

International Bible Lessons Commentary
John 20:19-23

New International Version

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, March 22, 2015

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 22, 2015**, is from **John 20:19-23**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

International Bible Lesson Commentary

John 20:19-23

(John 20:19) On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with

the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”

Early Sunday morning, the first day of the week, John wrote that Mary Magdalene, Peter, and probably himself as the author of this gospel saw the empty tomb of Jesus, but they did not understand the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from the dead. Later, two angels and Jesus spoke to Mary, and she told the disciples what they said. That same evening, Jesus appeared to His disciples in a locked house and spoke to them. The disciples were afraid of the Jews who might come and arrest them too, so they had hidden behind locked doors. Jesus had promised He would leave them with His peace (John 14:27). So, when He appeared to them in the house His first words were, “Peace be with you.” Jesus greeted them and gave them the same peace that quieted the storm when they were storm-tossed and feared death in a boat (Mark 4:39). They needed His peace once again to quiet all of their fears regarding His sudden and unexpected appearance as well as the Jews who had crucified Jesus.

(John 20:20) After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

When Jesus rose from the dead, He did not rise as a ghost as the disciples thought of ghosts (Mark 6:49). Jesus rose

in a glorified human body that still showed the marks of His crucifixion, but He was also able to pass through walls and appear and disappear as He willed. Just as the disciples rejoiced when they saw Jesus calm a storm as a real person, so they rejoiced when they saw Jesus again as their Lord and as a real person.

(John 20:21) Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Jesus again gave them His peace. Jesus can still the storms outside of us, and Jesus can quiet the fears and storms within our hearts and minds. The Father sent Jesus forth for ministry after Jesus had received to the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples that He would send them forth for ministry as He had been sent forth – after they had received the Holy Spirit. Their ministry would proclaim primarily the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus to save His people from their sins and grant believers in Him eternal life and the filling of the Holy Spirit, who would abide with them forever.

(John 20:22) And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit came to them from the Father through Jesus as He promised. This was the first time that the disciples received the Holy Spirit, because Jesus’ death and resurrection enabled them to be not only forgiven for

their sins but also cleansed from all their sins – Jesus’ death and resurrection made them morally and spiritually clean so they could receive the Holy Spirit. Later, they would receive the Holy Spirit as the Power from on High who would empower their ministry. Because they knew the Holy Spirit from Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit on them before His ascension into heaven, they recognized their baptism with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday was actually a filling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit would fill them often for ministry and preaching (Acts 4:8; 4:31).

(John 20:23) If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

On the one hand, Jesus gave this command to His original disciples, who would lead the Church and be responsible for Church government and discipline in New Testament times. The way they governed the Church would become a model for all the Church leaders who followed them, for all who had the responsibility of governing a church. Sincere repentance for sin and a return to faithful obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord according to the Scriptures were conditions that sinners must fulfill to be forgiven. If people repented and placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, they fulfilled the conditions set forth in the gospel to be forgiven and receive eternal life. If people

persisted in disobedience and rebellion against God, they retained their sins and Church leaders would acknowledge that fact for the sake of the Church and all concerned. On the other hand, Christians need to forgive personal sins or wrongs against them for their own spiritual well-being; however, unrepentant sinners retain true moral guilt for having wronged another and they need to repent and ask forgiveness from those they have wronged when this can be wisely done. Christians recognize that those who have sinned against them and have not repented or asked for forgiveness are retaining their sin and guilt by their own choice to not repent. Consider also, Matthew 18:15-35.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How many disciples saw Jesus on Resurrection Sunday?
2. How did Jesus get into the locked house?
3. What did Jesus show His disciples?
4. What two blessings did Jesus give His disciples?
5. How did Jesus give His most important gift to His disciples?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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