

John 71 – New Creations: New Beginnings

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John 20:19-31

Prologue

- Events occurring before Jesus appeared to the Eleven gives perspective; our focus is John's gospel theme
 - Christ appeared to Peter, but no details are given (Lk 24:34; 1Co 15:5)
 - Christ appeared to Cleopas and friends on the Emmaus Road; these men immediately sought the Eleven giving them the news: Christ is risen (Lk 24:13-36)
 - Belief in bodily resurrection will require concrete proof

Doubt Feeds Fear (Jn 1:54; Jn 4:18)

- If Jews can kill God; they will certainly kill people: Fear
 - Eleven huddled behind locked doors, fearing the Jews
 - Another reference to the Jews as a group distinct from Jesus followers heralds what is to come (Jn 19:38)
 - Mary could not confirm Jesus' bodily resurrection, she could not touch Him; this weakens her testimony (Jn 20:17-18)
 - Prophecy Jesus made three nights ago will be fulfilled: their sorrow turned to joy (Jn 16:20-22)

*These Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah and their King; then they executed Him
It was they who said He proclaimed Himself King of the Jews as a charge for Pilate.
(Jn 19:12-15)*

Peace to You – Not a Phantom

- Christ's greeting to His followers, "Peace to you" (Fear not! I Am! is implied) (Jh 14:22-27)
 - He is from the Father in bodily form like us (Jh 1:14-18)
 - Christ shows His wounds, allowing them to touch Him confirming His identity and body; throughout eternity
 - Again, "Peace to you"
 - John's Great Commission: As I was sent, I send you

This is also a death blow to Gnosticism, and today's evolutionary belief, that man's highest goal: To evolve into spiritual beings; however, this would put us on par with Satan and angels; not God's plan (2Co 6:1-3; Jh 1:14)

First Day of the Week

- We need to understand the significance of the First Day of the Week and its corresponding number: One
 - One signifies unity and completeness in God; Trinity (3) as Godhead (1) is complete needing nothing; those in Christ are complete in Him and the Father (Jh 17:20-24)
 - First day corresponds to Creation (Jh 1:1-5)
 - In the chaos of Darkness Christ brings Light: Father's glory shines into the Darkness through Him (Jh 1:1-9)

John's major theme is beginnings; just like his Opening Hymn began with Beginnings: Creation. Many are One in Christ as Trinity are One in the Father: All become unified in the Body (Jh 1:1-5)

Christ *Breathed* on Them

- This mirrored His breathing life into Adam: His image into Man (Moral self-awareness exclusive to Man) (Jh 2:7)
 - This gave man life but not *newness* of life (Ro 6:4)
 - Christ was giving His followers *newness of life* based on His death, purchased with His blood (Ro 6:1-11)
 - This was a *first fruit* of what they would receive at Pentecost (Shavuot) First Fruit (Wheat loaves)

This mirrors God giving Saul a new heart and the Spirit coming onto and leaving him. Before Pentecost, the Spirit did not reside in the person permanently: Old Covenant. Different from Barley First Fruits (Bikkurim) (Nu 11:26-29; 1Sa 10:2-10)

Forgiveness of Sin – Unity in God

- Old Covenant – Only God could forgive sins; priests only offered sacrifices for confessed sin (Mt 12:12)
 - Christ forgave sins, revealing Himself as God
- New Covenant – All can forgive sins based on will of God contained in His Word(s)
 - Now that His followers are one in Him, they (we) also have the power to forgive sin if repentance is presence

This is not independent of God but in concert with His will since they, and all believers, have God's mind
This implies maturity in both Christ and the Bible and practice; i.e., discernment (1e 5:11-14)
Forgiving people of sin who have sinned is not forgiveness but sin on your part; a Satanic act (Ja 2:1, 8-10, 12-15)

Unity in Christ is New Beginnings

- Thomas (Taoma), the Twin (Taama), was not present
 - When told about Jesus' appearance and words Thomas would not believe their testimony
 - He would only believe if he touched Jesus's wounds
 - Thomas was asking for the same proof they received; remember, they did not believe the report of the women
 - Thomas was no different than his contemporaries

Taoma was probably a nickname and was a Hebrew play on words which was common
He may have received this moniker if twins were uncommon (Jacob and Esau)
His actual name was unknown though some sources do refer to him as Judas

Jesus Appears Eight Days Later

- Eight is the number of *new beginnings*
 - Males were circumcised on the eighth day entering God's covenant (Gn 17:10-14)
 - Eight persons in ark for man's *new beginnings* (1Pe 3:18,22)
- Jesus appears eight days later (Sunday) when Thomas is present
 - This will mark a change, a *new beginning*, of faith alone

