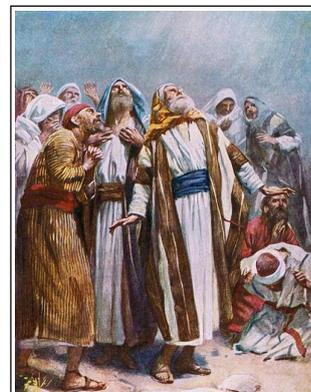




BETWEEN RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

R. Stanley



We over-celebrate Christmas, but under-emphasize Easter. The Christmas story is given only in two Gospels, namely Matthew and Luke. But all the four Gospels present a detailed account of the Resurrection of Jesus. There are just a couple of references to the Birth of Christ in Paul's Epistles (Gal 4:4; 1 Tim 3:16a). But the Resurrection of Christ is repeatedly referred to in the Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament Epistles. According to Paul, the Gospel begins with the death of Christ rather than His birth (1 Cor 15:1-4). It's not the cradle but the cross that's the sign of Christianity. Here lies a weighty reason for the weakness of modern Christianity and its message (1 Cor 15:14,17).

There's no reference in the Bible to the 40 days many Christians observe as Lent just *before* Easter. This is purely a tradition unfounded in the Scriptures. Jesus did not fast for 40 days at the close of His life but at the beginning of His ministry three and a half years before His Crucifixion (Mt 4:1,2,17). But the period of **40 days** Jesus spent with His disciples between His Resurrection and His Ascension is clearly stated in the Bible (Acts 1:3). The Bible records so many events which took place during this period. The outstanding thing was His ten appearances (Mk 16:9-11; Mt 28:9,10; Lk 24:13-32; 24:33,34; Jn 20:19-23; 20:24-29; 21:1-24; Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:44-49,50-53). During these 40 days Jesus was speaking of "the things pertaining to the *Kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:3). These ten appearances give us crowning lessons on the **Kingdom Life**. Jesus began His earthly ministry with preaching the "Kingdom of Heaven" or the "Kingdom of God" (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:14,15). He also concludes it teaching manifestly on the "Kingdom of God." Here's a brief meditation —

1. Appearance to Mary Magdalene

Mark 16:9-11, "When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe."

The first of Christ's appearance was to an ex-demoniac. She had been obviously and notoriously known as a demon-possessed woman. Even after experiencing total deliverance for two or three years she was still known as the one out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (Lk 8:1,2). Why did the Risen Redeemer choose a woman with such a background to be blessed with His first appearance? My answer is, **GRACE!** If she had been a hymnologist, the song, "*Amazing Grace*," would have been her composition! Apostle Paul

would not contradict my imagination, I suppose. This was his experience too, which he narrated to young Timothy: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained **MERCY**, that in me *first* Jesus Christ might show all patience, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1 Tim 1:15,16). I don’t know about you, my friend, but this is my testimony too. There cannot be a worse sinner than me, Stanley. I have nothing to boast of (Eph 2:8,9).

Apostle John’s record of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene gives us another glorious truth. John 20:11-18, “Jesus said to her, ‘Go to My brothers and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ” What an **IDENTIFICATION!** How is that the Creator and Saviour of the world calls us His “brothers?” I hesitate to call even a fellow human being my brother if he has no social status. But my Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is “not ashamed” to call us the wretched sinners as His brothers and sisters (Heb 2:11,12). I kiss His feet, wash them with my tears and wipe them with my short hair! “O Lord, forgive my arrogance that despises those who are less intellectual and less influential than me. Help me to associate with the humble” (Jer 9:23,24; Rom 12:16).

2. Appearance to the women returning from the tomb

Matthew 28:9,10, “As Mary Magdalene and Mary Zebedee went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ And they came and held Him by the feet and *worshipped* Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. *Go and tell* My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me’.”

