

John Chapter 20

Verses 20:1-31

This chapter records the appearances of Jesus to his own followers.

- (1) The appearance to Mary Magdalene (versus 1-18);
- (2) The appearance to the 10 disciples (versus 19-23); and
- (3) The appearance to Thomas (verses 24-29).

Jesus did not appear to unbelievers (see 14:19; 16:16, 22), because the evidence of his resurrection would not have convinced them if the miracles had not (Luke 16:31).

The god of this world (Satan,) have blinded them and prevented their belief (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Then Jesus, therefore, does appear exclusively to his own in order to confirm their faith in the living Christ.

Such appearances were so profound that they transformed the disciples from cowardly men hiding in fear, to bold witnesses for Jesus (e. g., Peter; see 18:27; Acts 2:14-39).

Once again, John's purpose in recording these resurrection appearances was to demonstrate that Jesus' physical and bodily resurrection was the crowning proof that he truly is the Messiah.

And son of God who lay down his life for his own (10:17, 18; 15:13; Romans 1:4).

Verses 1-10

There were several other women were present on this first visit (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; and Luke 24:1-12).

His clothes lay in an orderly fashion.

Had his body been stolen the grave clothes would not have been left.

John 20:1 "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher."

"The first day of the week" is a reference to Sunday.

From then on, believers set aside Sunday to meet and remember the marvelous resurrection of the Lord (see Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

It became known as the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10).

"Cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark":

Perhaps the reason why Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene was to demonstrate grace by his personal, loving faithfulness to someone who formally had a sordid past.

But clearly also because she loved him so dearly and deeply, that she appeared before anyone else at the tomb.

Her purpose in coming was to finish the preparation of Jesus' body for burial by bringing more spices to anoint the corpse (Luke 24:1).

This was the very first time that she could leave her home.

From 6 p.m. Friday until 6 p.m. Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath.

They could not go anywhere on Sabbath.

Mary Magdalene was the Mary that Jesus had cast seven devils out of.

This day mentioned is Sunday.

This day would soon be called the Lord's day.

This would be the very first Easter Sunday.

John 20:2 "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 sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him."

"The other disciple, whom Jesus loved":

This is the author John.

Though Jesus had predicted his resurrection numerous times, it was more than she could believe at that point.

It would take his showing himself alive to them by many "convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3), for them to believe.

The other disciple mentioned here is John.

Mary Magdalene was astonished that the huge stone had been rolled away.

She, perhaps, thought that the Roman soldiers or the Jewish leaders had taken His body away.

John and Peter were undoubtedly very close friends, along with James.

These three many times had gone aside privately with Jesus.

John 20:3 “Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher.”

The excitement of the woman aroused Peter and John, and they ran to the sepulcher.

John 20:4 “So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher.”

We know that John was younger than Peter, and that coupled with the excitement caused him to get there quicker than the older disciple Peter.

Verses 20:5-7

“Saw the linen clothes lying.”

A contrast existed between the resurrection of Lazarus (11:44), and that of Jesus.

While Lazarus came forth from the grave wearing his grave clothes, Jesus' body, both physical and material, was glorified and was now able to pass through the grave clothes much in the same way that he later appeared in the locked room (see verses 19- 20; Philippians 3:21).

The linen clothes and the napkin: the state of those items indicates no struggle, no unhurried wrapping of the body by grave robbers.

Who wouldn't unwrap the body anyway, since transporting it elsewhere would be easier and more pleasant if it was left in its wrapped and spiced condition.

All appearances indicated that no one had taken the body, but that it had been moved through the cloth and left it behind in the tomb.

John 20:5 “And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.”

Perhaps, John was too frightened to go inside until Peter got there so they could go in together.

John took a peep inside, but saw nothing except the clothes of linen which had been on Jesus.

John 20:6-7 “Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, 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 took time to look around and quickly realized these were the things that Jesus had been wearing when He was placed in the sepulcher.

John 20:8 “Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.”

“Believed”:

For as yet they do not: they believe Jesus was alive, but they did not yet knowing the details of His resurrection.

John saw the grave clothes and was convinced by them that he had risen.

John had been frightened, being a youth, but when Peter went in, he felt safe in going in also.

When John saw this, he believed.

He believed Mary that Jesus was no longer there.

John 20:9 “For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”

Neither Peter nor John understood that Scripture said Jesus would rise (Psalm 16:10).

