

John Chapter Twenty

Read **John 20:1-10** – The Empty Tomb

v.1 “THE FIRST *day* OF THE WEEK COMETH MARY MAGDALENE EARLY, WHEN IT WAS YET DARK, UNTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEETH THE STONE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE SEPULCHRE.”

Since that Jesus had been buried on the afternoon of the day of preparation for the Sabbath, there wasn't much time to prepare his body for burial. Consequently early on the first day that was available to them to do so the effort was made to go to the tomb and correct those matters that had been done hurriedly.

John mentions only Mary Magdalene while Matthew mentions her and “THE OTHER MARY”, and Mark lists Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome as going to the tomb. In **Mark 16:3** they were concerned about being able to move the stone that was used to seal the tomb but when they arrive the stone is no longer a problem, it and their Savior are both gone from their places.

v.2 “THEN SHE RUNNETH, AND COMETH TO SIMON PETER, AND TO THE OTHER DISCIPLE, WHOM JESUS LOVED, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE LORD OUT OF THE SEPULCHRE, AND WE KNOW NOT WHERE THEY HAVE LAID HIM.”

Mary Magdalene, seeing that the tomb was empty, runs to inform Peter and John. She thinks that they body has been stolen or moved for some reason from its resting place. She apparently has no thoughts about the possibly of his being resurrected.

v.3 “PETER THEREFORE WENT FORTH, AND THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, AND CAME TO THE SEPULCHRE.”

Peter hurries to the tomb, along with John. Luke records:

Luke 28:12 “THEN AROSE PETER, AND RAN UNTO THE SEPULCHRE; AND STOOPING DOWN, HE BEHELD THE LINEN CLOTHES LAID BY THEMSELVES, AND DEPARTED, WONDERING IN HIMSELF AT THAT WHICH WAS COME TO PASS.”

v.4-5 “SO THEY RAN BOTH TOGETHER: AND THE OTHER DISCIPLE DID OUTFRAN PETER, AND CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE. AND HE STOOPING DOWN, AND LOOKING IN, SAW THE LINEN CLOTHES LYING; YET WENT HE NOT IN.”

John Chapter Twenty

John apparently out runs Peter and reaches the tomb first but he's hesitant to barge right in so he only stoops down and looks into the burial chamber. The burial clothing is lying there, it seems, just like someone would have thrown back their cover and climbed out of bed.

v.6-7 "THEN COMETH SIMON PETER FOLLOWING HIM, AND WENT INTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEETH THE LINEN CLOTHES LIE, AND THE NAPKIN, THAT WAS ABOUT HIS HEAD, NOT LYING WITH THE LINEN CLOTHES, BUT WRAPPED TOGETHER IN A PLACE BY ITSELF."

Peter doesn't hesitate but then Peter is not known for being shy. He comes up to the tomb and goes right in to see for himself whether Jesus is there or not. Jesus has been dressed the same way that Lazarus was dressed when he was buried:

John 11:44 "AND HE THAT WAS DEAD CAME FORTH, BOUND HAND AND FOOT WITH GRAVECLOTHES: AND HIS FACE WAS BOUND ABOUT WITH A NAPKIN. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO."

v.8 "THEN WENT IN ALSO THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, WHICH CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE, AND HE SAW, AND BELIEVED."

After Peter goes in, the John also enters and believes. They believe that he is gone as Mary Magdalene has told them but they don't yet comprehend that he has been resurrected. But he is gone and the grave clothes are abandoned.

v.9 "FOR AS YET THEY KNEW NOT THE SCRIPTURE, THAT HE MUST RISE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD."

John, being an eye witness, writes that they didn't know yet the prophecy that would verify that he would rise from the dead or that they hadn't put it all together yet. In mentioning this scripture, John is probably referring to:

Psalm 16:10 "FOR THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL; NEITHER WILT THOU SUFFER THINE HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION."