As per the Gospel record, the first ones to WORSHIP the resurrected Lord were **WOMEN!** Also the **WOMEN** were the first ones sent forth by Jesus to WITNESS for His resurrection! This is not accidental. God has deliberately designed it so. Miriam was a prophetic song leader. She called other women saying, “Sing to the Lord, for He has *triumphed* gloriously” (Ex 15:20,21). Deborah was a prophetic song leader. She sang, “Let all Your *enemies perish*, O Lord! But let those who love You be like the sun when it comes out in full strength” (Judg 4:4; 5:1,31). Hannah’s song was in the spirit of prophecy. She sang, “The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces ... He will give strength to His *King*, and exalt the horn of His anointed” (1 Sam 2:10). It was women who led a singing procession celebrating the *victory* of David over Goliath (1 Sam 18:6,7). Mary’s song was similar to that of Hannah which we call the Magnificat because she magnified the Lord throughout calling Him “mighty” (Lk 1:46-55). The Church is everlastingly indebted to women composers and singers like Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) and Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879). How much the Tamil Church misses Sister Sarah Novaroji (1938-2014)! Had she been alive, she would have given us in this Season new songs on Crucifixion and Resurrection!

Many churches are not comfortable with women preaching from their pulpits. Why not let the women lead praise and worship? Who can deny that their voice is more melodious than that of men? Women can lead singing in our churches on alternate Sundays at least. This will be another Reformation for our congregations as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah

(Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67). The singing procession with shouts of “Hosanna” was the fulfilment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O *daughter* of Zion! Shout, O *daughter* of Jerusalem! Behold, your *King* is coming to you” (Mt 21:4,9; Zech 9:9). You may argue that the “daughter” of Zion simply means the “inhabitants” of Zion. May be, but why are they not called here as the “son” or “sons” of Zion as in Zech 9:13? Whatever be the case, women are not second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God (Gal 3:28). Dear Pastor, why observe only one of the 52 Sundays as Women’s Sunday? Why not at least one Sunday every month? After all, women outnumber men in most of our gatherings! I urge the womenfolk of each Church to represent this matter to the leadership. The only thing to be stressed is that there must be decency, decorum and dignity in their dresses when they stand before the people of God.

Women have a talking talent. This can be used advantageously to gossip the Gospel. In the cultural context of India, women can easily reach women. This is especially true of rural India. The Church must help the womenfolk to organize themselves as teams to reach the villages with the Gospel. Not less than 50% of the Indians are women. Dear sister, will you become a Joanna, a Susanna, a Priscilla, a Tryphena, a Tryphosa, a Persis and a Julia? (Lk 8:2,3; Rom 16:3,12,15).

3. Appearance to the two disciples on Emmaus Road

Mark 16:12,13, “After that, Jesus appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.”

Luke 24:13-32, “Now behold, two of them were travelling the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them ... And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the *Scriptures* the things concerning *Himself*... Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.”

Here comes a call to all Christians to become **BIBLE** lovers and **BIBLE** learners. As days are becoming more and more hectic, the first casualty is our quiet time with the meditation and the study of God’s Word. There’s so much of talk on receiving “blessing,” but the way to true “blessedness” is pointed out in the very first chapter of the longest book in the Bible: Psalm 1:1,2, “Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law he meditates day and night.” Fullness, freshness and fruitfulness are the immediate outcome (v3). According to Evangelist D.L. Moody (1837-1899), “A day without the Bible is ill-spent!” The primary lesson God wanted to teach His people through their wilderness journey of 40 years was that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Dt 8:3,4). This was the first stroke of the sword that Jesus gave Satan (Mt 4:4). How much time do we spend daily to earn bread, and how much time to meditate the Bible?

The most profitable Bible study is to meet **JESUS** in every book of the Bible. He expounded to the Emmaus disciples in "ALL" the Scriptures the things concerning "**HIMSELF**" (Lk 24:27). The Bible is Christocentric. Get hold of a Study Bible like the *Open Bible* which will immensely help you to meet Christ in each of the sixtysix books of the Bible. Any other type of study may tend to be merely academic. This was the problem of the Jews who sought to kill Jesus. They were searching the Scriptures because they thought that in them they had eternal life. But they failed to understand that it was these Old Testament Scriptures which testified of Him the Giver of eternal life (Jn 5:18,39,40). Mere head knowledge without a personal encounter with Jesus! Don't we have so many theological graduates in our pulpits who neither know Jesus nor are known of Him? They know only the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages written on the Cross, but not the Lord of Glory crucified on it (Jn 19:19,20; 1 Cor 2:8).

4. Appearance to Simon Peter

Luke 24:33,34, The two Emmaus disciples returned to Jerusalem, and told the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to *Simon!*" Apostle Paul acknowledges this fact in 1 Corinthians 15:4,5, "Jesus rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and He was seen by *Cephas*, then by the twelve."

