

## The Gospel of John 19:38-20:13

### I Resting in Human Honor

- A. After the Lord had completed His work in His death, He rested (19:38-42). In John 18 and 19 we see the many evil things and sufferings which came to the Lord. Some treated Him evilly, others mocked Him, and even His most intimate disciple denied Him. Everything in His environment was dark. But, however evil were the events and however much He suffered, He endured them all and passed through them victoriously, showing that He is the victorious and conquering life. His is not the life conquered; His is the life conquering. Thus, immediately after His death, the environment was changed from black to white.
- B. After the Lord accomplished His redemptive and life-imparting death, His situation of suffering immediately changed into an honorable one. Before His death, everything was evil and deadly; after His death, everything became pleasant and agreeable. Joseph of Arimathea, "a rich man" (v.38; Matt.27:57), and Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1), came with linen and very expensive spices, myrrh and aloes (vv.39-40), to prepare His body for burial. It was not the poor but the noble who cared for His body, burying Him in a new tomb "with the rich" (v.41; Isa.53:9). By this we see that the whole situation was changed into a rich condition, a noble state, a new sphere. The Lord was now dear to people, and they valued Him very highly. Hence, the Lord rested in human honor. Although He was put to death in shame, He was buried in honor. The problem had been with death, but after the Lord died, this problem was solved. When He died, the trouble and the evil things were over. Now, according to God's sovereignty, in human honor of a high standard, the Lord rested on the Sabbath day (v.42, Luke 23:55-56), waiting for the time to resurrect from among the dead.

### II Resurrecting in Divine Glory and Leaving the Old Creation in the Tomb

- A. The first day of the week, or the day after the Sabbath, signifies a new beginning, a new age. In Lev.23:10,11,15, a sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest was offered to the Lord as a wave offering on the day after the Sabbath. That sheaf of the firstfruits was a type of Christ as the firstfruit in resurrection (1Cor.15:20,23). Christ resurrected on precisely the day after the Sabbath. By His all-inclusive death He terminated the old creation, which had been completed in six days, after which was the Sabbath day. In His resurrection He germinated the new creation with the divine life. Hence, the day of His resurrection was the beginning of a new week—a new age. This day of His resurrection was appointed by God (Psa.118:24), was prophesied as "this day" in Psa.2:7, was predicted by Himself as the third day (Matt.16:21; John 2:19, 22), and later was called by the early Christians "the Lord's Day" (Rev.1:10). On this day Christ was born in resurrection as the firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33; Heb.1:5) and the Firstborn from the dead to be the Head of the body, the assembly (Col.1:18).
- B. All the things that were cast off from the Lord's resurrected body and left in His tomb signify the old creation, which He wore into the tomb. He was crucified with the old creation and buried with it. But He rose from within it, leaving it in the tomb and becoming the firstfruit of the new creation. All the things left in the tomb were a testimony to the Lord's resurrection. If these things had not been left there in good order, it would have been difficult for Peter and John to believe (v.8) that the Lord had not been taken away by someone but had risen by Himself. These things had been offered to the Lord and wrapped around Him by His two disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus (19:38-42). What they had done toward the Lord in their love to Him became very useful in the Lord's testimony.

### III Loving Seekers Having the Discovery, Revelation and Experience of the Lord's Resurrection

- A. Although the Lord's resurrection had been accomplished, the discovery of it required the seeking of His disciples. The discovery of His resurrection was made by the loving seekers of the Lord Jesus. John 20 shows the kind of person who will realize the Lord's resurrection, the kinds of person to whom the vision of His resurrection can be disclosed. The Lord's resurrection is such a wonderful and mysterious fact. But how can we know it? How can it be revealed to us? How can we have this vision? Only by loving the Lord and seeking Him. Before Mary the Magdalene came to the tomb, the resurrection in life had in fact been accomplished. But Mary had to discover it by loving and seeking the Lord. This lays down a principle. Today the resurrection of Christ is an accomplished fact, yet so many people have not seen it. They have never come to the point where they have discovered it. Have you discovered the fact of Christ's resurrection? Have you received the revelation or vision that the Lord has been resurrected? You have the knowledge, the doctrine, and the story of His resurrection, but have you discovered the fact of it in the spirit? If we would make such a discovery, we must first love the Lord and seek Him.
- B. In this chapter it is quite evident that there are three kinds of disciples. The first kind is represented by Mary, the second by Peter and John, and the third by the lazy ones. The lazy disciples had no revelation or discovery of the Lord's resurrection, Peter and John had the discovery and the revelation but not the experience. Mary had the discovery, the revelation, and the experience. What is shown in this record is also true of Christians today. This record reveals the accomplished fact of Christ's resurrection, but the discovery of His resurrection still requires our seeking, and the experience of His resurrection demands even further seeking. In other words, the revelation depends upon our seeking, and the experience depends upon our further seeking. We must first seek the Lord before we can discover His resurrection, and we must seek the Lord even more before we can experience His resurrection.
- C. The resurrection of Christ was not only discovered by the seeking ones but also testified to by the angels sent from God (20:11-13). When Mary looked at the tomb, she saw "two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (20:12). These two angels were like the cherubim on the propitiation cover, watching and observing how the glorious Lord, who is the resurrection, carried out the wonderful task of walking away from the threatening of death. These two observing angels became the strongest witness that the Lord Jesus had resurrected. As the linen cloths and the napkin were the testimony from man's side, the angels were the testimony from God's side. All these were seen only by a sister who sought the Lord.