

THE GOSPEL PROJECT –CHRONOLOGICAL

JESUS SAVES

JESUS THE RISEN KING

The Risen King Sends His People

My niece who lives in San Francisco near many of the recent wildfires asked me, “Is this Armageddon?” I suppose every generation has wondered, “Is this the end?” God’s Word answers this question in **Matthew 24:7-8 (ESV)** ⁷ *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.* ⁸ *All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.* No, we are not currently experiencing Armageddon. Those who know the Risen King need not fear end time events, suffering or death. Let’s be like Job who lived so many centuries before the coming of Christ, and yet put his trust in God. **Job 19:25-26 (ESV)** ²⁵ *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.* ²⁶ *And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,*

It is not my intention to write a lesson on end times events. But, I do want to assure God’s people that we can have the peace that transcends all understanding even in fearful times. That peace is available because of what the Son of God has done for us. Spiritual peace comes from the Redeemer of the Ages and is dependent upon His Presence with us. **Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

When we personally know the One who is the Prince of Peace, it should be the desire of our heart to do everything we can to enable others to discover the Prince of Peace as well. In last week’s lesson, Cleopas and his companion met up with the Prince of Peace on the Emmaus Road. We left off with those two hot-footing it to Jerusalem to tell others the good news. Let’s find out what happened when they arrived!

Read Luke 24:33-37 (ESV) ³³ *And they [meaning Cleopas and his companion] rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,* ³⁴ *saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”* ³⁵ *Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.* ³⁶ *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”* ³⁷ *But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.*

Those who were gathered in Jerusalem shared with the two arrivals that Simon (Peter) had a personal visit with the risen Lord and they in turn shared their personal encounter with Jesus on the Emmaus Road. Then, Jesus Himself came in. A door did not open to admit Jesus. In fact, the

door was locked! That gives us some idea of the difference between our future resurrection body and our present bodies. When the Son of God became a man, He allowed Himself to be self-limited. After the resurrection, He came out of the grave clothes without disturbing them. After the resurrection, He is able to present Himself in a material body of flesh and bones, but no longer be subject to the former laws. We too will be able to appear in a room without opening a door! Some day we shall have bodies like His, and we will no longer be limited by the law of gravity!

We started with Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem from Luke's gospel even though today's focal passage is from John's gospel. I wanted to focus on Cleopas and his companion making it to Jerusalem just in time to meet Jesus there. This was not a coincidence. When we go to tell others about Jesus, we can be certain that we too will encounter the Risen Lord ourselves!

The Risen King gives us His peace.

Read John 20:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

The disciples had locked themselves away from the outside world. I am in no way making light of their fear – especially since at this time they were not yet empowered by the Holy Spirit. That was about to change. Even though today we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, in many respects, today's church often does the same thing – that is hide from the world behind church doors. Essentially, we cut ourselves off from those who need us the most. David Legge says, "There is no doubt an identifiable centuries-old pattern of isolation is in the church. We have locked ourselves away from those who are the broken, the most needy, and at times the untouchables." For so many of us the longer we are a Christian the fewer non-believers we even know.

One commentator answers the question of why this has often been the case in church history this way, "I think it is because we have just enough of God's life to survive and maintain our lifestyles, but not enough to venture out boldly into the world as ministers to the hurting," We need to get to the point in our spiritual walk so that the power of God within us overflows in order that rivers of living water don't just spring up within our own spirits, but actually flow from us as a raging river to touch others. **John 7:37-38 (ESV)** ³⁷ *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*

The Risen King sends out His people.

Read John 20:20-21 (ESV) ²⁰ *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.* ²¹ *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*

Matthew Henry writes of when Jesus appeared to them, “When they were assembled, Jesus came among them, in His own likeness, yet drawing a veil over the brightness of His body, now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in His transfiguration.” It is not surprising that they were frightened and thought they saw a spirit as Luke mentioned. In a way they were seeing a spirit – the Spirit of God. Nevertheless, He showed them His wounded hands and side and gave them opportunity to discover that it was indeed their Master, and that He was real! Wiersbe reminds us that, “the wounds meant more than identification; they also were evidence that the price for salvation had been paid and man indeed could have ‘peace with God.’ The basis for all our peace is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He died for us, He arose from the dead in victory, and now He lives for us. In our fears, we cannot lock Him out! He comes to us in grace and reassures us through His Word.”

In this passage we find that Jesus said, “*Peace be with you!*” for the second time. Most know that our word peace in the Hebrew is shalom. Shalom is used to both greet people and to bid them farewell, but it covers more than “peace, hello or goodbye”.... Each Hebrew word conveys feeling, intent and emotion. Shalom is more than just simply peace; it is a complete peace. It is a feeling of contentment, completeness, wholeness, well being and harmony. If you are feeling stressed at night remember **Psalm 4:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.* How do we stay peaceful during the problems of the day? Our peace comes from the Lord! **Isaiah 26:3 (ESV)** ³ *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.* True peace is not found in positive thinking, in absence of conflict, or in good feelings. It is found in Jesus Christ.

The Risen King gives us the Spirit’s power.

Read John 20:22-23 (ESV) ²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.* ²³ *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*

Jesus breathed the breath of God upon them! The only other time we find words like this in the Bible is at the creation of man. **Genesis 2:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

There is some debate over exactly what occurred here. Did the disciples actually receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit that day or was it just a foretaste of the coming of the Holy

Spirit that would fall on the Day of Pentecost? I am not totally sure what happened. I do like David Jeremiah's explanation in the Jeremiah Study Bible, "Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit. Just as God created humanity with His breath, He gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples by breathing on them. God was re-creating humanity in Christ."

The breath of God - there is nothing else like it! The thought comes to my mind - what a privilege to have been the first man - to have God Himself breathe the breath of life into his nostrils. Then I think, what a privilege to have been these early disciples when Jesus Himself breathed the Holy Spirit upon them! But, we don't need to feel left out! His Spirit is available to all who believe and repent from our sins. God gives each of us the privilege of partaking of His Holy Spirit and being filled with His Spirit is an ongoing occurrence. As the old hymn says, "Holy Spirit breathe on me. Take thou my heart, cleanse every part, Holy Spirit breathe on me.

I think there are times in the lives of all believers when Jesus breathes specially and personally upon His children and it is a glorious time. If we think about it, most of us can probably recall times in our lives when Jesus has breathed His refreshing breath upon us.

Because of verse 23, it has been claimed by some that these disciples were the first bishops of the Church, and the Lord was giving them the authority to forgive sin and they were to go out into the world and have people confess sins to them and they would tell them what penance to do in order to receive forgiveness of their sins. That is not a reasonable explanation, since only God can forgive sin - even the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day knew that!

Jesus was giving the disciples their mission to go and tell the gospel - that is the good news of Jesus Christ - the Son of God. **Romans 10:13 (ESV)** ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Jesus gave them the privilege of telling new believers that when they called upon the name of the Lord that their sins would be forgiven because they accepted Jesus' message. Many times we have difficulty forgiving ourselves for sins committed when God has already freely forgiven those. **1 John 1:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* The disciples did not provide forgiveness; they proclaimed forgiveness on the basis of God's Word. **Romans 10:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* We have not been told when the end is coming but we have been told it is coming! Please go and tell others about Jesus! On the day Jesus ascended into heaven, we read in **Acts 1:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ ... *why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.*" Jesus is coming! Perhaps today! Go and tell the good news!