

**John 20:1-18**  
**“Taken with Jesus”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**

**III. Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord**

**I. Intro.**

In normal biographies, there would be no chapter 20 or 21 as this gospel would conclude with the death and burial of the subject! This is the only biography ever read that includes a resurrection. The 20<sup>th</sup> chapter records the events for a span 8 days. The first day covers verse 1-23 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> day to the 8<sup>th</sup> day are to be found in verses 24-31. This resurrection morning our focus will on two things and how they affected those that witnessed them.

• **Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**

• **Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord**

Piecing together all the accounts we get the chronological order of the events that morning: Early on Easter Sunday morning Mary started off with the other ladies for the tomb but in her eagerness to get there, she went ahead of the other ladies. Based upon Matthew 28 before she got to the tomb there was a great earthquake and an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the door! The purpose was clearly NOT to let Jesus out but to let others in. This caused the guards to shake with fear. When Mary came to the tomb she saw the stone was rolled away, her immediate conclusion was that they had moved the body of Jesus so without waiting for the other ladies to get there, she ran to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus was moved. It is after Mary leaves that the other ladies then arrived and when they get there they see two angels who told them that Jesus had risen and to go tell the other disciples. Meanwhile, Mary arrived to where Peter and John are staying, and tells them that Jesus' body is missing (apparently it is this message that the two on the road to Emmaus hear). And in this passage that we are about to examine, Peter and John come to investigate running together until John out runs Peter. Apparently Mary decided to come back to the tomb as well but by the time she got back to the tomb Peter and John had observed, studied and believed then they left. Mary then came back, not knowing that the other ladies had seen the angels, and at this time she looks into the tomb, sees the two angels and then meets Jesus and clings to Him.

**II. Vs. 1-10 The empty tomb**

Vs. 1 There were according to the other gospel accounts perhaps as many as three other women that came with Mary Magdalene early that Sunday morning, but Mary was the first to arrive and then ran back to tell Peter and John then came back with them. The first thing we realize in this story is that **Mary was not hopping for a resurrection she was looking for a body which she assumed had been stolen**. The word in the Greek translated “*early*” in verse 1 is a word that means “*4<sup>th</sup> watch*”. The Roman soldiers had set the night up into four watches:

- A. The first watch went from six to nine PM
- B. The 2<sup>nd</sup> watch went from nine PM to twelve
- C. The 3<sup>rd</sup> watch went from twelve to three AM
- D. And the fourth watch went from **three to six** in the morning

So, Mary left while it was still dark from 3-6 AM and made her way to the tomb with the other ladies at sunrise. The rabbis has a saying “*It is better that the words of the Law be burned, than be delivered to a woman.*” **The woman who were the last at the cross are now first at the tomb.** This was the first day of the “*Feast of first fruits*” thus Jesus became the first fruits of those who are raised from the dead.

Vs. 2-10 John identifies himself as the “*disciple whom Jesus loved*” even after 70 years after had passed he was aware that Jesus loved Him like no other! **John is with Peter who had denied Jesus who had not been with him and the four women at the cross! I wonder if Peter would have come to the empty tomb if John had not sought him out after his failure. Peter, disgraced in the courtyard, absent at the cross runs to the empty tomb because he was with John! Sometimes that’s what it takes to get someone to the empty tomb; hang around them and as verse 4 says “run together with them” for a while to ensure that they make it.**

In verses 5-8 the word “*saw*” appears three times but what is interesting to me is that though **each time the word in English is “saw” the word in Greek is a different word.**

1. The first time in verse 5 the word in Greek means, “*to look, at to see visibly*”. As John stopped at the entrance of the tomb and looked to see the linen clothes lying there.
2. Then in verse 6 Peter comes crashing in and saw linen clothes lying there but here the word in Greek is where we get our word “*theory*”, which indicates that Peter studied the situation more intently than just observing it.
3. Finally in verse 8 we are told that John also went into the tomb after Peter did and here we are told that “saw and believed” and the word used here in the Greek is where we get our word for “*idea*” which means “*I get it*”. John started out making an observation, Peter moved from an observation to studying and came up with a theory. Finally, John went from a theory to “getting it”. What Peter observed was that it looked as though the body had vaporized leaving the linen strips. These fellows didn’t get it at first and they didn’t get it apart from hanging around each other, they persisted and built upon what the other person did. Hang in their folks as we are told in verse 9 “*as yet they did not know the Scripture*” either but they kept at it observing, studying until they got it.

