

# The Spirit of Peace

John 20:19-23

SS Lesson for 03/22/2015

**Devotional Scripture:** Ps 85:7-11

## OUTLINE

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*Key Verse: John 20:22*

*Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

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Peace from fear of rejection by the world (Gal 6:12-16)

Peace from the fear of trials and tribulations (John 16:33)

Peace from fear that comes from the Lord of all (Acts 10:36)

Peace from fear because we have been freed from slavery of fear (Rom 8:15)

Peace from fear because God is our helper (Heb 13:6)

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# Introduction

## Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines how we should seek and depend on **The Spirit of Peace**. The **study's aim** is to teach that Jesus' resurrected appearances culminated in instructions for serving Him. The **study's application** is seen how Jesus' words encourage us to witness boldly for Him. (*Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

### Key Verse: John 20:22

*And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**The disciples** had almost been arrested with Jesus. They remained under the **fear of death** at the hands of **the Jews** (i.e., the Jewish authorities), so they met in secret at night, with fear, behind locked doors. (What a contrast with their boldness about seven weeks later on the day of Pentecost!) **Jesus** passed through the door, as indicated by the fact that when the **doors were locked, He came and stood among them** (cf. v. 26). This showed the power of His new resurrection body. But His body had substantial form and continuity with His pre-Cross body (cf. v. 27). His first words, **Peace be with you!** were a conventional greeting similar to *šālôm* in Hebrew. But the words were now invested with a deeper and fuller meaning (cf. 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). Seeing the wounds in **His pierced hands and side**, they **were overjoyed** (though at first they were frightened, as Luke stated [Luke 24:37-44]). What a change from their fear and despondency! Jesus then recommissioned the disciples as His apostles: He was **sending** them as His representatives, **as the Father had sent Him** (cf. 17:18). They were sent with His authority to preach, teach, and do miraculous signs (Matt. 28:16-20; Luke 24:47-49). For their new commission they needed spiritual power. So **He breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit**. The image and wording of breathing on them recalls God's creative work in making Adam (Gen. 2:7). Now this post-Resurrection "breathing" was a new kind of creative work for they would soon become new creations (Eph. 2:8-10). This reception of the Spirit was in anticipation of the day of Pentecost and should be understood as a partial limited gift of knowledge, understanding, and empowerment until Pentecost, 50 days later. Forgiveness of **sins** is one of the major benefits of the death of Jesus. It is the essence of the New Covenant (cf. Matt. 26:28; Jer. 31:31-34). Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins was the prominent feature of the apostolic preaching in the Book of Acts. Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) the privilege of announcing heaven's terms on how a person can receive forgiveness. If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. If a person rejects Jesus' sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is **not forgiven**.

### Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

Jesus had told His disciples beforehand of His approaching death and resurrection (cf. Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23); yet His words had not penetrated their understanding. His death brought them grief and hopelessness; and even when reliable witnesses told of His resurrection, they were slow to believe it was true. Ten of Jesus' disciples were gathered in fear behind closed doors on the evening of His resurrection when the risen Lord suddenly appeared to them. He calmed their fears and showed them the scars in His hands and side (John 20:19-20). There could be no doubt that Christ had, indeed, risen from the dead. Jesus' words to His disciples at that time might at first strike us as curious. He focused on two things: the future mission of the disciples and the divine power that would enable them to carry out that mission (John 20:21-23). While we might have expected some explanation for what His resurrection and victory over death meant, Jesus returned to two ideas He had previously taught His disciples. Jesus reminded them that He was sending them into the world (John 20:21; cf. 17:18-21). He also reminded them of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, whom He would send to them. Jesus had taught them about the future work of the Spirit in their lives during His Upper Room Discourse (chaps. 14-16). In mentioning

the Spirit now, He was letting the disciples know that His time with them was soon coming to an end. His resurrection did not mean He would continue with them indefinitely. Jesus' breathing on them perhaps recalls the breath of God in giving life to the first man (Gen. 2:7) and suggests the new life given by the Spirit. As He breathed, however, He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Whatever Jesus meant by these words, this event does not mark the beginning of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. That event would come some seven weeks later on the Day of Pentecost. When Jesus ascended into heaven ten days prior to Pentecost, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them (Acts 1:4-8). When that day came, the Spirit came upon all the believers, indwelt them, and empowered them for ministry. And from that day forward, the Spirit has come to indwell every believer at the moment of salvation (I Cor. 12:13; cf. Rom. 8:9). What is described in our text is probably a temporary empowering of the Spirit to sustain the disciples in the immediate future in carrying out their mission. Such empowerment would be much like the Spirit's work in the Old Testament era and would be consistent with the limited nature of such a work. Here the bestowal of the Spirit was limited to the circle of Jesus' closest disciples. The Spirit's coming on Pentecost was for all of Jesus' followers. What is important for us to remember is that our Lord has not assigned us to be witnesses and then left us powerless. He has given us not only the Great Commission but also His Spirit. We have everything we need to do everything He asks.

## ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Type the phrase "commemorative items" into an Internet search engine and the resulting hits will number in the millions! Clearly, the business of commemorating people, places, events, achievements, etc., is huge. Products available for purchase range from mass-produced items that are intended to address the collective consciousness of a nation (first moon landing, etc.) down to single-copy, personalized tokens intended for just one recipient (job promotion, etc.). Were we to count the number of commemorative items in our homes right now, we would probably be surprised that we have so many. Over the years we may find ourselves tossing out various items of this nature; some achievements or transitions that we once thought to be important to mark end up being seen as relatively minor in the broader contexts of our lives. And then there are the commemorative items that we might prefer never to have received in the first place: those physical and emotional scars that remind us of past trauma of some sort. Even so, the existence of such scars is evidence of victory over (or at least survival of) the trauma. Today's passage notes two "commemorative items" that served as proof of Jesus' own victory over adversity. The first were the physical wounds he had received during the crucifixion; these bore witness both to God's power and Jesus' authority. The second was and is the disciples themselves—from the first generation of disciples to believers today. The fact that believers in every generation continue to proclaim him serves as a powerful confirmation of his victory over the grave. Jesus' defeat of death lives on in the witness of those who accept the facts of history.

Today's brief passage brings the Gospel of John full circle in many respects. The writer prefaces his account of Jesus' ministry with an episode involving John the Baptist. When a delegation from the religious authorities in Jerusalem questioned him about his identity, he explained that he was simply preparing the way for someone much more worthy than himself (John 1:19-27). The next day, John the Baptist told two of his disciples that Jesus was the one they had been waiting for. He predicted that Jesus would baptize people not with water but with the Holy Spirit (John 1:29-34, lesson 1). Jesus himself affirmed this promise of Holy Spirit-bestowal when he invited those present at the Festival of Tabernacles to "come to me and drink," promising that "rivers of living water" would "flow from within them" (John 7:37, 38); the Gospel writer then immediately explains that Jesus was referring to the forthcoming gift of the Holy Spirit, who would be granted only after Jesus had been glorified. The night before the crucifixion, Jesus repeated several times the promise of the granting of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples of his pending departure (John 14:2-4, 19, 25, 28; 16:5-7, 16, 28), while assuring them that he would send the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, to be with them (14:16-18, lesson 2; 15:26, 27; 16:7-14, lesson 3). The disciples were confused by such statements (John 14:5; 16:17, 18), not least because it seemed impossible that God's Messiah could be killed. Their expectation was challenged dramatically by the events of Jesus' arrest, trials, torture, and crucifixion. Whatever they had expected the

Messiah to be, none of it seemed reconcilable with the horrific fact of Jesus' death. That experience seemed to dash any hope that the promises of John the Baptist and Jesus would be fulfilled. If those two could not avoid death at the hands of earthly authorities, then how could anyone believe their statements about a baptism with the Spirit, the sending of the Spirit of truth, etc.? Of course, the cross was not the end of the story, and our passage today shows the beginning of the fulfillment of John the Baptist's prophecy and Jesus' promises regarding the Holy Spirit. The episode described in John 20:19-23 is recorded in a different form in Luke 24:36-43, which sheds helpful light as we consider the significance of the momentous occasion that was at hand.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Jesus' Peace (John 20:19)**

19 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."

#### **Peace in the face of fear (19)**

*Peace from fear unlike anything in this world (John 14:27)*

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

*Peace from fear of rejection by the world (Gal 6:12-16)*

12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

*Peace from the fear of trials and tribulations (John 16:33)*

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

*Peace from fear that comes from the Lord of all (Acts 10:36)*

36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

*Peace from fear because we have been freed from slavery of fear (Rom 8:15)*

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

*Peace from fear because God is our helper (Heb 13:6)*

6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

*Peace from fear because God is our refuge and strength (Ps 46:1-3)*

46 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

### **Peace in the inner being (19)**

*Peace in the inner being through righteousness (Isa 32:17)*

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

*Peace in the inner being through the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)*

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

*Peace in the inner being through the guarding of our minds (Phil 4:7)*

7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*Peace in the inner being through reconciliation (Eph 2:14-18)*

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

*Peace in the inner being through faith (Rom 5:1)*

1 Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

*Peace in the inner being through having a mind controlled by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:6)*

6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

*Peace in the inner being through trust in God (Rom 15:13)*

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Peace in the inner being from the God of peace (1 Cor 14:33)*

33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,

*Peace in the inner being through unity of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:3)*

