

## **John 20: Jesus Messages to His Disciples**

### **10-09-16**

When Jesus arose from the grave on the first day of the week, the entire order of spiritual things was changed. He arose with all authority in heaven and on earth given to Him (Matthew 28:18). His rising signified a new reign in heaven of a new king. When He met His disciples, He had important messages to give them, chief of which was the great commission. John's Gospel records several of the messages Jesus left His disciples. These messages are spiritual, and sometimes are not clearly understood at first glance.

#### **Jesus Said:**

*Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*  
John 20:17

Why did Jesus declare "My Father and your Father, My God and your God"? This statement is new, and perhaps we ought to consider that it coincides with the new covenant languages. Consider this: in the Old Testament, God is called father only 9 times, 4 of which are prophecies pertaining to Christ or to Christians. The language of God as Father in the OT is very limited; instead, the covenant name of God is used several thousand times. From lessons in the past, we have noted that this covenant name (Jehovah, YHWH, "I AM") is not used at all in the New Testament. But when we look into the New Testament, we see that the Father language is used at least 82 times (even excluding Jesus' personal words to His Father). It is clear that the New Covenant is one with a Father. Jesus message to Mary was emphasizing this change. Jesus was going to ascend to OUR Father, and He will mediate there (1 Timothy 2:5).

#### **Jesus Said:**

*So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*  
John 20:21-22

John tells us that Jesus breathed and the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. But what about the Promise He made earlier? In John 14:16-17, John 15:26, and John 16:7 Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would not come until He had left. Then in Acts 1:8 He promised, right before he ascended, that the Holy Spirit would come soon. Is this a contradiction? How could Jesus promise the Holy Spirit to come after He left if John 20 says He came when Jesus breathed on them? The answer to this is in Luke 24:44-49. There a parallel account of this event is made. Luke's Gospel often translates the spiritual language of Jesus into a more straight-forward way; in that passage Jesus "opened their

minds to understand the Scriptures” (vs. 45). This is a parallel to “he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” This is an important truth that we need to understand: Receiving the Holy Spirit is the same as Understanding the Scriptures.

**Jesus Said:**

*“If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”*  
John 20:23

This passage has been used by many to suggest that the Apostles (and their successors) have the right to receive the confessions of Christians and to remove their sins. Of course, first of all, only one apostles had a successor, and this was by prophecy (Acts 1:16-20, Acts 12:2). But consider too that it is a fact that ONLY God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7, Luke 5:21, 1 John 1:9). We can forgive others for sinning against us, but that does not remove the guilt of sin before God. What did Jesus mean? The answer is again in the parallel text of Luke 24:44-49. When Jesus opened their minds to Scriptures, He immediately said that “repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (vs 47). This is how they would forgive sins: by preaching the Gospel of remission of sins. It was not their personal power to forgive, but the power of the Gospel.

**CONCLUSION:** In John 20, the conversations of Jesus are recorded in spiritual language that can be misunderstood by carnal or immature minds. We need to use all of the Gospels to understand the words of Christ. Jesus spoke on matters of importance in these moments.