

Witnesses to New Life

Key Verses: *“Ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”*
—Luke 24:48,49

Selected Scripture:
Luke 24:36-53

TODAY'S LESSON IS THE

account of one of Jesus' appearances to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. His eleven disciples were gathered in Jerusalem, some already having seen him since his resurrection. As the eleven were discussing their various individual encounters with the risen Lord, Jesus appeared in their midst, and said, “Peace be unto you.” (Luke 24:36) He had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, and as a result the dis-

ciples were terrified and frightened.—vs. 37

Jesus, attempting to reassure them that it was he, their Master, said, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.” (vss. 39,40) We are not to think from this that Jesus had somehow been resurrected as a human being. This was not possible, as he had given up human life forever by laying it down in sacrifice as a ransom for father Adam and his race. He was now a spirit being, resurrected to that condition by the mighty power of God. As a spirit being he could take on the form of a human, and appear as flesh and blood. He did so in this case only to gain

their confidence that it was indeed him, their Lord and Teacher. He also had the power to appear and disappear from their midst instantaneously, which is what had initially frightened them.

As the disciples slowly gained confidence that this was indeed Jesus, he made a strange request, saying, “Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.” (Luke 24:41-43) As a resurrected spirit being, Jesus no longer needed earthly food for sustenance, but here again he chose to further impress upon the minds of the disciples that it was he. No doubt the disciples had seen him eat many times during his earthly ministry, and were very familiar with his habits in this regard. Watching him eat, using the same mannerisms that had been so familiar to them as they observed him on many previous occasions, was surely more convincing evidence to the disciples that this was Jesus.

Having now convinced the disciples as to who he was, Jesus began to instruct them. First, he reminded them that “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” (vss. 44-46) Next, Jesus told the disciples that a great preaching work would soon begin, in which they would have a significant part. This preaching would be “among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (vs. 47) To do this preaching, it was necessary for the disciples to receive God’s Holy Spirit. The Key Verses give Jesus’ instructions to them to remain at Jerusalem, in order that they might receive this ‘power from on high.’ This important event occurred, just as Jesus had promised, ten days later on the Day of Pentecost.—Acts 2 ■