

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

CLASS TEN – THE RESURRECTION

Introduction

Welcome to the final class in our series Who is Jesus Christ? Before we dive into the class, I wanted to thank several people who were invaluable in presenting the classes. First, here in the back, I wanted to thank David Bruce and Carol McCurdy up in the booth for their hard work in providing sound and lighting. They deserve a big hand for what they do every week for us. [START WALKING] . I also want to thank Alvin Modest – our excellent head usher – for his help with lighting. Todd Reynolds – who is not in the room - played a key role connecting my DVD player with the system here at Meadowcreek. Alan Rouse – for asking me to do the class. Kendall Knight – who helped several times backstage. Peter Barry – for coordinating musical interludes. My wife [KISS] whose ladies Bible study group (Collier’s Chicks) first pioneered the idea of using movie scenes and who was very supportive of me throughout the past 10 weeks.

Let’s review what we have covered. [PAUSE AT EXIT; THEN CONTINUE TO STAGE AND BACK TO CURTAIN] First, we looked at how people view Jesus – both today and in the 1st Century. We looked at OT prophesy about the Messiah. We looked at the oldest part of the NT (written before the gospels) and what it says about Jesus. We talked about the Incarnation and what that means. We studied Jesus teaching about the Kingdom and the freedom it brings us. We looked at what Jesus was really like. We talked about Jesus – the Friend of Sinners. We covered Jesus teaching on faith. Last week, we looked at the cross. Today, we will end with the Resurrection.

Oh, but there is one more person I want to thank. [TAKE HOLD OF CURTAIN] The Wizard of Oz himself. The man behind the curtain. [RAISE CURTAIN] . Larry Cole – who makes the screen work – song lyrics, Richard’s Power Point and my movies. For what he does every week, Larry also deserves a big hand.

The Empty Tomb

We will start with a movie scene. It is very brief with no dialogue. Please pay careful attention or you will miss what is happening. Lights please. [PLAY SCENE] Lights back on please. Turn to John 20. [WALK TO PODIUM]. Think of the most joyful moments in your life. Marriage, birth of a child, graduation, your first home, victory over illness, successful transplant, baptism, baptism of friends, baptizing your own child. Think of the most joyful and inspiring moments in the news. The Olympic opening ceremonies. Iraqi citizens holding up blue fingers to show they voted. New Year’s Day back in the year 2000. The Fall of the Berlin Wall. Nelson Mandela’s release from prison. The Bicentennial in 1976 and fireworks at the Statue of Liberty. Man Walking on the Moon in 1969. MLK at the Lincoln Memorial. Think back further. VJ Day and VE Day which ended WWII. The cover of Life Magazine showing the soldier kissing a girl on Times Square. We could go further back into history for inspiring moments of great joy. None compare to this moment – they all pale in significance – this is the most joyful moment of all time – the greatest joy ever experienced. 20:1-18. I have seen the Lord! He is alive! He rose from the dead. Can you imagine the joy? How they must have felt? :20 says the disciples were overjoyed

when they say Jesus. More joy than the law allows. Jesus had promised to give them joy that the world could never take away. And here it was. Permanent lasting joy. No matter what would happen later in their lives. Hardship. Persecution. Suffering. Martyrdom. Nothing could take away the joy of knowing that Jesus rose from the dead.

How many folks read the book or saw the movie – *The DaVinci Code*? What was the importance of Mary Magdalene in that story? She was married to Jesus and they had kids – a bloodline that continued. Radical scholars are fascinated by this notion – point to 2nd Century Gnostic works that talk about Mary M, but have no basis in historical fact. But what is the true significance of Mary Magdalene? Why do we remember her 2,000 years later? She was the first witness to the Resurrection. The first one Jesus chose to appear to. Not Peter or John or anyone else. Mary M. Who came to his tomb to anoint his body and wouldn't leave even when it was discovered empty. They have taken my Lord and I don't know where he is. You don't have to be the most important disciple in the church. You don't have to be talented. You don't have to be smart. You don't have to be a leader. All you have to do is love Jesus, be devoted to him and he blesses you. He will bring you great joy. He will never abandon you.

How Important is the Resurrection?

Turn to 1 Cor 15. ^ We looked at this passage briefly in Week 3, but I thought we should look at it again. In this letter, Paul has been calling the Corinthians back to the gospel. Here in Chapter 15 he sums up his appeal. :1-8. As I said before, this is the oldest account of the Resurrection in the NT. Written about 55 AD, it is 10 years older than Mark; 20 years older than Luke or Matthew; 40 years older than John. And it is in fact older than that. Paul says he passed onto the Corinthians what he earlier received. He preached to them what he himself received when he first became a disciple. Many scholars believe :3-7 is an early creed. A statement of belief about the Resurrection the earliest Christians were taught and memorized before any books of the NT were written. Paul was converted in the 30s – not long after Jesus died. Some scholars believe Paul was taught this creed by the earliest disciples in the Jerusalem Church – Peter, James or perhaps Barnabas. I think Paul is saying he received it directly from Jesus. Either way, it shows us the Resurrection was central to the message of the gospel from the very beginning. Acts 1:22 says witness to the Resurrection is the essence of being an apostle. All 5 of the sermons of Peter recorded in Acts include the Resurrection as a central topic. It is mentioned in Paul's earliest letters – Gal and I Thess.

:12-21 As Alan taught us in his class, apparently some in the Corinthian church were saying there is no resurrection from the dead. But Paul says emphatically no, Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. And furthermore, the Resurrection is central to our faith. Without the Resurrection, everything we preach is useless. Our faith is useless. Without the Resurrection, Paul was a false witness and we are still in our sins. The Resurrection is the fact that validates everything about our faith. Proves who Jesus was. Proves he died for our sins. Proves he was the Son of God. You can't have Christianity without the Resurrection! People who want to downplay the Resurrection and say it is just a nice story, but keep the rest of Christianity are fooling themselves. You can't separate Christianity from the Resurrection. The whole message hinges on the Resurrection. The gospel isn't just about the cross; it is about Jesus coming out of the grave. Brothers and

sisters, I don't think we talk enough about the Resurrection. I don't think we focus on it enough. It is a source of incredible joy. We should revel in it often!

Look at verse :30-34. Paul says if there is no Resurrection, we might as well eat, drink and be merry. If there is no Resurrection, then the Hokey Pokey really is what it's all about. Paul says the Resurrection is why he does what he does. Why he was willing to sacrifice and suffer and face danger. Why he persevered even though it was not easy. Why he ultimately was willing to be in chains and die for Jesus. Because of the Resurrection. He says it is ignorant to think there is no Resurrection. He even says it is a sin.

:50-57. Because of Jesus death and Resurrection, we all have the hope of being raised from the dead. We can look forward to the day we will be immortal. We can look forward to eternal life. Death cannot defeat us. The power of sin has been broken. The victory is ours. That celebration of victory in Times Square in 1945 is nothing compared to this. Victory over death. We have that because of the Resurrection. Again, brothers and sisters, I don't think we think about this enough. As Richard says, we should think about heaven every day. Think about the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and gives to us the same promise of eternal life. The Hokey Pokey is not what it's all about. It's all about the tremendous hope and joy we have because Jesus rose from the dead.

As we close, I wanted to end it with one final movie scene. A musical scene that reminds us of the awesome Lord we serve, Jesus Christ. Lights, please.