This is evident by the reports of Luke (24:25-27, 32, 44-47).

Jesus had foretold His resurrection (2:19; Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; 9:31; Luke 9:22), but they would not accept it (Matthew 16:22; Luke 9:44, 45).

By the time John wrote this gospel, the church had developed an understanding of the Old Testament prediction of Messiah's resurrection ("as yet").

Why they didn't know is not explained, Jesus had told them over and over while He was with them, but somehow it had not soaked into their thinking: that on the third day He, Jesus, would rise again.

John 20:10 “Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.”

Surely they were thinking that something unusual had happened here, but they had not been able to figure out what.

Verses 20:11-13

"Weeping":

Mary's sense of grief and loss may have driven her back to the tomb.

She apparently had not crossed paths with Peter or John and thus did not know of Jesus' resurrection (see verse 9).

This was Mary's second visit (verses 11-18, Mark 16:9-11).

John 20:11 “But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher,”

Even Jesus' body had been important to Mary.

Her thought must have been that they had taken all contact with her Savior away.

Her sorrow would be turned into joy.

John 20:12 “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.”

Two angels (Luke 24:4), describes both.

Matthew (28:2-3 and Mark 16:5), report only one.

John's reason for the mention of angels is to demonstrate that no grave robbers took the body.

This was an operation of the power of God.

Looking with the physical eye could, perhaps, not reveal these two angels, but Mary was looking, broken in spirit.

Jesus will not leave her without hope.

The sight of these two angels brought hope to Mary.

Mary is not one who sees, but yet cannot see.

She believes and can see the glories of God.

John 20:13 “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.”

Mary was so grief stricken that she had failed to realize these two angels had brought good news to her.

She is still interested in finding the body of Jesus that she might be even that close to Him.

Even in death sometimes, we feel better when we visit the grave of the deceased.

John 20:14 “And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.”

"Knew not that it was Jesus":

The reason for Mary's failing to recognize Jesus is uncertain.

She may not have recognized him because her tears blurred her eyes (verse 11).

Possibly also, the vivid memories of Jesus' bruised and broken body were still etched in her mind, and Jesus' resurrection appearance was so dramatically different that she failed to recognize him.

Perhaps, however, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, she was supernaturally prevented from recognizing him until he chose for her to do so (see Luke 24:16).

This seems to be a strange Scripture, but truly it is not.

Our bodies will be changed from a fleshly body into a spiritual body before they go to heaven.

My own personal belief is that the Spirit of Jesus went immediately to the throne of God when He commanded His Spirit to go to the Father.

On the third day, I believe, His Spirit rejoined His body.

His body was transformed into a Spiritual body.

In (1 Corinthians 15:44), the natural body must be transformed to spirit to go to heaven.

When He speaks to her, and calls her Mary, she recognizes Him.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

John 20:15 “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 is so bereaved that she is still inquiring of Jesus' body.

He must have looked like a natural man, or she would not have thought Him to be a gardener.

When Jesus called her woman, she represented all of suffering humanity.

John 20:16 “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.”

Mary!

Whatever the reason for her failure to recognize Jesus, the moment he spoke this single word “Mary,” she immediately recognized him.

This is reminiscent of Jesus' words "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (10:27; 10:3-4).

There was something in the way He said her name that revealed to Mary who He was.

Rabboni or Master means you are my Lord.

In this moment, Mary is thrust from worshipping Jesus as Healer, Teacher, and Deliverer to worshipping Him as Lord of all.

There is no doubt that Mary saw Him in all His glory here.

There was such an awakening in her spirit as to who He really is.

John Chapter 20 Questions

1. When did Mary Magdalene come to the sepulcher?
2. What did she see that surprised her?
3. When was Jewish Sabbath?
4. What would this day soon be called?
5. Who did she run and tell?
6. Which of the men arrived first at the sepulcher?
7. Who was the first to go in?
8. What did they see inside?
9. Where did they return to?
10. Who stayed behind?
11. Why did they not realize what had happened?

12. What was Mary doing at the sepulcher after the men left?
13. Who did Mary see at the head and foot of where Jesus had lain?
14. What did they ask Mary?
15. When she turned she saw whom?
16. Who did she think He was?
17. In 1 Corinthians 15:44, what do we learn about the body?
18. In verse 51 of 1 Corinthians, what shall all do?
19. When does Mary recognize Jesus?
20. What does Mary call Jesus?
21. What major change has taken place in Mary?