3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

### **The Disciples' Joy (John 20:20-21)**

20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

## **Joy being in the presence of Jesus (20)**

*Joy being in the presence of Jesus because of His power (1 Cor 5:4)*

4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in Spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

*Joy being in the presence of Jesus because of His unfailing love (Ps 119:76)*

76 May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant.

*Joy being in the presence of Jesus because He is the God of comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4)*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

*Joy being in the presence of Jesus because of His compassion (Isa 49:13)*

13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

## **Joy in being used by Jesus (21)**

*Joy in being used because of giving ourselves to God (2 Cor 8:5)*

5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

*Joy in being used because of submitting to God (2 Chron 30:8)*

8 Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the Lord. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the Lord your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

*Joy in being used by being an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13)*

13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

*Joy in being used because of living for the Lord (Rom 14:8)*

8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

*Joy in being used because of honoring God with our body (1 Cor 6:19-20)*

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

## **The Holy Spirit Received (John 20:22-23)**

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

## Received from God (22)

*Received from God through repentance (Acts 2:37-38)*

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

*Received from God because Jesus promised not to leave His people as orphans (John 14:18)*

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

*Received from God because Jesus sent Him (John 16:6-7)*

6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

*Received from God to indwell God's people (Rom 8:9-11)*

9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

*Received from God because God's people are His temple (1 Cor 3:16)*

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

*Received from God to help God's people be obedient (2 Tim 1:13-14)*

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

## Differing Interpretations of the "Breathing" (From Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The commission of the apostles carried with it the need for divine enabling. Thus Jesus, "when he had said this...breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). This is a difficult statement to interpret in view of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost later (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4), and there are varying interpretations (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Eerdmans). Some see this endowment as a partial and temporary bestowal of spiritual power in anticipation of the Day of Pentecost. It is pointed out that Jesus' breathing on the disciples signifies the beginning of a new creation, just as the divine breath animated Adam (Gen 2:7). Others prefer to see the breathing and the command to receive the Spirit as symbolic of what would happen later at Pentecost. It is pointed out that if this were a real bestowal of the Spirit, it would have brought greater change to the apostles' outlook right away. It is therefore seen a kind of parable pointing forward to Pentecost. Whichever view is taken, all can agree that Jesus recognized the need for spiritual power for these future church leaders. Also difficult to interpret is Jesus' next statement: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). This declaration did not give the apostles power to forgive or refuse forgiveness. The verb tenses and construction of "they are remitted" and "they are retained" can be literally translated, "they have been remitted" and "they have been retained" (see Matt 16:19 and 18:18 for the same kind of construction). This indicates that God forgives or retains person's sins based on their response to the gospel of Christ.

## Received to provide authority (23)

### *Authority to present God's Word to others (Col 1:25)*

25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

### *Authority through the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20)*

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

### *Authority to do the work of God (Acts 13:1-4)*

1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. 4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

### *Authority so that man could have food and work (Gen 9:2-3)*

2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

### *Authority lower than angels (Heb 2:7)*

7 You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

Jesus' Second Appearance: The Disciples, Minus Thomas (20:19-23)

John very kindly does not tell us what Mark and Luke record in their accounts—that when the disciples were told that Jesus was alive, they refused to believe it without seeing Him (Mark 16:9-11; see also verses 12-13; Luke 24:10-11).

It was on the first day of the week—the same day that Mary saw Jesus—and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors. They were afraid of the Jews, and rightly so. They were disciples of Jesus, and He had just been crucified for sedition. And now, the story was circulating that they had stolen the body of Jesus (Matthew 28:11-15). Remember that the tomb was sealed by Rome, and guarded by Roman soldiers. The disciples may have felt in greater danger here than on any previous occasion. They must have been deeply troubled by the reports they had heard that Jesus was alive. What were they to think of all this? What were they to do? They did not know. And so the disciples met together behind locked doors. We are told that one disciple was missing—Thomas. We are not told why he was absent. There is no particular blame cast on him for his absence. In some miraculous way, Jesus enters the room, even though the door is locked. We do not know what the disciples saw, but John certainly leaves us with the impression that our Lord's entrance was unusual—one more proof of His resurrection. Our Lord twice repeated the words, "Peace be with you" (20:19, 21). This certainly reminds us of what Jesus had said earlier to these men (John 14:24-29). It would appear that this was our Lord's first appearance to the disciples after His resurrection. If this is so, it may be the same

appearance that Luke describes, providing us with additional details (Luke 24:30-43). Jesus would have appeared to Mary and the other women by now, and they have already announced to the disciples that Jesus was alive. But the disciples refused to believe. Then, the two men who talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus arrived to tell the disciples of their encounter with the risen Lord. Once again, the disciples refused to believe (Mark 16:12-14). John spares us from yet another account of the unbelief of the disciples, and of Jesus rebuking them for their unbelief. While their unbelief deserved rebuke, John moves on to tell us how Jesus convinced His disciples of His resurrection. He shows them His nail-scarred hands and His spear-pierced side. There was no mistaking the fact that His wounds, now healed, were incurred at His crucifixion. It was Jesus, and there was no denying it, incredible as that may be. The disciples had a job to do, and they were being left behind so that they could accomplish it. This task is summed up in the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20).

