

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Jesus Appears to the Apostles and to Thomas

### John 20:19-31

## Opening

Gathering: Give examples of when someone was blamed for something while others were just as guilty.

Today's Focus: All of Jesus' apostles were slow to believe He had risen, but Jesus forgave them.

Key Verses: *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.* John 20:29

*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name.* John 20:30-31

Opening Prayer

## Lesson

Jesus First Appears Easter Morning (*John 20:10-18*)

Who did Jesus appear to first after He rose?

Mark 16:9 = Mary of Magdala (in Galilee)

Did she recognize Jesus as soon as she saw Him? = She thought they relocated the body

John 20:10-15 = No, she assumed He was the gardener

How did she come to realize who He really was?

John 20:16 = He said her name, she recognized his voice

What did Mary do when she realized her Lord was really alive?

John 20:17-18 = She hugged Him then went and told the disciples she had seen Jesus

How did the disciples react to this terrific news?

Mark 16:10-11 = Disciples didn't believe her story

Jesus Appears Again Easter Morning (*Matthew 28:8-10*)

Who did He appear to next?

Matthew 28:8-9 = The women going back from the tomb

What did Jesus say to them?

Matthew 28:10 = Go tell my disciples to meet Me in Galilee

How did the disciples react to this amazing confirmation of Mary's earlier report?

Luke 24:9-11 = They didn't believe the women, it didn't make sense to them

Jesus Appears Easter Afternoon (*Luke 24:13-32*)

What happened as a couple of believers walked back home to Emmaus that afternoon?

Luke 24:13-15 = Jesus joined up with them as they discussed the events

Were they more observant than Mary and recognize Jesus when He caught up with them?

Luke 24:16-18 = No, *they were kept from recognizing Him ... their faces downcast*

How did they explain Jesus' story to this stranger?

Luke 24:19-24 = Powerful prophet; killed by priests; Messiah hopeful; empty tomb

How did Jesus answer their confusion?

Luke 24:25-27 = He used the Scriptures to explain what had happened and why

How did they finally recognize who this stranger really was?

Luke 24:28-32 = Jesus acted as host at dinner, gave thanks and gave them bread

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### The Response of Believers (*Luke 24:33-35*)

Although it was dark and dangerous outside, what did these disciples do?

Luke 24:33 = They *returned at once to Jerusalem* and found the apostles  
Had anything else happened since these men had left Jerusalem?

Luke 24:34 (*1 Corinthians 15:5*) = Jesus had appeared to Peter  
After hearing this update from the apostles, what did the two do?

Luke 24:35 = They told their story  
After four appearances, did the apostles finally believe and understand?  
Mark 16:12-13 = *They did not believe them either*

### Jesus' Fifth Appearance (*Luke 24:36-43*)

What amazing thing then happened that helped them believe?

Luke 24:36 = Jesus appeared among them while they were still talking  
Did Jesus just sneak through the door and walk in?

John 20:19 = No, the doors were locked, He just appeared  
With this new strong evidence, did the disciples finally believe and understand?  
Luke 24:37 = No, they thought He was a ghost

### The Resurrected Body (*1 Corinthians 15:35-50*)

How does Paul help explain why Jesus wasn't recognized and could appear behind doors?

1 Corinthians 15:35, 39-40 = He was in His resurrected body, not earthly body  
How is the resurrected body different than the earthly body?

1 Corinthians 15:41-44 = Raised body is imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual  
What analogy does Paul give us to help understand that we don't keep our earthly bodies?

1 Corinthians 15:36-38 = Seed - dies in the ground and grows to its mature body  
How does Paul describe the resurrected Jesus?

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 = The second Adam is spiritual, while the first was natural  
What does this mean for us?

1 Corinthians 15:48-50 = We'll also receive the resurrected spiritual body like Jesus

### No Need For Ghostbusters (*Luke 24:38-41*)

How did Jesus try to prove that He wasn't just a ghost?

Luke 24:38-39 = He offered for them to touch His flesh and bones

Why didn't He say "flesh and blood"? = His blood had been poured out to give us life - atonement

Leviticus 17:11 (10-14) = Natural life is in the blood, Blood makes atonement

Genesis 9:4 = *Do not eat meat that has its lifeblood in it*

John 19:34 = Jesus' blood was poured out when He was pierced on cross

Hebrews 9:12-15 = The blood of Christ sets us free under the new covenant - atonement

Now, did these doubting disciples finally believe and understand?

Luke 24:40-41a = No, they were too amazed for it to sink in, too good to be true

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Let's Try Another Approach (*Luke 24:41-43*)

What else did Jesus do to prove it was really Him in the flesh?

Luke 24:41b-43 = He took some fish and ate it

Did this help convince these skeptical disciples?