Why a special appearance to Simon Peter? This is a million dollar question which cannot be satisfactorily answered by any Bible scholar. As for me, I take it as God's **CHOICE**. All the children of God are said to be chosen in Christ even before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13). From among these chosen ones God chooses men and women specially for some specific purposes. For example, Paul was a "chosen vessel" to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15; Gal 1:1). Rufus was "chosen in the Lord" for a purpose not stated in the Bible (Rom 16:13). Apostle John wrote his Second Epistle to "an elect lady" (2 Jn 1). Simon Peter was chosen to open the door of the Kingdom to Jews first and then to the Gentiles (Acts 2:14,40,41; 10:17-20,44,45). It was for this purpose Jesus gave him "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 16:19). We as believers must recognize and respect those who are specially chosen by the Lord for specific tasks. Let's not dare to challenge God's choice and earn His fury like Aaron and Miriam or Korah and Dathan (Num12:1,2,9; 16:3; Jude 11c).

God's choice is not based on the person's merit but His mercy (Rom 9:13-15). On what basis did Jesus choose twelve of His disciples to become Apostles? In the Gospel records their defects outnumber their strengths: Faithlessness, Prayerlessness, Worshiplessness, Unforgiveness, Competitiveness, Inquisitiveness, Compassionlessness, Couragelessness, Narrowmindedness and Earthlymindedness. But Jesus chose them not only to lead the Church but also to judge Israel in the future Kingdom (Lk 22:29,30). Let's salute His foreknowledge behind any choice!

5. Appearance to ten disciples in the upper room

Luke 24:36-49, As the two Emmaus disciples were saying these things to the disciples in Jerusalem, "Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you!' But

they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit ... He showed them His hands and His feet ... And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them ... Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations ... Behold, I send the *Promise* of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with *power* from on High.”

John 20:19-23, “Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, ‘*Peace* be with you! ... As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the *Holy Spirit*. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ ”

Jesus having spoken “Peace” to His disciples, sends them forth to spread the message of peace everywhere. This is applicable to each of us His children. Once we were enemies of God but now we are reconciled to Him through the death and the resurrection of His Son (Rom 5:10). Once we were His opponents, but now we have become the exponents of His message. God has made us **AMBASSADORS** for Christ by entrusting us with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18,19). Soulwinning means bringing people to Christ to make peace with God (v20). We are peace-makers as the responsible sons of God (Mt 5:9). Peace with God to enjoy the peace of God! Peace with God to experience peace with one another! (Prov 16:7).

*O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace!*

*My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad, the honours of Thy name!*

— Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

We cannot fulfil the ministry of reconciliation in our own strength however smart and clever we may be. That’s why the Resurrected Saviour blew on the disciples so they might receive the **HOLY SPIRIT** (Jn 20:22). This experience was a foretaste of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit they were to receive on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4,5).

6. Appearance to the eleven including Thomas

John 20:24-29, “Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not *believe*.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here ... Do not be unbelieving, but *believing*.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have *believed*.’ ”

Christian life is a walk of **FAITH**. Apostle Paul testifies on behalf of God's children, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). This is because "we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (4:18). Apostle Peter resonates the same truth: 1 Peter 1:8, "Though now you do not see Christ, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory." Sensationalism has overtaken modern Christendom. People look for feelings. Feelings can be there, but they may follow faith and not precede it. The *fact* of God's Word comes first; *faith* on it is next; *feelings* may or may not follow. Do not ever change this order. In this age of science and technology, this of course is difficult. But without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). With a note of lament Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Lk 18:8b). As we approach the end of endtime, let us encourage one another to maintain the virgin faith and grow in it (Heb 3:12,13). Our very "living" is to be by faith (Rom 1:17; Gal 2:20). In the Book of Acts, those who became Christians were frequently called "those who *believed!*" The apostles encouraged God's children to "continue in the faith" to experience the blessings of the Kingdom even amidst suffering and hardship (Acts 14:22).

7. Appearance to the seven apostles by the Sea of Galilee

John 21:1-24, "After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias ... Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples ... when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus ... He said to them, 'Cast the net on the *right side!*' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish ... When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you *love* Me more than these?' He replied, 'Yes Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He asked him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you *love* Me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He asked him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you *love* Me?' Peter was grieved because He asked him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he answered, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'" In the next verses of this passage Jesus foretold the kind of death Peter would have, and He rebuked him for his inquisitiveness over the affairs of John.

