

AFTER THE RESURRECTION WHAT?

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

WHAT CHRIST SAID AND DID DURING THE FORTY DAYS

IT IS an interesting study to find what our Saviour did in His resurrection body and what He said to the various groups who were witnesses to His forty days appearances. We must remember what John said in two places in his Gospel. **“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name”** (20:30, 31). And then in 21:25 he says: **“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”**

I would judge that these statements would cover the deeds and words of His flesh-life as well as the deeds and words of the forty day period after His resurrection. Studying the record, you will find that He appeared to the disciples, as far as the records go, only about six of the forty days, and only small portions of those days. Now, whether He met the disciples at other places and times during the forty days we do not know, because our information is limited entirely to the record in the New Testament. It is supposed that He had other things to say, other demonstrations of His resurrection power and other revelations of His resurrection presence, but we could only conjecture about that. We are interested in and will limit ourselves to the records.

SOME OF HIS DEEDS

- He emptied death's tomb, arose from the dead.
- He contacted, talked to, comforted, encouraged His discouraged disciples.
- He opened the Scriptures to them and warmed their hearts.
- He performed some miracles.
- He filled their fishermen's nets after a night of fruitless labors with a whole school of fishes, one hundred and fifty-three.

This evidently was on the order of His power having control of the seas and the fishes thereof.

- He prepared a refreshing meal of bread and fish and built a warm fire for His shivering disciples, after facing the wind and waves through a long night of disappointment and failure.

- He entered a room where the disciples were without opening a door or doing violence to the property. How marvelous must be His body now if it is not subject to the ordinary laws of nature!

- He changed His form from the unrecognizable to the recognizable, and vice versa.
- He opened their blinded eyes.
- His resurrection is probably the greatest of all miracles.

His ascension without the means of earthly transport into the heavens above is no mean miracle.

- He breathed on them the breath of His holy power.

And many other signs of personality and power did He show among His disciples in these tragic immortal days.

WHAT HE SAID

We have only a few of the things recorded that He spoke to His disciples during these days. One would desire to know the other things of which John spoke in his closing chapter. Would it not be glorious to have the other tender, comforting revelations He made to His disciples? This is not a complaint but a soul-longing hunger. Let us itemize some of the things He said to His disciples.

He gave them several commandments on His missionary world-will, which will be discussed in other chapters.

Most of His commissions and missionary orders were given during the last period of His public ministry among men.

He packed into these significant, far-reaching and eternity-meaning messages that which has influenced the world in the centuries since and will until He comes again. I think His orders, even though given to individuals or small or larger groups are to be binding on the conscience of each individual or groups of individuals or of His churches every-where.

He invited Mary not to touch Him and the other Marys to touch Him. He invited doubting Thomas to put his hands in His wounded hands and side. This was the pragmatic, practical touch of faith, convincing the doubter that his doubts were wrong. Christ is always willing to make a test of His genuineness and of our acceptance of Him.

He taught them what the Old Testament Scriptures said about Him, opening their hearts and minds to look back on the wonderful revelations of the Old Testament. I am wondering if this is not a prophecy and promise of His revelatory visit to us in our days of ignorance and darkness. He said, **“Peace be unto you,” “Be not afraid.”**

The hearts of the disciples were distressed and full of all sorts of complexities and confusion. They were afraid of the overpowering ecclesiastical, political and military organizations of that day, which were unanimously against Him.

He came into their midst and told them that they need not be afraid and that their best usefulness could be when they were fully filled with peace, the peace that His power would give to them as they faced their difficult tasks.

He told them to cast their empty nets on the right side of the ship. They evidently were disobeying Him in their going back to their old jobs, away from His spiritual kingdom, but He desired to encourage them, even in their disobedience, and told them to fish on Christ's side of the ship. Disobedience always causes failure. If we are unwilling to do God's will, He will not let us have our way. Many Christians today are fishing on the wrong side of the ship. When they cast their nets according to Christ's commands and follow Him implicitly and obediently, then the schools of fishes will find their nets.

He chided them for their lack of understanding of the Scriptures and their lagging faith in Him as the risen Lord. The most consummate wastes of all this world are the wastes of misunderstanding and lagging faith. Our losses count into the billions because we do not trust Him and do not follow Him.

He probed their souls and pressed their consciences on the great doctrine of love's debtorship. He craves the best of our love. We must love Him, if we satisfy Him, **"more than these,"** whether it be our business, our pleasure, our comradeships, or our dearest ties; and He says if we love Him we will show it in feeding His lambs, His little sheep, and His sheep.

He rebuked them twice for trying to settle dates and seasons about His return and His disposition of the destinies of His people. These rebukes are found in John 21:21-24 and Acts 1:6, 7. It is not our business to settle times and seasons which are in the Father's hands and will.

The doctrine of the Lord's second coming should not anywhere be used as a divisive matter, nor should it be used to delay us nor hinder us nor stop us in the building of the lines of His far-flung missionary program. He not only told us to wait and watch and pray about His return, but He told us also to work.

He said in that immortal fourteenth chapter of John, in the twelfth verse, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."** And in the twenty-first verse, **"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."** And in the twenty-third verse, **"If a man love me, he will keep my words."**

So work is a part of His program for us, touching His return, and there is a lot of work to do. Souls all around us are lost; sick everywhere need comfort and strength; the ignorant in every place need the light of God's truth. The missionary, educational and benevolent organizations and institutions should be reinforced and we should give ourselves in a wholehearted cooperation to bringing in His kingdom and to the accomplishment of His world-will.

We cannot be faithful to His last orders and be idle and non-cooperative.

Waiting and watching and praying for His return are not substitutes nor alibis nor good excuses for a failure to do His will and to work out His program.

He gave them His wonderful promise of witnessing power, especially recorded in Acts 1:8. He says: **“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come unto you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem (City Missions), and in all Judea (District Missions), and in Samaria (State and Home Missions), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Foreign Missions).”**

And immediately after giving this order He left them and the men in white promised that He would come back.

These are some of the things He did and said. We wish we had a record of the other things He said and did in these wonderful forty days, but this is enough for us to be glad over and to find full occupation until He comes again.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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