

MORE APPEARANCES, THE ASCENSION

Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-53; John 21:1-24; Acts 1:3-11

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, Peter and the other disciples

Key-locations: Jerusalem and Galilee

Key-repetitions:

- Power: Jesus received all power (Mt 28:18); Jesus promised power to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came on them (Ac 1:8).

- Three times Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Each time Peter answered, "Yes, you know that I love you!" and then Jesus ordered Peter to feed his sheep (Jn 21:15-19).

- Holy Spirit: Jesus ordered the disciples to baptize in the name of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19); he promised they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:5); they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them (Ac 1:8).

- Jesus gave the disciples responsibilities: to feed his sheep (Jn 21:15-19); to make disciples (Mt 28:19-20); to preach to all creation (Mk 16:15); to be his witnesses (Ac 1:8).

- Everywhere: all nations (Mt 28:19); all creation (Mk 16:15); to the ends of the Earth (Ac 1:8).

Key-attitudes:

- Peter's impatience when he said, "I'm going fishing." He was impatient because time had passed since Jesus had appeared to them.

- Peter's embarrassment when Jesus repeated the

question, "Do you love me?"

- The disciples' emotional confusion, when their doubts were mixed with worship, on the mountain in Galilee.

- The disciples' curiosity about the time when Jesus would establish his kingdom.

- Jesus' authority when he gave orders to his disciples.

- The admiration and fear of the disciples when they observed Jesus being taken up into the sky.

- The hope given by the promise of Jesus' return.

Initial-situation:

On Friday, Jesus died and was buried. On Sunday morning, Jesus resurrected and appeared to Mary Magdalene, some other women, two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. Thomas was absent. A week later Jesus appeared to the disciples with Thomas present.

Initial-problem:

Jesus made several appearances on the first two Sundays after his resurrection. After time passed without seeing Jesus, Peter told some of the other disciples, "I'm going fishing."

Final-situation:

Jesus was taken up into Heaven where he received all power in Heaven and on Earth. He will return and everyone will see him.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Appeared Beside the Sea of Galilee Jn 21:1-24

Jesus made several appearances on the first two Sundays after his resurrection. Twice, he appeared to his disciples. The third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection was by Lake Tiberias (also called Sea of Galilee). It happened this way: Seven disciples were together and Simon Peter told them, "I'm going fishing."

The others responded, "We'll go with you." They went out in a boat and fished all night without catching anything (Jn 21:1-3).

At sunrise, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't recognize him.

Jesus called out, "Friends, did you catch any fish?"

They answered, "No, not a thing!"

Jesus told them, "Throw your net off the right side of the boat, and you'll catch some." They did, and caught so many fish that they couldn't drag the net up into the boat (Jn 21:4-6).

The disciple John told Peter, "It is the Lord!" Simon Peter jumped into the water and swam. The other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish. They were about a hundred yards from shore. They landed and saw a fire of burning coals with fish and bread cooking on it.

Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

Simon Peter went back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. Even though the net was full of a 153 large fish, it did not tear. Jesus invited them, "Come and eat" and he gave them bread and fish (Jn 21:7-14).

After they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Jesus asked a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

Jesus asked a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was upset because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" Peter answered, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:15-17).

Jesus continued, "I tell you the truth, when you were young, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you don't want to go." Jesus said this to indicate how Peter would die and bring glory to God. Then Jesus commanded Peter, "Follow me!"

Peter turned his head and noticed that John was following them. Peter asked, "Lord, what about him?"

Jesus answered, "If I want him to live until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me!" (Jn 21:18-24).

Jesus Appeared on a Mountain in Galilee Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15-18; 1 Cor 15:6-7

Then the eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. The moment they saw him, they worshiped him; however, some doubted.

Jesus drew near to them and said, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, wherever you go and make disciples of all peoples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of time" (Mt 28:16-20).

Jesus' Last Appearance Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:3-8

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers over a period of forty days and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. On one occasion, he gave them this command, "Don't leave Jerusalem. I've told you that my Father promises to give you the Holy Spirit; but wait for my Father to give you the promised Holy Spirit. John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Ac 1:3-5).

