

John 20:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Analysis

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week—John carefully marks time: Sunday evening, resurrection day. This becomes Christianity's new worship day, the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10), replacing Sabbath observance and marking new creation dawning. **When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews**—the locked doors (kekleisimenōn, κεκλεισμένων, perfect passive participle indicating completed action with ongoing result) emphasize both fear and the miraculous nature of Jesus's appearance. Their phobos (φόβος, fear) was justified; they expected arrest as followers of an executed criminal.

Came Jesus and stood in the midst—Christ's resurrection body possessed both physical reality (He later eats, shows wounds) and supernatural properties (passing through locked doors). The Greek estē eis to meson (ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον) positions Jesus centrally among them, the focus of gathering. His greeting —**"Peace be unto you"** (eirēnē hymin, εἰρήνη ὑμῖν)—transcends customary shalom greeting. This is the peace He promised (John 14:27, 16:33), purchased through His death, secured by His resurrection, and now personally bestowed. Their fear meets His peace; their locked doors cannot exclude the Risen One who brings reconciliation.

Historical Context

The disciples gathered in Jerusalem despite danger, likely in the upper room where they had shared the Last Supper (Mark 14:15, Acts 1:13). First-century Jerusalem remained tense during Passover season with heavy Roman military presence preventing riots. Jewish authorities had successfully executed Jesus; His followers reasonably feared similar treatment. Peter had denied Christ; all had fled—guilt and fear paralyzed them.

Jewish homes typically had simple wooden doors with bar locks. Jesus's ability to appear without opening doors demonstrated His glorified body's properties while maintaining physical continuity (same wounds, v.20). Early Christian confession emphasized Christ's physical resurrection against docetic heresies claiming mere spiritual resurrection. The shift from Sabbath (Saturday) to Lord's Day (Sunday) worship represents one of history's most significant religious changes, explicable only by resurrection reality transforming Jewish believers' practices.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's ability to enter through locked doors speak to areas of your life you've shut off from Him?
2. What relationship exists between experiencing Christ's peace and engaging His mission in a hostile world?
3. Why did early Christians risk persecution to gather weekly on resurrection day rather than maintain Sabbath observance?

Interlinear Text

Οὔσης	οὖν	ὀψίας	τῇ	ἡμέρᾱ	ἐκείνῃ	τῇ	μιᾶ	τῶν	
being	Then	at evening	G3588	day	the same	G3588	G1520	G3588	
G5607	G3767	G3798		G2250	G1565				
σαββάτων	καὶ	τῶν	θυρῶν	κεκλεισμένων	ὅπου	ἦσαν			
day of the week	and	G3588	the doors	were shut	where	were			
G4521	G2532		G2374	G2808	G3699	G2258			
οἱ	μαθηταὶ	συνηγμένοι	διὰ	τὸν	φόβον	τῶν	Ἰουδαίων		
G3588	the disciples	assembled	for	G3588	fear	G3588	of the Jews		
	G3101	G4863	G1223		G5401		G2453		
ἦλθεν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	καὶ	ἔστη	εἰς	τὸ	μέσον	καὶ	λέγει
came	G3588	Jesus	and	stood	in	G3588	the midst	and	saith
G2064		G2424	G2532	G2476	G1519		G3319	G2532	G3004
αὐτοῖς	Εἰρήνη	ὑμῖν							
unto them	Peace	be unto you							
G846	G1515	G5213							

Additional Cross-References

John 20:26 (Peace): And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 14:27 (Peace): Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 20:21 (Peace): Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Ephesians 2:14 (Peace): For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Mark 16:14 (Parallel theme): Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

John 7:13 (Parallel theme): Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (Peace): Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

Revelation 1:4 (Peace): John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

1 Corinthians 15:5 (Parallel theme): And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

John 16:33 (Peace): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.