Several of these disciples were expert fishermen. But their labour was fruitless that night. When they followed the simple **GUIDANCE** of the risen Lord, there was an unusual catch (v6a). Too often we depend more on our skill and experience than the simple guidance of God through His Spirit. Here's a strategical lesson for the missionaries who are frustrated over fruitlessness in mission fields in spite of toiling and moiling. Take a break from your schedule to wait on the Lord for fresh guidance. There's no field of work where God cannot guide us. The disciples did not think what a carpenter knew about fishing! If the sailors, experienced though, had listened to Paul the tentmaker, who was led by God, they would not have incurred so much of disaster and loss (Acts 27:9-11,21).

Another sacred lesson Jesus teaches us through this seventh appearance is that a genuine, undivided, **SUPREME LOVE** for Him is the indispensable qualification for whatever ministry He has called us to (Jn 21:15-17). This is especially true of those who are called to pastoral ministry. The congregational members do not belong to the Pastor. Jesus emphasizes His ownership by saying, “*My lambs ... My sheep ... My sheep*” (vv15-17). The Church is what He has “purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Pastors are simply His servants to oversee and shepherd the sheep. Our commitment to bless the sheep will be directly proportional to our devotion to the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet 5:4). Jesus repeated the question thrice to Peter. Yes, Pastors must frequently subject themselves to self-examination so they might flush out secondary motives from their ministry. Another observation: This is the only appearance in which Jesus makes a mention of His Return (Jn 21:23). Yes, only those who have a lavish love for Him will “love His appearing” (2 Tim 4:8).

*My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine —
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou:
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!*

— William R. Featherston, 1846-1873

8. Appearance to the eleven and 500 believers on Mount Tabor

Matthew 28:16-20, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All *authority* has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ ”

1 Corinthians 15:6, “After that He was seen by over 500 brothers at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.”

During this appearance the Lord gave the **GREAT COMMISSION** in explicit words. He did not wait to see the faith of His disciples perfected. Even at this hour, after so many of His appearances, “some doubted” (Mt 28:17). This even among the “eleven!” (v16). God does not entrust us with ministerial responsibilities because we are perfect but in spite of our imperfections. He has not “found” us faithful, but “counted” us faithful (1 Tim 1:12). Let’s not disappoint Him.

In spite of open doors, there’s a growing opposition to missionary evangelism all over the world (1 Cor 16:9). It’s very much true of our motherland India. The recently released film (2019), titled, *Least of These*, on the ministry and martyrdom of Graham Staines (1941-1999) along with his two young sons, has moved us to tears. God forbid, what happened in that fateful night of 22 January may be repeated. Shall we stop? A thousand times, No! Because, our orders are not from any Government but from God. “All authority” is with our

Captain, Christ Jesus, the Lord of lords and the King of kings! Christians, don't be simply standing on the promises of God and sitting in His premises. March on!

9. Appearance to the eleven and James

Mark 16:14, "Afterward Jesus appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their *unbelief* and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He has risen."

Luke 24:44-49, "Then He said to them, 'These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the *Promise* of the Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with *power* from on high.'

It was referring to this ninth appearance of Jesus that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:7, "After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles."

Christ "rebuked" **UNBELIEF** because it's a serious matter. There were so many offences on the part of the Israelites who left Egypt for Canaan. But the foremost among them was their unbelief (Heb 3:19). It's unbelief that ultimately lands anyone in hell. We can pray for the forgiveness of any sin of our neighbour, but not for the sin of unbelief which ultimately leads to the departure from the living God, even to idols (1 Jn 5:16,21; Heb 3:12). Faith leads to obedience, but unbelief to disobedience (Heb 4:6, 11). Faith honours God, but unbelief dishonours Him and limits Him. The question that came out repeatedly from the mouths of the Israelites was, "Can God?" (Psa 78:19,20,41). This is what displeased and angered God. Let our confession be, "God can!" on the basis of "What's written." *Is anything too hard for the Lord? No, nothing is too hard for the Lord!* No doubt there come times in our lives when our faith is shaken to the core. This is why we must never take off our eyes from Jesus who is the Pioneer and the Perfector of our faith (Heb 12:2). Keep you finger on every promise of God in the Bible and say, Amen!

