Date: 4/22/17

Title: Believe It or Not!

Theme: Jesus was raised from the dead and is coming back to save us – believe it or not.

Object: Comic book pages from on-line Ripley’s Believe It or Not, example stories as in supplement.

Text: John 20:24-25 (NIV) Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus [appeared to them]. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Thomas refused to believe that Jesus rose from the dead without seeing it for himself.

Have you ever found something hard to believe?

There was a man named Robert Ripley who made a living out of stories that were hard to believe.

He started a business called *Ripley’s Believe It or Not*.

He collected stories that he claimed were true, but were so amazing that they were hard to believe.

He published lots of books called *Ripley’s Believe It or Not* and people would buy them to read these amazing stories.

Today there’s a *Ripley’s Believe It or Not* website that publishes amazing stories and facts each day.

Here’s a couple of recent pages: [read selected stories]

*Ripley’s Believe It or Not* also collects amazing feats that set a record.

Joann Barnes, a fifteen-year-old from California, once swung sixty-eight hula-hoops on her body at the same time!

Can you believe that? I can't even keep one hula-hoop going.

I think I would have to see that to believe it! But if it is true, it’s true, whether I believe it or not!

On the Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave, he appeared to a group of his disciples.

One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with them.

When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and that he was alive, Thomas said, "I won't believe it until I see it with my own eyes. I want to put my finger in the nail-prints in his hands - and place my hand where the spear went into his side.

A week later, Thomas saw Jesus.

Jesus invited Thomas to touch his hands where the nails had been.

He told Thomas to put his hand in the wound in his side.

Then Thomas believed!

Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

A lot of people today won't believe that Jesus really rose from the dead because they haven't seen him with their own two eyes.

Do you know what? It is true whether they believe it or not!

We can believe that Jesus rose from the dead because the Bible says so.

The Bible is God’s word. It is true from beginning to end.

In fact, those who were eye witnesses of the resurrection wrote the NT.

They saw Jesus with their own eyes, they talked with Him and ate with Him after He was raised from the dead.

The truth is we serve a risen Savior and He’s coming back to save us some day.

Do you believe it --- or not???

How many believe that Jesus is coming back to save us like He promised?