

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: "The Lord is Risen!" Luke 24

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 24: 1-12

1. The empty tomb and the disbelief

- a. Early morning on the first day of the week ['Yom Reeshone', today's Sunday], Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome the mother of James and John, went to the tomb wondering who would roll away the large stone that sealed the tomb. They found the tomb empty and met two angels who told them that the Lord had risen as promised. They reminded them of the previous promises by the Lord.
- b. The women then notified Peter and John, who went to the tomb to verify the women's report. Both the women and the disciples did not believe the news of the empty tomb in spite of the Lord's promises in the past [Matt 16:21, 17:22-23, 20: 17-19, Luke 9:22, 44; Luke 18:31-34]. Mary Magdalene lingered and met the risen Lord.
- c. Detailed accounts of how the believers saw the 'empty tomb' as they relayed the first-hand eye-witnesses to the gospel writers later, are testaments of truthfulness of the resurrection of Lord Jesus. The band of Jesus followers, who had been in deep sorrow, despondence and disarray, were now transformed through the joyful ecstasy at the knowledge that their Lord overcame death and came back to their midst wearing a resurrected body. Yet, they did not fully comprehend the meaning of His resurrection. The risen Lord spent 40 days to teach, encourage and mold them for the Great Commission, the evangelical mission of carrying the gospel story to all parts of the world.

2. Historicity of the Lord's resurrection

The enemies of the truth of God spread false lies about the Lord's resurrection including the stolen body story, the swoon hypothesis, the vision hypothesis and the lost body hypothesis. Historical documents, on the other hand, testify the historicity of the Lord's resurrection:

- a. Historian Flavius Josephus wrote in *Antiquities of the Jews*, "When Pilate, upon the accusation of the first men amongst us, condemned [Jesus] to be crucified, those who had formerly loved him did not cease [to follow him], for he appeared to them on the third day, living again, as the divine prophets foretold, along with a myriad of other marvelous things concerning him."
- b. The Roman governor Pilate, in his letter to Emperor Tiberius about Jesus Christ, backed the biblical account of the Lord's trial, crucifixion and resurrection in detail.

3. Our living hope through resurrection

The death and resurrection of the Lord form the core of the gospel of Christ. Apostles of Christ later expounded on this topic:

- a. Apostle Paul relayed the resurrection account in 1 Corinthians 15:
For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then, he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. [1 Cor. 15: 3-8]
- b. Apostle Paul, then, expounded that, while death came through Adam, life comes to us through the resurrected Christ:
For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. [1 Cor. 15: 21-22]

- c. Because Christ became the first fruit of resurrection, we have the hope of resurrection from death so that we may live forever with God.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. [Romans 6: 4-5]

- d. Apostle Peter also wrote on the hope we have on the new life through the resurrection of Christ, which he had witnessed:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead [1 Peter 1:3]

- e. Thus, the problem of death has been solved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was the plan of human salvation that the Divine Council agreed to implement “before” the world began [Titus 1:2, 2 Tim 1:9]. God the Son was willing to come to earth, live as a human with a fully-human body and nature, die a cruel death on a cross although He was sinless, and God raised Him from the darkness of death. Then, He was made our Chief High Priest, the Alpha and Omega of our salvation [Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13].

4. Discussion topics:

- a. Let us discuss the activities of the women on the resurrection day, contrast them against the men’s reactions and lessons for us today.
- b. Did you have periods of disbelief before the Lord helped you believe as happened to these disciples?
- c. Why was there no big fanfare associated with the Lord’s resurrection? What does it imply to the Christian life today?