To accomplish this task, the disciples are in need of divine enablement. This was promised by our Lord in the Upper Room Discourse (John 14:15-17, 25-26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-16). I had never noticed before that in His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus does not ask the Father to send the Spirit, which He has promised in chapters 14-16. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is not even mentioned in this prayer! How can this be? I believe that while our Lord prepared His disciples for the coming of the Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse, He did not intend to send the Spirit until after His ascension. In other words, the Holy Spirit would not come until Pentecost. Some suggest that in our text Jesus is temporarily bestowing the Spirit upon His disciples, until Pentecost comes. I don't agree. In the first place, John does not report anything out of the ordinary happening as a result of our Lord's actions. The disciples are not transformed, as they will be at Pentecost. The gospel is not preached. In fact, the next thing to happen in John's Gospel is that some of the disciples go fishing. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit was immediately bestowed upon the disciples at this moment, as a result of what Jesus says and does. I believe Jesus is symbolically bestowing the Spirit upon His disciples, although it will not actually take place until Pentecost. Jesus will have ascended to the Father then, and so this gesture indicates to the disciples that when the Spirit comes at Pentecost, it will be as a result of what Jesus had promised earlier, and symbolically indicates here. I wish to be very clear here, both as to what I am saying, and as to what I am not saying. I am saying that our Lord is here symbolically bestowing His Holy Spirit on the church. This symbolic act will literally be fulfilled at Pentecost. Jesus wants it to be clear that it is He who is sending His Spirit to indwell and to empower His church. I am not saying that the Spirit is given at the moment Jesus breathes upon His disciples. I am not saying that this is a temporary bestowal of the Spirit, until the permanent coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Specifically, I believe that what Jesus is symbolically bestowing is the coming of the Holy Spirit upon His disciples as those who will act as His apostles. Earlier, Jesus outlined some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. For example, the Spirit would call Jesus' teaching to their minds. He would convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. But here, none of these ministries seems to be in view. Here, the Holy Spirit is given to the apostles so that they can either proclaim the forgiveness of sins, or the retention of sins. I do not think this text justifies some priestly hierarchy, who hears confessions and grants absolution from one's sins. Instead, I believe Jesus is giving the apostles the authority to declare men and women to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I believe we see an example of this in the Book of Acts (Acts 11:1-18). It takes a monumental work of God to convince the Jews that God has purposed from eternity past to save Gentiles (see Acts 22:21-23). Our Lord had promised to send the Spirit, which He did at Pentecost. After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit directed Peter to go to the house of a Gentile and to proclaim the gospel to those gathered in his house. The Spirit then came upon all those who had come to faith, thus indicating that the gospel (the forgiveness of sins) was not just for Jews alone, but for all who believe, Jew or Gentile. It is difficult for Gentile believers today to grasp how hard it was for Jews to accept the salvation of the Gentiles. Even the apostles found this difficult. As the Spirit came upon the apostles, this truth was embraced, proclaimed, and defended by them. By means of the Spirit's guidance and illumination, the truth that the gospel was for Jews and Gentiles was declared by the apostles, and particularly by Paul (Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 3:1-9).

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

An ambassador is someone designated to represent officially the positions of a nation. By definition, an ambassador's authority is derivative: ambassadors speak on behalf of those who send them. Jesus, as God's Son, bore this type of authority. He had been sent by God to speak on the Father's behalf. As such, the Son's words were God's Word, carrying eternal consequences. Jesus' divine power underlines this point; he could do things that others simply could not. The ultimate testimony to Christ's authority is seen in the reversal of the judgments of Rome and the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. That's power! In certain ways, Christ's relationship with the Father is a pattern for our own role as ambassadors for Christ. Like Jesus, we are not citizens of this world; we belong to another kingdom. Like Jesus, we are sent to act as God's spokespersons. Also like Jesus, we can expect to be rejected and ridiculed. Christ guides our witness through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth is our peace and power as we fulfill our mission.

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. In times of fear and uncertainty, believers find strength in fellowship (John 20:19)
2. Jesus brings peace and confidence when He enters our fearful situations
3. Jesus reveals all we need to believe in His comfort (vs. 20)
4. Jesus has given every believer the privilege and responsibility of sharing the gospel (vs. 21)
5. God has given us the authority and power to do His work in the world (vss. 21-22)
6. As we share the gospel, people hear the message and receive forgiveness upon believing that message (vs. 23)