The last time Jesus was with his followers, he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany to the hill called the Mount of Olives (Lk 24:50; Ac 1:12).

The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered, "You are not going to receive the times or dates. The Father is the one who has authority to set the time. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power, and you will be my witnesses to tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:6-8).

Jesus Ascended Up to Heaven Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:9-12

Jesus raised his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was elevated up to heaven (Lk 24:51).

As they watched, Jesus was lifted up and a cloud hid him from their sight. The followers of Jesus stood staring up into the sky. Suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up at the sky? Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way as you saw him go up to heaven" (Ac 1:9-12).

Jesus Is Now Exalted Mt 28:18; Mk 16:19; Jn 14:1-2; Ac 2:33-35; Eph 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22

After the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven. God seated Jesus at his right hand in heaven. Jesus rules there above all heavenly authority and earthly authority. He has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. No power is exempt from his rule, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything (Eph 1:20-22).

Jesus Will Return Mt 24:27-31; Mk 13:26; Ac 1:10-11; Rev 1:7; 22:20

Before his death, Jesus promised his disciples that he was going to his Father's house and prepare a place for them. Then he would return and take them to be with him (Jn 14:1-3). Jesus also promised that all people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Jesus will send his angels to gather God's chosen people from everywhere on the earth (Mk 13:26-27).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when Peter wanted to go fishing?
2. What happened when Jesus met the eleven disciples on the mountain in Galilee?
3. What were some of the responsibilities that Jesus gave to his followers?
4. How did Jesus ascend into heaven?
5. What are some of the reasons we have to expect Jesus to return?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. When a person stops following Jesus' instructions, he makes effort without experiencing productivity. Jesus called Peter to be a fisherman of men (Mt 4:19); Peter decided to return to fishing for fish (Jn 21:3). He worked all night without catching any fish (Jn 21:3). Effort without productivity contrasts with the overabundance that Jesus gives those who obey him. Examples:
 - A large amount of water was transformed into wine in Cana (Jn 2:6-9);
 - After feeding the 5,000, there were twelve baskets of surplus food (Jn 6:11-13);
 - Living water flows for eternity (Jn 4:14; 7:37);
 - God gives a constant flow of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:37-39);
 - Jesus gives abundant life, life to the full (Jn 10:10).
2. Jesus seeks to restore his follower who has deserted him. Jesus went to where Peter was fishing (Jn 21:4). He is the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep (Mt 18:12).
3. The decision to follow Jesus may require that a person make the sacrifice of doing something he doesn't want to do. Jesus informed Peter that he would have to go where he didn't want to go (Jn 21:18). Examples of some who went against their personal desire in order to obey God:
 - Moses (Ex 3:10-4:17);
 - Jonah (Jon 1:13; 3:1-3);
 - Peter (Jn 21:18; Ac 10:28);
 - Paul (Ac 16:6-7, 10).
4. The commandment to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and to the end of the Earth specifies the geographical and cultural areas that are to be evangelized (Ac 1:8):
 - Jerusalem specifies people of the same geographic area who are of the same culture;
 - Judea specifies people from a large geographic area who are of the same culture;
 - Samaria specifies people from a local geographic area, but who have a different culture;
 - To the end of the Earth specifies people from all geographical areas and from all cultures.
5. Some benefits that the ascension brings:
 - The pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:38). While he walked in Palestine, Jesus was limited by his physical body and could only be in one place at a time. Now the Holy Spirit, with his power and blessing, has come to live inside each believer in Jesus;
 - Jesus went to prepare a place for his followers (Jn 14:2);
 - Jesus is the Christian's lawyer in heaven. Jesus defends his followers before God (1 Jn 2:1);
 - In heaven, Jesus intercedes to God in favor of those who believe in him (Heb 7:25).
6. Reasons to believe Jesus will return:
 - Jesus promised to return (Jn 14:3);
 - Angels said he will return (Ac 1:11); they were right when they predicted his birth (Lk 1:30-33; Mt 1:20-22);
 - God, speaking through the Old Testament prophets, said that he will return (Zec 14:1, 3-4; Mal 4:1-2);
 - The Holy Spirit, speaking through New Testament writers, said he will return (1 Th 4:16; He 9:28; 10:37).