

Jesus Rises from the Dead

John Chapter 20:1-23

Read John 20:1-10

v.1 – Mary was not alone as she went to the tomb (Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10 - note “we” in v.2). Other gospel accounts explain that they went to anoint the body with spices. What is the significance of the first day of the week?

All four gospel accounts tell us Jesus arose on the first day of the week. The second day on which Jesus appeared to disciples was the first day of the next the week (John 20:26). The day of Pentecost was a first day of the week (Lev. 23:15,16). The disciples were gathered on this day when the Holy Spirit came to their meeting (Acts 2:1). The churches took up collections each first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). Although everyday is an appropriate time to come together as one body, these occasions describe Christians assembling on the first day of the week. How can we draw a comparison from this “first” premise with Proverbs 3:9 (think beyond monetary)?

v.6-7 - The folded cloth showed there was no haste in Jesus’ departure or evidence of grave robbers. Jesus had left alive, under His own power. If any man had stolen the body (as the Jews claimed), they would surely not have removed the grave clothes, and folded the head cloth. The deserted tomb bore the marks of perfect calm.

v.8-10 - In what way were the disciples still confused?

Again, this is first-hand testimony from John. “*He saw and believed*”. He has faith in that he recognizes God's fingerprints at the scene. But he still does not understand the full meaning of what he sees because v.9 shows they did not understand that Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples then left to go to their homes, confused and uncertain about what had happened.

Can you recall a time when you recognized the fingerprints of Jesus, and yet were confused about the situation?

Read John 20:11-18

v.11-13 - What did Mary see in the tomb? What question did they ask Mary, and how did she answer?

v.14-15 - Who did Mary see next? Why might she not have recognized Him?

Mary thought Jesus was dead; also v.16 also indicates that she did not yet turn to look directly at Him. Mary's answer (v. 13) shows that she is totally focused on the fact that Jesus' body is missing. He is still her Lord even though (as she believes) he is dead; her loyalty is steadfast.

v. 16 - When Jesus calls Mary’s name she knows his voice, for she is a true sheep. Look up: John 10:3-4

v.17-18 – What instruction does Jesus give to Mary; and how does she respond?

Read the lyrics to the great hymn, In the Garden: “*But He bids me go*” – As awesome as quiet/alone time is with the Lord, we cannot remain in isolation. He has work for us to accomplish. Look up: Isaiah 6:8

Read John 20:19-23

v.19 - Why were the doors locked? What had just occurred that gave the disciples reason to be afraid? Look up: John 19:6

v.21 - Jesus immediately speaks of a mission for the disciples, just as he did with Mary. He repeats his blessing of peace as they receive him. Throughout the Gospels Jesus is said to have been sent by God, and now that will become the defining characteristic of his disciples. Considering what Jesus had just gone through, how would you receive this instruction?

v.22 - At this point the union Jesus shares with God is now shared with the disciples. They are not only reunited with Jesus, but are beginning to be *united* to him. The word used for *breathed on* (emphusao) is the same word used in the Greek Old Testament to describe God's action when he formed the man from the dust of the ground and "breathed into his face the breath of life" and the man became a living being (Gen 2:7). This imparting of the Spirit however seems to be a foretaste of the later experience at Pentecost (Acts 2). This breathing of the Spirit by Jesus does not totally fulfill the promises he made earlier in this Gospel. The conditions for the presence of the Spirit have not been completely met. The Spirit will completely be given after Jesus' return to the Father (14:16, 16:7). Jesus is in the process of returning but has not yet returned (20:17). So it appears that Jesus' giving of the Spirit (for these disciples at least), like his ascending to the Father, is a complex stepped-process.

v.23 –Through the disciples' witness of Jesus, sharing of the word and by their life of love in their community, the world would be forced to choose for or against Jesus, just as they were during Jesus' own ministry. Those who repent and believe in Jesus would be assured of forgiveness, and those who refuse to repent could be certain that their sins would not be forgiven. Judgment takes place as people come in contact with the light. Look up: John 3:19-21