

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

1) 05 Mar 2023.....	John 12:1-19.....	Why Wasn't This Sold?
2) 12 Mar.....	John 12:20-50.....	If It Dies
3) 19 Mar.....	John 13:1-38.....	I Will Come Again
4) 26 Mar.....	John 14:1-31.....	Peace I Leave
5) 02 Apr.....	John 15:1-17.....	Remain in Me
6) 09 Apr.....	John 20:1-18.....	I Have Seen
7) 16 Apr.....	John 15:18-27; 16:1-33.....	When the Spirit Comes
8) 23 Apr.....	John 17:1-26.....	I Pray
9) 30 Apr.....	John 18:1-27.....	I Am He
10) 07 May.....	John 18:28-40.....	I Find No Fault
11) 14 May.....	John 19:1-42.....	If Is Finished
12) 21 May.....	John 20:19-31.....	Reach out Your Hand
13) 28 May.....	John 21:1-25.....	Do You Love Me?

INTRODUCTION

- Jesus' initial words and summation of actions since His return from the grave provide additional details for many to make a sound decision to believe in Him being the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God.

Passage	Comments
John 20:19-22	<p>Receive the Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus pops in on His disciples at night and gives them proof of His Resurrection, and also bestows on them the Holy Spirit. How would we handle such a fright? Why such secrecy behind closed doors and at night? Why didn't Jesus pop in on the Pharisees, Sadducees, the Roman cohort, the High Priest, and even on the governor, Pontius Pilate, during broad daylight hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider this. Recall that God's Kingdom is not coming with something observable at this time, but it is within His people. God's Kingdom is essentially growing one soul at a time. Some asked Jesus, "When will you restore your Kingdom, Lord?" And He replied back, "Where the corpse is, the vultures will be gathered" (Luke 17:20-37). This euphemism indicates God's Kingdom will come at a time where there will be no hiding place from God's wrath as no corpse in the field can be hidden from vultures (presumably at the end of the Great Tribulation). What was the significance of receiving the Holy Spirit at this time compared to the more obvious Pentecostal outpouring noted in Acts 2? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bravery? <input type="checkbox"/> Miraculous wonders? <input type="checkbox"/> Others? Consider this. The Holy Spirit was promised in several OT passages, one prominent passage being Ezek 36:26-27, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them]". Other notable passages specifying the coming Holy Spirit include Num 11:29, Psalm 143:10, Proverbs 1:23, Is 11:1-2, Is 32:15, Isaiah 42:1-4, Is 44:3, 4, Is 59:16-21, Is 61:1-3, Ezek 36:26-27, Ezek 37:1-14, Joel 2:28-29
20:23	<p>Sins are Either Forgiven or Retained – Uhm?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Catholics latch on this passage to give credence to their practice of confessing one's sins to a priest HOWEVER, this passage seems to be a church discipline principle when you consider the context of Matt 18:17-19, "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, regard him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you truly that if two of you on the earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOW, God honors and works with the decisions of godly church elders

Passage	Comments
20:24-29	<p>Doubting Thomas' and Skeptics are Accommodated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vv24-25. Thomas quipped back to his fellow disciples, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." vv26-28. And Doubting Thomas received his requests from Christ and fully acknowledged his Lord and Savior v29. Jesus essentially said to him and to us, "Blessed are those who believe w/out all the confirming facts" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would these blessings entail? Does this make our faith a blind faith or an evidential faith?

A Note on Doubting Thomas. According to church tradition Thomas took the Gospel to Asia via the subcontinent of India. Various historical records and traditions indicate Thomas traveled by sea to India in AD 52. He was later martyred and buried there. The tomb of St. Thomas is in Mylapore, India.

20:30-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vv30-31. Jesus possibly performed more than 100,000 healings and miracles over 3 years, and John only records 7 unique ones, which is plenty to make a sound decision.
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How Do We Answer Skeptics TODAY? Apologetics is the Answer!	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologetics is the study and practice of giving answers for the reasonableness and truthfulness of the Christian faith. The word comes from the Greek apologia and means "to give a defense". In 1Peter 3:15 Christians are commanded to give an apologia to anyone who asks the reason for the hope that lies within us. SO, are we confident enough in God's word not to be troubled, & to lead someone to the Lord or to address some common issues for believers and skeptics alike? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does it take to acquire such confidence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <1 year? <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years? <input type="checkbox"/> 10+ years? <input type="checkbox"/> Depends? Consider this. Reading 10 pages per day (45-60 min) you can read the Bible through in 90 days. If you are able to read the Bible through about 12x (in about 3-12 years), you are on par with the majority of preachers. How would we answer the following questions? <input type="checkbox"/> What do I need to do to get saved? <input type="checkbox"/> How can God fix my life? <input type="checkbox"/> Can God give me more money or better health? <input type="checkbox"/> Why isn't God healing like He once did? <input type="checkbox"/> What is wrong with alternative lifestyles? <input type="checkbox"/> How do the roles of men and women differ? <input type="checkbox"/> How old is the earth? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there space aliens? <input type="checkbox"/> When is Jesus coming back? Though God does provide answers in His word, many may not like them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The just live by faith Hab 2:4 His ways are not our ways Isaiah 55:8 Secret things belong unto God Deut 29:29 The whole world lies in the power of the evil one 1John 5:19 AND we must realize we can only go so far to convince skeptics of the truth. "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets (aka, God's Word), they will not be persuaded even if someone were to rise from the dead." Luke 16:31 	

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- Can you imagine the impact mature believers can have on the world, assuming we have the correct answers from Scripture and the empowerment by God's Holy Spirit?
- Therefore, we should be bold in our faith and be on the offensive more than on the defensive.

NEXT WEEK: John 21. Final miracle and remarks by Jesus left a lasting impression on his followers.

