



Sunday School Lesson
John 20:1-18
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Easter Sunday



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Quick Links to the Study

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [He is not here, vv. 1-10](#)
- b. [Where is He? vv. 11-18](#)

Easter Sunday for Christians is one of the most sacred days of the entire year. We celebrate the resurrection of our Lord from death. In so doing, we renew hope not only for eternity but for the immediate future that lies before us before eternity begins. Recently I've been reading in my extra reading time, usually from about 4:00 to 6:00 am, a new publication from Oxford University Press titled *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* by David L. Holmes. Professor Holmes presents an in depth study of the religious beliefs of six of the founders of the United States: Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe. All of them in their own individual way embraced English Deism as their religious orientation. The impact of this was to deny Christ as the Son of God and to dismiss the resurrection of Christ as ignorant superstition. As I have worked my way through this study, my heart has been saddened to realize how baseless one's religious commitment is without the resurrected Christ as its core. Most all of these esteemed men, except for Franklin, held membership in some church, usually the Episcopal Church, but for one reason or another each had gutted their religious training and upbringing in favor of deified Reason as their conception of God. Living a good moral life was their perception of being a Christian, and in a few instances their skepticism about anything after death limited their religion to nothing more than a set of moral principles pertaining only to one's earthly existence. How tragic!



But for genuine Christians such is not the case. And Easter Sunday is the celebration of life that transcends death and transforms life before death. The New Testament never describes in any "scientific" way how the resurrection took place. The four gospel accounts merely affirm its occurrence. That affirmation is mostly in terms of personal encounter of the resurrected Christ with those who loved and cherished him. Many skeptical people today follow in the footsteps of the American founding fathers who found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe that Jesus rose from the grave simply because such events aren't "reasonable" or cannot be proven scientifically. But skeptics have been around from the very beginning when the Jewish religious leaders paid bribes to the soldiers guarding the tomb to say that Jesus' body had been stolen by his followers. And skeptics will always be present until the day our Lord returns to earth

again at the close of human history.

But for people of faith who have encountered the life changing presence of the risen Christ in conversion no skepticism exists. Jesus is alive and we know it to be so. We have seen him, we have experienced him, we know his love and presence day by day in our living and serving the Lord of this universe. We have become the tabernacle for his presence and his Spirit inhabits our life.

This study calls to our attention this central event and how it impacted the lives of those who first witnessed it.

I Context

Two previous studies will provide a substantial amount of background resources for this study. The study on [John 18:1-38a](#) summarized the background material to both the Gospel of John and the *Passio Christi* leading up to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. Only a small condensed version of relevant aspects of that study will be presented here. For greater details this study is recommended. Second, a year ago we studied this same event using the Gospel of Luke ([24:1-12](#)) as the lead passage. Relevant parts of that material will be used in our focus on John's version of these events.

a. Historical

In the traditional approach to the fourth gospel, the apostle John is considered to have been responsible for the writing of this story of Jesus. Yet, one cannot speak even of a "traditional approach" and imply a unified understanding of the origin of this document from the second Christian century on. Uncertainty over the identification of the writer of this document existed early on. But the view of the apostle John gradually gained dominance. The historical situation usually thought to have provided the incentive for writing this gospel is as follows. The apostle as an old man lived most of his adult years after the mid 50s of the first century in and around Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia in the western part of the modern country of Turkey. In the late 80s to early 90s of the beginning century he composed the first twenty chapters of this gospel, with chapter twenty-one being added by his disciples subsequent to his death from his notes and teachings.

His story of Jesus reflects a very different approach to the life of Jesus from that of the synoptic gospels, i.e., Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This difference has occasioned considerable discussion all through the history of interpretation, and especially in the modern era. Whether circumstance in the 90s, distinctive needs of his initial readership, the passing of time and subsequent reflection on Jesus, or some other unknown dynamic produced this different approach cannot be determined. We do have the "finished product" and it is very different. As was often observed in the early period of Christian history, John's gospel is a "spiritual gospel." That is, his

story of Jesus is much more focused on the religious significance of Jesus, than it is concerned with a strict historical narrating of Jesus' life on earth. This is not to claim that no interest in history is present, for it is. But who Jesus was as a religious person is uppermost in John's approach.

In rejecting the traditional viewpoint advocates of alternative understandings are left with a huge challenge of proposing a historical scenario to account for the gospel that can naturally fit the known circumstances provided from early Christian writings. We will assume the traditional viewpoint in this study.

b. Literary

One of the more interesting debates among modern scholars is the literary connection of the fourth gospel to the synoptic gospels. Did John have access to any or all of the synoptic gospels? If he did, the impact of that can only be seen as very minimal upon the content of his writing. Apart from the *Passio Christi* section of the last seven days of Jesus' earthly life, this gospel story rarely ever intersects the synoptic gospels in covering the same event in Jesus' life. Only one of the thirty-plus miracles of Jesus is common to the synoptics and John: the feeding of the 5,000. He redivides the amount of attention devoted to Jesus' time in Galilee and Judea drastically from that given in the synoptics. His beginning of the story is different with a thematic beginning in the Prologue of 1:1-18. The synoptics lay the foundation for the public ministry mostly with Jesus baptism and temptation. John describes nei-

