



HISTORIC ST. JAMES AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
222 NORTH ROMAN STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70112
Telephone: 504.586.8381 Facsimile: 504.586.8993

THE REVEREND JONATHAN C. AUGUSTINE, J.D., M.Div., PASTOR

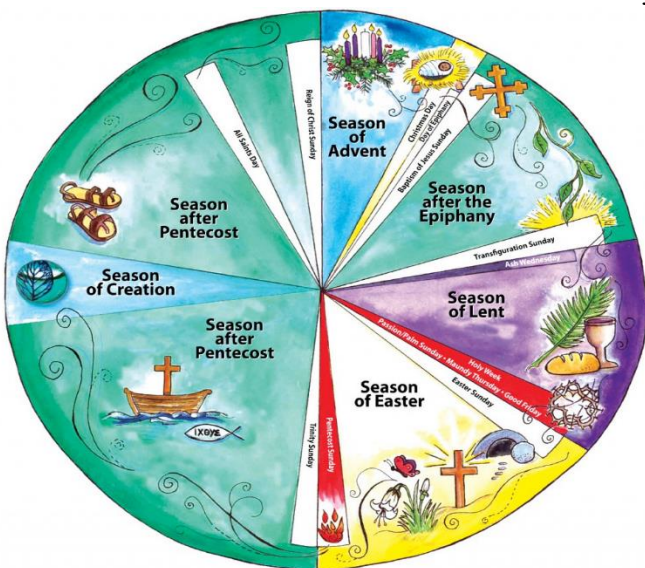
April 11, 2018:

Seasons Change: The Easter Season's Celebration of Faith

I Prayer

II Introduction

As part of our faith tradition, we observe the respective seasons of the liturgical year and denote them by color. During the recent Lenten Season, for example, purple was used to denote penitence, during a liturgical time of sacrifice, in commemorating the 40-days and nights wherein Jesus sacrificed in preparing for his public ministry. During the last week of Lent, as we observed Holy Week or Passion Week, the liturgical color was red, denoting Jesus' passion in Jerusalem and His blood as shed on Good Friday. On Resurrection Sunday, however, as the church's mood changed, its liturgical seasons also changed, along with the associated color. As we now observe the "Great 50-days," we worship with white as a color of celebration, in observing not only Jesus's resurrection, but Jesus's six-post-Resurrection appearances. Jesus showed convincing proofs that He was indeed who He purported to be, the divine Son of God. This Easter Season celebration continues until the 50th day after the Resurrection, when we observe Pentecost (*Acts 2*), the "birthday" of the church and coming of the Holy Spirit.



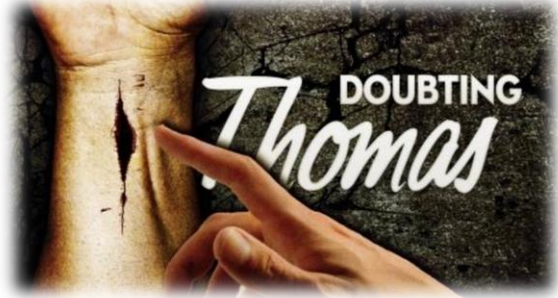
As we now observe the "Great 50-days," we worship with white as a color of celebration, in observing not only Jesus's resurrection, but Jesus's six-post-Resurrection appearances. Jesus showed convincing proofs that He was indeed who He purported to be, the divine Son of God. This Easter Season celebration continues until the 50th day after the Resurrection, when we observe Pentecost (*Acts 2*), the "birthday" of the church and coming of the Holy Spirit.

In this evening's Bible Study, **"Seasons Change: The Easter Season's Celebration of Faith,"** we see three of Jesus's post-Resurrection appearances, and we also see the origins of one of the Bible's most famous nicknames, "Doubting Thomas."

III Examining the Text: John 20 (read out loud)

- Beginning with the end of Chapter 20, let's look at verses 30-31. Why do you think the author of *John* writes these verses and how do they tie in to anything you might know about the *Gospel of John* (hint: when was *John* written and how do you think these two verses came about)?

- In reading verses 11-16, put yourself in the position of Mary Magdalene. Describe how you would have felt. Now, put yourself in Jesus’s position. How do you think Jesus was feeling and what do you think Jesus was thinking? Has Jesus ever “shown-up” for you, at a time when you were feeling like Mary Magdalene? Is it possible that you didn’t originally recognize that it was Jesus, too? What do you think Jesus was thinking, as He came to you, in the midst of your situation?
- According to *John*, Mary Magdalene is the first person to see the resurrected Jesus. By verse 18, she is engaged in an act of evangelism, by telling others about Jesus. Although *John* doesn’t describe how the others reacted to hearing her news . . . we can probably imagine! What do you think the scene was like? How do you think she felt? How would you feel? Have you ever been in a similar situation, where you were excited to tell someone about Jesus and they had a reaction similar to the reaction we can imagine the others had? What do we do, stop telling others about Jesus, or do we continue spreading the “good news?”
- Verse 19, describes “evening on that day, the first day of the week.” Put yourself in the place of the disciples. How do you think they were feeling and how does the mood and the tone change by verse 21? How would you feel, based on where you were in verse 19, considering the instructions Jesus gave in verse 21? Is that an OK feeling (note: personal reflections)?
- By verse 25, Thomas shows up He’s from Missouri (smile), and says he won’t believe unless he sees proof! Do you know anyone like “Doubting Thomas?” **NOTE VERSE 26: Jesus made him wait** He eventually showed up, again, *a week later*. Do you believe Jesus will eventually “show-up” for anyone like “Doubting Thomas” you might know (story: KGM)?
- Verses 29-29 show a new side of Thomas and Jesus’s reaction to Thomas’s “new found” faith!



Are you more like Thomas, in that you believe because you have seen, or have you always believed (REAL TALK)? Haven’t we all already seen?!?!?

IV Questions and Open Discussion

V Closing Prayer