In verses 5-7 the Greek wording makes it apparent that the linen burial wraps that were placed upon Jesus’ body by Joseph and Nicodemus were still there with the folds and spices only flattened. What this suggests is twofold:

1. **The body was not tampered with by grave robbers as they would have just quickly removed the linen strips.**
2. **That the body was resurrected, taken through the wrappings.**

Whatever happened to the grave clothes? Is the Shroud of Turin for real?

Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, states that “*The evidence thus far indicates the probable conclusions that the shroud is ancient (perhaps from the first century), that it does not contradict the NT accounts, and that the image is not a fake. It may well be the actual burial garment of Jesus.*” Results of the Shroud of Turin Research Project in October 1978 determined that the Shroud is not a painting or a forgery. They determined that its blood is real blood, and the image seems to be some type of scorch, though they cannot account for how it was made. Furthermore, based upon the evidence of the Shroud the image is of a crucified male, bearded, 5’11” in height,

weighing about 175 pounds. His physique was muscular and well built, and he is an estimated age of 30-35 years. His long hair is tied into a pigtail and there is no evidence on decomposition on the cloth.

### III. Vs. 11-18 The risen Lord

Vs. 11-14 I love Mary's fixed devotion; she is outside the tomb, overcome with grief and she peeks into the tomb. Now John gives a very picturesque description saying that she observes "two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." In Exodus 25:18-20 Moses was instructed by God to "make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat." All of this reminds us of the Mercy seat where the sacrifice of a lamb's blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat.

Next we are told that Mary has a conversation with these two angels but she is more interested in finding the Lord than talking with two angles. With all these supernatural things going on around Mary her only concern is on finding where "They have taken away **MY** Lord"; Jesus was personal to her. She turned away from the angels and in so doing saw Jesus even though she assumed He was the Gardner. Her eyes filled tears, her heart broken and she can't recognize Jesus though He is right in front of her. That is true with a lot of us at times as we are unable to see Jesus in the midst of our circumstances. Mary recognized that **she was already a beneficiary of Jesus love** and having "once" been set free from the demons of the past she was forever indebted and devoted. I'm afraid today there are far more folks wanting to talk to angels get a few snapshots with them than they are wanting to cling to Jesus.

Vs. 15-18 One wonders if there isn't a gentle rebuke in Jesus words to Mary in verse 15, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Numerous times Jesus had told them that with His death would come His resurrection so why the tears, who are you seeking? Jesus is either who He claims to be, or He isn't! And sense He is.... dry up the tear and begin to rejoice. At times **I'm far too prone to evaluate circumstances as a disaster, instead of realizing that they will fulfill God's promises!** Martin Luther once spent three days in a depression over something that had gone wrong. On the third day his wife came downstairs dressed in mourning clothes. "Who's dead?" he asked her. "God," she replied. Luther rebuked her, saying, "What do you mean, God is dead? God cannot die." She replied, "the way you've been acting I was sure He had!"

The Greek phrase of verse 17 "means to stop an action already begun rather than to avoid starting it." This indicates that Mary was holding on to Jesus and did not want to let Him go. This verse reveals that the glorified body of Jesus was not a ghost but has a real body with physical properties, albeit quite different from our own. The Jewish courts would not recognize the testimony of a women, but Jesus did. This also argues for the historic truth of this account. If someone fabricated this story, they would not make the first witnesses to the resurrection a woman, who were unfairly regarded as unreliable witnesses. Mary Magdalene that doesn't have all the right theology, she was still in the dark with regards to the resurrection. But she came back to the tomb but not because Jesus had risen from the dead, she is driven there not by right

theology but rather ***indebtedness***. I'm afraid we Christian forget how many demons Jesus cast out of us and our ***indebtedness*** has turned into ***entitlement***. I personally think that is what is wrong with Christians today, we have right theology, but we have long ago forgot what Jesus has done for us! What our lives used to be like and how He saved us from the things tormenting us and destroying our lives. Mary Magdalene was in love and thankful and because of this she was determined to stay by Jesus even though her understanding was not right. One reason Mary need not cling to Jesus is because this was not going to be the last time she saw Him in fact one day she would never be apart from Him. Notice Jesus says something very interesting as it relates to being near Him, "*Go to My brethren and say to them*", that is "*You will never be closer to Him than you are when you obey Him and serve Him!*" You say you aren't feeling that close to Jesus, just aren't experiencing His presence well then start obeying His word. Mary became the first missionary sent to proclaim the resurrection to others, a woman in whose testimony was not accepted in court, so what gave her that honor? Well, I believe it was her devotion and sense of indebtedness.