Please note that the word translated "HELL" here should in fact be translated Hades, the resting place of the dead, not the location of ultimate punishment of the wicked. The disciples, at this point, didn't know the scriptures but 40 days later, with his words being guided by the Holy Spirit, Peter testifies.

Acts 2:31 "HE SEEING THIS BEFORE SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THAT HIS SOUL WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL, NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION."

John Chapter Twenty

v.10 “THEN THE DISCIPLES WENT AWAY AGAIN UNTO THEIR OWN HOME.”

Jesus body has disappeared, they don't know the scripture concerning his resurrection, they don't know where he is nor even if they will see him again even though he had told them that “FOR A LITTLE WHILE” they wouldn't see him the for a little while they would see him again (**John 16:16**). So they return to the places where they stay.

Read **John 20:11-18** – Jesus And Mary Magdalene

v.11 “BUT MARY STOOD WITHOUT AT THE SEPULCHRE WEEPING: AND AS SHE WEPT, SHE STOOPED DOWN, *and looked* INTO THE SEPULCHRE,”

Peter and John, baffled perhaps by Jesus not being in his tomb, leave and go home. But Mary Magdalene, who of the women, owed much to the Jesus for her well being since he had cast seven devils out of her, stays and relieves her anxiety through weeping. In doing so she bends down and looks into the tomb.

v.12-13 “AND SEETH TWO ANGELS IN WHITE SITTING, THE ONE AT THE HEAD, AND THE OTHER AT THE FEET, WHERE THE BODY OF JESUS HAD LAIN. AND THEY SAY UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? SHE SAITH UNTO THEM, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY MY LORD, AND I KNOW NOT WHERE THEY HAVE LAID HIM.”

When Mary Magdalene bends down to look into the tomb she see two angels sitting as it were at the head and foot of the place where Jesus laid. Apparently these angels did not appear to Peter and John, otherwise John would have recorded it. They ask her why she is weeping and she tell them because the body of her precious Lord has been taken away and she don't know there it is.

v.14 “AND WHEN SHE HAD THUS SAID, SHE TURNED HERSELF BACK, AND SAW JESUS STANDING, AND KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS.”

She rises and turns as though to walk away from the tomb and sees Jesus, except at this time she doesn't recognize him. Whether his countenance had changed to the extent that he was unrecognizable or just that their minds refused to accept what their eyes was seeing, we're not told. But this is not the only time that Jesus wasn't recognized by those that he spent the most of his time with. We see that when he visited his fishermen disciples at Galilee:

John 21:4 “BUT WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME, JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE: BUT THE DISCIPLES KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS.”

John Chapter Twenty

v.15 “JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? WHOM SEEKEST THOU? SHE, SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER, SAITH UNTO HIM, SIR, IF THOU HAVE BORNE HIM HENCE, TELL ME WHERE THOU HAST LAID HIM, AND I WILL TAKE HIM AWAY.”

Mary Magdalene still has no concept of Jesus being resurrected and leaving the tomb under his own power. Even when she backs away from the tomb and sees him she asks him if he has moved Jesus' body

v.16 “JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, MARY. SHE TURNED HERSELF, AND SAITH UNTO HIM, RABBONI; WHICH IS TO SAY, MASTER.”

When he speaks again she realizes who he is and calls him “MASTER”.

v.17 “JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, TOUCH ME NOT; FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER: BUT GO TO MY BRETHREN, AND SAY UNTO THEM, I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER; AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD.”

Jesus tells Mary not to touch him because he has not yet returned to the Father but he allows Thomas to touch him if he chooses to provide the opportunity to remove the doubts that Thomas had spoken concerning his resurrection. John records that Jesus tells her to tell his disciples that he is to go back to his Father, back to God just as he had promised them earlier:

John 16:28 “I CAME FORTH FROM THE FATHER, AND AM COME INTO THE WORLD: AGAIN, I LEAVE THE WORLD, AND GO TO THE FATHER.”