Though there was an urgency to carry the message of forgiveness to regions beyond, Jesus would not let the disciples go out "until they were endued with **POWER** from on High" (Lk 24:49). Now that the Holy Spirit has already come as a Person into this world, we don't need to tarry for Him to come from Heaven. On the other hand, each born-again Christian must stay in God's presence until he knows for sure that he is filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18,19). The irrefutable evidence of Spirit-filling is that the candidate would know beyond doubt that he is filled. Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit, giving us a pattern (Acts 10:38; 1:8). The Holy Spirit stands with us to strengthen our witness (5:32).

10. Appearance to the eleven on the Mount of Olives

Luke 24:50-53, "And Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while *He blessed* them, that He was parted from

them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.”

Mark 16:19, “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and *sat down at the right hand of God.*”

Acts 1:1-3, “The former account I (Luke) made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during *forty days* and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

Acts 1:9-12, “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’ Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey.”

The posture of Jesus at the time of His ascension is arresting. “He lifted up His hands and *blessed* the disciples” (Lk 24:50). I imagine that He ascended with outstretched hands as an eagle or an angel would soar with outstretched wings! This is indicative of Christ’s ascension **BLESSINGS** to each of God’s children. Christ “sat at the right hand of God” (Mk 16:19). And we are seated with Him “in the heavenly places” so “every spiritual blessing” becomes our inheritance (Eph 1:3). The spiritual blessings that are ours because of Christ’s ascension are innumerable. We must regularly pray for ourselves and the fellow-believers for an enlightenment to know “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18,19). All these are because “God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (v20). Our vision gets blurred when we overoccupy ourselves with the “things on the earth” instead of seeking “those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (Col 3:1,2). The Holy Spirit and His **GIFTS** are ours because Christ got them for us from the Father after His ascension (Eph 4:7-11). Apostle Peter’s understanding of this truth is profound: Acts 2:33, “Being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, Christ poured out this which you now see and hear.” Following Christ’s Ascension, the disciples returned to the temple in Jerusalem and spent the next ten days before Pentecost in praise and worship (Lk 24:52,53).

*Golden harps are sounding, angel voices ring,
Pearly gates are opened, opened for the King:
Christ, the King of glory, Jesus, King of love,
Is gone up in triumph to His throne above.*

Let's summarize the **10 Lessons on Kingdom Life** deduced from the 10 post-resurrection appearances of Jesus —

1. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God is granted purely by His GRACE. The identification of Christ with us the children of God as our Elder Brother is beyond comprehension.
2. Christ treated WOMEN with high esteem in a male-dominated Jewish society of His time. Neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.
3. The BIBLE is the rule-book for the Kingdom Life. Neglect of daily meditation and painstaking study of the Bible leaves us undeveloped and underdeveloped.
4. All the children of God are a chosen generation to proclaim His praises. From among this group He chooses a few for specific and special tasks. His CHOICE cannot be questioned.
5. The Kingdom of God is characterised by PEACE (Rom 14:17). The Kingdom citizens are Ambassadors of Peace to bring people to God to reconcile with Him through Christ.
6. The life in the Kingdom is not one of sight or any other sense but by FAITH, from beginning to end. Feelings are secondary.
7. Nothing should distract the Kingdom citizens from their LOVE and devotion to their King. Our usefulness to others is decided by our love for Jesus.
8. The compelling reason why we are involved in missionary evangelism is that we have a GREAT COMMISSION from the Lord of Armies, even Christ (2 Tim 4:1,2). We are under orders to reach men and women with the Gospel.
9. We dare not go to witness for our King without the POWER of the Holy Spirit. Evangelism is a spiritual warfare in which we captivate for Christ those captivated by the power of darkness (Col 1:13).
10. We died with Christ. We were buried with Christ. We are raised with Christ. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places. All spiritual BLESSINGS are ours because of our position in Christ. We await His Return so we may reign with Him in His eternal Kingdom for ever and ever (Rev 3:21; 22:5b).

*Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing:
Alleluiah! Alleluiah! Praise the everlasting King!*

— Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847

(This article appeared as an attachment to the Online Letter 102 of 21 April 2019 also.)