Jesus Gives Thomas Proof

- Jesus offers Thomas the *same* proof He offered others: Touch His wounds proving His bodily reality and not an underworld phantom
 - Issue is belief in the *bodily* resurrection
 - Thomas believes when he has verified this new concept, hitherto unknown, bodily resurrection
 - This will not be available for future believers; Christ will not appear for each believer to personally verify

Faith is Not Signs

- The followers were little different from contemporary Jews who wanted tangible proof as foundation for faith
 - Jesus openly condemned this approach knowing that signs do not substantiate faith (Mt 16:4; 1Co 1:22-24)
 - Followers were again behind locked doors, their sign did not negate their fear; i.e., little faith
 - Apostles followed Christ based on faith, He had not performed any *signs*, faith is always the basis for belief

Thomas' Declaration

- Once Thomas sees and touches he proclaims, "My Lord and my God!"
- Christ institutes a new *beginning* of faith without signs
 - Blessed are those who believe (faith) but have not seen (Jh 11:3)
 - Even on the Emmaus Road Christ was not touched
 - Henceforth, knowledge would be by faith alone in Bible

Written So You May Believe

- With Christ's statement on the necessity of faith, John states purpose of his Gospel: So we may believe; thus, from *Opening Hymn* to this statement John shows:
 - Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
 - By believing you can have {eternal} life in His name alone (Jn 4:8-12)
 - He strengthened Apostolic testimony by the many other miracles which are not in John's Gospel: Slow to believe

Faith New Beginnings

In these two appearances Christ changes from Old Testament to New Testament economy

Jews Who Loved the Law

- Jews who loved the Law, though it condemned them, rejected Messiah and had Gentiles execute Him so *their* hands would be *clean* for Pesach (Jn 2:10-11)
 - From the moment they rejected Jesus they revealed themselves as *False Jews*, joined not to God but to Satan
 - Jesus revealed to them the truth of their hatred of God and thus love of Satan; for this Truth they executed Him (Jn 5:44)

Christ Calls Forth *True* Jews

- When Jesus appeared to the Eleven, He breathed in them the life of the New Covenant which separated them from those desiring the Old Covenant (Joh 4:21-31)
 - Christ cast out those desiring the Old Covenant
 - For those who desired the New Covenant He accepted into His body (First Fruit Dispensation) (1Co 12:12-20)
 - Gentiles do not become Jews by salvation; we do become children of Abraham's faith (Gal 3:27-29)

All who are saved during First Fruit Dispensation enter Christ's called-out assembly; Church
All stand equal before Him; however, during the Great Tribulation Christ again calls out *True Jews*
The Millennial Kingdom fulfills Christ's promises to believing Jews for an earthly kingdom; there will be Gentiles also

Old Covenant Built on Signs

- God revealed Himself by fire, smoke, lightning and thunder on Mt Sinai (Ex 19:16-20)
 - This conveyed separation from God; the only position possible between sinners and a holy God
 - It was only through blood sacrifices that sinners could apprehend the true need for Messiah
 - Most Old Covenant sinners believed they could be righteous by doing; Messiah would enslave Gentiles (He 9:22)

New Covenant Built on Christ

- Saved sinners are one with Christ and the Father via the Holy Spirit based on the Christ's sacrifice satisfying God's justice (He 3:21-31; 2Co 5:17)
 - Thus, New Covenant believers come to Mt Zion in fellowship with the Son in His righteousness (He 12:18-24)
 - Based on faith alone, in Christ alone by His Word alone
 - Not intellectual apprehended but spiritually realized by Christ in us, hope of glory (Eph 3:14-21; Col 1:24-28)

Shambles of Church History

- Church history records the subversion of believing congregations by sinners via false teachers (Ro 2:3)
 - Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy
 - Reformation & State-aligned Protestant denominations
 - Extra-church denominations & Cults: Methodists, etc.
 - Evangelicalism adopting scientism and social justice
 - Represents same failure Jews experienced in OT

God Saves Individuals

- God only saves individuals, individually, from Adam to you and me; He did not, does not save groups
 - The death of the *old man* is as individual as the death of each person separating from their fleshly body (Ep 4:20-24)
 - One's relationship in Christ is not determined by what one does but what one does shows everyone whom you worship (Ro 4:1-13)
 - Salvation is of God alone: Sovereignty (Ro 11:1-16)

One Apostle to Restore

- John and Peter had a special relationship evident from the night of Jesus' arrest and Peter's denial
 - Though Jesus appeared to Simon, He had not dealt with Peter's guilt and consequence of denying Christ
 - John's final chapter deals with Jesus reminding Peter of his calling
 - This gives us hope as each of us deny Christ every time we choose to sin; it *never* goes unnoticed (1Jo 1:8-10)