This was not the only instructions that Jesus gave Mary for we read in:

Matthew 28:10 “THEN SAID JESUS UNTO THEM, BE NOT AFRAID: GO TELL MY BRETHREN THAT THEY GO INTO GALILEE, AND THERE SHALL THEY SEE ME.”

Jesus has now been resurrected from the dead. Where he was between his resurrection and his ascension we're not told, except for those times that he appears to his disciples. Did he return to God during those days? We're not told so we don't know. Paul writes that he is to be the firstborn of many who will indeed enter into the kingdom of God; born into the family of God:

Romans 8:29 “FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE *to be* CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN.”

John Chapter Twenty

v.18 “MARY MAGDALENE CAME AND TOLD THE DISCIPLES THAT SHE HAD SEEN THE LORD, AND THAT HE HAD SPOKEN THESE THINGS UNTO HER.”

Mary Magdalene did as she was instructed, ran and reported her conversation with Jesus to his disciples. But she wasn't believed:

Mark 16:11 “AND THEY, WHEN THEY HAD HEARD THAT HE WAS ALIVE, AND HAD BEEN SEEN OF HER, BELIEVED NOT.”

Read **John 20:19-23** – Jesus Appears to His Disciples

v.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, CAME JESUS AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, PEACE BE UNTO YOU.”

That same day, the day of his resurrection, the first day of the week, he appears to the eleven. Mark records this event in these words:

Mark 16:14 “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 adds the information that they were gathered because of fear of the Jews and behind closed, if not locked, doors. He appears among them without having entered the room in the normal way that a man would enter the room. This is one of the occurrences that Paul writes to the church at Corinth to verify the resurrection of our savior:

I Corinthians 15:5 “AND THAT HE WAS SEEN OF CEPHAS, THEN OF THE TWELVE”

v.20 “AND WHEN HE HAD SO SAID, HE SHEWED UNTO THEM *his* HANDS AND HIS SIDE. THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD, WHEN THEY SAW THE **LORD**.”

Just as he offered to show Thomas at a later time he shows them his hands and his side, the wounds that he received on the cross to verify that he was indeed who he said that he was.

John Chapter Twenty

v.21 “THEN SAID JESUS TO THEM AGAIN, PEACE *be* UNTO YOU: AS *my* FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU.”

As we consider what Jesus said here in this verse, first we understand that God sent him to accomplish a purpose. The Hebrew writer declares:

Hebrews 3:1 “WHEREFORE, HOLY BRETHREN, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION, CHRIST JESUS;”

Jesus is our leader, our High Priest, the Apostle of Apostles and with this authority he is going to send them on to do the work laid out for them. Part of what they were to do was as Paul writes to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:2 “AND THE THINGS THAT THOU HAST HEARD OF ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.”

He has the authority to order such an action and the power to bring it about as we read in:

Matthew 28:18 “AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.”

v.22-23 “AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE BREATHED ON *them*, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST: WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT, THEY ARE REMITTED UNTO THEM; *and* WHOSE SOEVER *sins* YE RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED.”

There is something here in this verse that I had never considered before. We know that the disciples of Jesus had been given certain powers before because when the seventy were sent out they could perform miracles to confirm their teaching (**Luke 10:1-18**). And here again we see Jesus providing them with some measure of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. However, the full measure of the Holy Spirit, the full power that God intended them to have was not given to them until the day of Pentecost came.

The balance of the verse parallels the promise given to Peter:

Matthew 16:19 “AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN.”

John Chapter Twenty

We are told by many scholars that a more accurate translation of Matthew 16:19 would be that "WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND ON EARTH WILL ALREADY HAVE BEEN BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL ALSO HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOOSED IN HEAVEN." Further confirming the apostles power and authority rested with God and only with the God head. He tells them again a little later when instructing them in handling disputes among brethren:

Matthew 18:18 "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER YE SHALL LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN."

Read **John 20:24-31** – Doubting Thomas

v.24 "BUT THOMAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED DIDYMUS, WAS NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME."

