world to come.

Jesus is all this and more. He is your Savior, Lord, and King who loves you. He wants you to love and obey Him. He wants you to follow Him now and be with Him forever. Jesus will not force you to follow Him. He leaves the choice up to you.

Application

12 After studying who Jesus is, what should you do now?

- a) Love Jesus—follow Him the rest of your life.
 - b) Go your way—disregard what you have studied.
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Check Your Answers

- 5 b)** He was sending them as the Father had sent Him.
- 1 b)** She wanted to put spices on the body.
- 6 c)** The Holy Spirit
- 2 a)** The tomb was open and empty.
- 3 c)** Jesus' grave clothes in the empty tomb.
- 4 c)** go and give His disciples a message.
- 8 a)** To let us know that Jesus is the Son of God
- 9 a)** their obedience to Jesus' words.
- 10 b)** What would happen to John
- 12 a)** Love Jesus—follow Him the rest of your life