John 20:20 = Yes, they were overjoyed

How did Mark record Jesus' appearance to the doubting and scared apostles?

Mark 16:14 = He rebuked them for their lack of faith and refusal to believe witnesses

Note: Luke 24:44-49 is understood to have occurred weeks later, after time in Galilee (v49)

His Peace (*John 20:21*)

What words did Jesus repeat that He first said when He appeared to the disciples?

John 20:21a = *Peace be with you!* - Normal Jewish greeting – *shalom* in Hebrew

What was He saying more than just *Hello*? = They were afraid for their lives

John 14: 27 = He was giving them His heavenly Peace through the Spirit

Did this Peace mean that they would be freed from troubles?

John 16:33 = No, troubles will come in this world, but Jesus overcomes the world

Are Christ's disciples to avoid the world and Peacefully await His return?

John 20:21 = No, He has sent us into the world

How can we Peacefully be of this world?

John 17:14-18 = We're not of the world, we're *sent into* the world with protection

The Office of the Keys (*John 20:22-23*)

How did Jesus give His Peace to the apostles?

John 20:22 = *He breathed on them*

How could Jesus give His Spirit just by breathing on them?

Genesis 2:7 = Man was given life by God's breath

What privilege and responsibility came with this giving of the Spirit?

John 20:23 = Pronouncing God's forgiveness to the repentant and warning the non-repentant

Why is this called the *Office of the Keys*?

Matthew 16:19 = Jesus gave the Church these keys to heaven

When to Forgive (*1 Corinthians 5*)

How do we Christians know which sins God forgives and He does not forgive?

1 John 1:8-10 = Forgives those which are confessed, Retains those not confessed

What are we to do with those who do not confess and repent?

Matthew 18:15-17 = *Treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector* - avoid him

What does this mean? Shouldn't we be proud of freely forgiving sins of fellow Christians?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7, 12-13 = *Expel the wicked man from among you* - yeast

What are we to do when the excommunicated finally sees his sin and repents?

2 Corinthians 2:6-8 = Forgive him and love him

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### Doubting Thomas (*John 20:24-26*)

- Was Jesus' appearance to the apostles enough proof for other disciples that He was alive?  
John 20:24-25 = No, Thomas required personal physical proof to believe
- Was Thomas known for having a slow and doubting faith?  
John 11:7-8, 16 = Thomas was ready to die with Jesus in Jerusalem  
John 14:2, 4-5 = Thomas wanted to follow Jesus to His Father's house
- When was Thomas given this special opportunity to personally see and feel Jesus alive?  
John 20:26 = A week later, same locked doors, Jesus appeared and gave Peace

### Thomas' Great Confession (*John 20:27-29*)

- Did Jesus know what Thomas had said?  
John 20:27 = Yes, he offered his hands and side to Thomas
- Did Thomas put his finger into Jesus' hands and his hand into His side as he said?  
John 20:28 = No, he immediately confessed his faith - Climax of John's gospel
- What message did Jesus leave for those of us who weren't around to physically see Him?  
John 20:29 = *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*
- How are we blessed for believing in Him who we have not seen?  
1 Peter 1:8-9 = We're filled with great joy and receive the salvation of our souls

### Other Appearances (*John 20:30-31*)

- Was this the last appearance Jesus made before ascending?  
Acts 1:3 = Appeared many times to various disciples over 40 days
- What appearances did Paul list?  
1 Corinthians 15:5-8 = Peter, Apostles, over 500 disciples, James, Apostles again, Paul
- Did John try to record all of Jesus' appearances?  
John 20:30 = No, there are many more *not recorded in this book*
- Why did John give us the stories that he did?  
John 20:31 = *That you may believe ... and by believing ... have life in His name*

### Closing Prayer

### Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Why is it important to me that Jesus truly rose physically in the flesh?  
(*Luke 24:26-27; John 20:24-25; Acts 26:8; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*)
2. When has my faith been weak with doubt?  
(*Mark 16:9-14; 9:23-24; Luke 24:11, 19-27, 36-38; John 20:24-25, 29; 1 Timothy 1:12-14*)
3. How have I felt the peace of Christ?  
(*John 20:19-21; 14:27; 16:33; Numbers 6:24-26; Psalm 85:7-8; Luke 2:13-14; Phil 4:4-7; Col 3:15*)
4. When have I especially recognized Jesus as my Lord and my God?  
(*John 20:28-31; 11:25-27; 13:13; Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46-49; Romans 10:9-13; Philippians 2:9-11*)
5. What witnesses and events have strengthened my faith?  
(*John 20:30-31; Matthew 4:4; Acts 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 12:3; Ephesians 2:19-22; 6:10-18; 1 John 4:2*)