Thomas wasn't with them when Jesus appeared to them. We saw from an earlier occasion that Thomas was one that somewhat of a dismal outlook on life. When Jesus insisted upon going to Jerusalem his response was:

"THEN SAID THOMAS, WHICH IS CALLED DIDYMUS, UNTO HIS FELLOWDISCIPLES, LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." **John 11:16**

We might as well go to Jerusalem with him and die with him when he does.

v.25 "THE OTHER DISCIPLES THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, WE HAVE SEEN THE **LORD**. BUT HE SAID UNTO THEM, EXCEPT I SHALL SEE IN HIS HANDS THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND PUT MY FINGER INTO THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND THRUST MY HAND INTO HIS SIDE, I WILL NOT BELIEVE."

They try to convince Thomas that they have seen the risen Savior but Thomas isn't buying it. He demands to see, touch and feel both the nail prints in Jesus hands and the wound in his side before he will believe that Jesus has been resurrected.

v.26 "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."

Some eight days later they disciples are gathered again and Thomas is present. Jesus again appears in their midst without coming into the room through the doors in the normal manner of men. Then he challenges Thomas directly:

John Chapter Twenty

v.27 “THEN SAITH HE TO THOMAS, REACH HITHER THY FINGER, AND BEHOLD MY HANDS; AND REACH HITHER THY HAND, AND THRUST IT INTO MY SIDE: AND BE NOT FAITHLESS, BUT BELIEVING.”

Speaking directly to Thomas he commands him to touch the nail prints in his hands and to put his hand into his side that he might believe that He is the Christ risen from the dead. As we study John’s record we can be assured that he wrote, in addition to being guided by the Holy Spirit, from the position of being an eye witness to all of those things that he recorded. He writes in his first general epistle:

I John 1:1 “THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING, WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, WHICH WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES, WHICH WE HAVE LOOKED UPON, AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED, OF THE WORD OF LIFE;”

v.28 “AND THOMAS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, MY **LORD** AND MY GOD.”

I can almost hear the astonishment in the voice of Thomas, and perhaps a little embarrassment because he did not believe previously.

v.29 “JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, THOMAS, BECAUSE THOU HAST SEEN ME, THOU HAST BELIEVED: BLESSED **are** THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND **yet** HAVE BELIEVED.”

Jesus uses the occasion, as usual, to teach a lesson. Thomas believed because he saw with his own eyes, Jesus says the those would be “BLESSED” who had not seen him in the flesh or after his resurrection but would still believe in Him.. Why is this so important to us as his children? Because we don’t the opportunity to be an eye-witness; Paul writes simply:

2 Corinthians 5:7 “(FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT:)”

We walk by faith, faith gained by hearing the word of God, faith fostered and nourished by our continual study of God’s revelation. As a result we are those:

“WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE; IN WHOM, THOUGH NOW YE SEE **him** NOT, YET BELIEVING, YE REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY:” **I Peter 1:8**

This is another reason to take advantage of every opportunity provided to us to strengthen our faith through the worship of God and the study of God’s will.

John Chapter Twenty

v.30 “AND MANY OTHER SIGNS TRULY DID JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK:”

John begins to close his record with the notation that Jesus did many other things that are not recorded in any of the gospels, or any where else. After all he taught and traveled the land of Israel for a little over three years. At the close of this book John writes:

John 21:25 “AND THERE ARE ALSO MANY OTHER THINGS WHICH JESUS DID, THE WHICH, IF THEY SHOULD BE WRITTEN EVERY ONE, I SUPPOSE THAT EVEN THE WORLD ITSELF COULD NOT CONTAIN THE BOOKS THAT SHOULD BE WRITTEN. AMEN.”

What has been written should be sufficient for our need and the books couldn't hold all that could have been recorded. Then he tells us why they had not been recorded

v.31 “BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; AND THAT BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”

What has been written is recorded that we might believe and as a result of that belief receive “LIFE”. Jesus, himself, taught:

John 5:24 “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.”