ther of these events. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee, while occupying over half of the content in Matthew and Mark (Luke has 24%), takes up a scant 15% of John's story. More space (28%) is devoted to the three month period at the beginning of AD 30 to Jesus' activity in Judea and Perea in southern Palestine. Only Luke shows a similar interest in this phase with 35% of his story. Yet, Luke and John virtually never overlap in this part of their story. Only with the Passion Week does John join the synoptic writers in proportion of accounting (Mt. 34%; Mk. 34%; Lk. 20%; Jn. 33%). Here he will overlap the synoptic accounts frequently, but still maintain he very different way to telling the story of the same event. With the resurrection and resurrection appearances John will do the same thing as the other three gospels. He has his own approach to [the Empty Tomb account](#) including the women, and then recounts resurrection appearances to the Twelve that are not found in any of the other gospels. To be sure, this is true of Matthew and Luke as well. Mark's gospel ended originally at 16:8 and thus only contained the Empty Tomb account. His creativity and individu-

ally oriented approach are quite apparent.

But this is a part of the genius of the ancient literary form called Gospel, which these four writers created. This **genre** drew from elements of ancient history and biography in order to tell the story of Jesus primarily to the followers of Jesus. This was intended, as [John 20:30-31](#) indicates, to promote deeper faith in Jesus as God's Savior and Redeemer.

One powerful implication of this very different approach of the fourth gospel is the **literary structure** of the document. Although many aspects of this could be explored, one of those looms large and is critical for proper understanding of any passage in the gospel. The [Prologue](#) in 1:1-18 sets the foundation conceptually for the rest of the gospel. The rich word pictures of Jesus as Logos, light/darkness, the role of John etc. becomes the interpretive filter through which the story of Jesus is told. None of the synoptic gospel writers uses such an approach. This will contribute to the distinctiveness of the fourth gospel. One cannot properly understand any pericope elsewhere in the gospel without first gaining a handle on the Prologue.

II. Message

Our passage, 20:1-18, quite naturally divides into two units: 1) the Empty Tomb (vv. 1-10) and the Appearance to Mary Magdalene (vv. 11-18). The central figures in both pericopes are Mary and Jesus. The interruption of Peter and John's running to the tomb provides the break between the two segments.

a. He is not here, vv. 1-10

Greek NT

<20:1> Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρωι σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἠρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. <20:2> τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἔβραν τὸν κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. <20:3> Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής, καὶ ἦρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. <20:4> ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ·

NASB

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running to

NRSV

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were

NLT

1 Early Sunday morning, F88 while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!" 3 Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. 4 The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. 5 He stooped

καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, <20:5> καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. <20:6> ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, <20:7> καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον. <20:8> τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν· <20:9> οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾔδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. <20:10> ἀπῆλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί.

gether; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again

running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. 6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side. 8 Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed – 9 for until then they hadn't realized that the Scriptures said he would rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home.



Notes:

The account of the empty tomb is very distinctive in each of the four gospels. In order to understand John's perspective [the others](#) need to be laid on the table as well.

	Matthew:	Mark:	Luke:	John:
VI. Resurrection appearances and ascension				
	28:1-20 (2%)	16:1-20 (3%)	24:1-53 (5%)	20:1-21:25 (6%)
A. The Empty Tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-12	20:1-10
B. The Appearances to His Disciples	28:9-20	[16:9-20]	24:13-53	20:11-21:25
28.1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance	16.1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll	24.1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes	20.1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the	

was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you." 8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.



Just a quick reading of the four accounts reveals considerable difference in both details and emphasis. Let's quickly note these:

Matthew's sequence:

- 1) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to the tomb after the sabbath right at dawn on Sunday;
- 2) an earthquake accompanies the angel's rolling back of the stone;
- 3) the soldiers faint out of fear at what happened;
- 4) the two women, present for these things, are instructed by the angel to see the empty tomb and then go tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee;
- 5) the women then leave the tomb fearfully and run to tell the disciples.

Mark's sequence:

- 1) after the sabbath Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bring spices to the tomb early on Sunday just a sunup;
- 2) they wondered on the way how they were going to get the stone rolled away in order to anoint Jesus' body with the spices;
- 3) upon arrival they discover the stone already rolled away and they enter into the tomb;
- 4) inside the tomb they see a "young man in a white robe" sitting on the right side where the body should have been;

stood beside them. 5 The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Luke's sequence:

- 1) On Sunday at early dawn the women (who had followed him from Galilee, cf. 23:49, 55; 8:1-3) went to the tomb with the prepared spices;
- 2) they found the tomb opened but no body;
- 3) while pondering this, two men suddenly stood by them causing them to fear and bow down in reverence;
- 4) the men remind them of Jesus' promised resurrection;
- 5) leaving the tomb they told the eleven what had happened.
- 6) Peter runs to the tomb

tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

John's sequence:

- 1) On Sunday while still dark Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb;
- 2) She sees the stone rolled away from the entrance;
- 3) She runs to tell Peter and the "other disciple";
- 4) The two run to the tomb to see what had happen;
- 5) Peter got there first, but the other disciple went into the tomb followed by Peter;
- 6) They went back home not knowing what to make of this.

See vv. 11-18 for continuation of this in John.

One notes that each narrative stresses different women being present. Luke's unnamed women includes Mary Magdalene as is clear from v. 10 and

the 8:1-3 reference. Thus, she is the one consistent across the four gospels identifying the women who were present. Matthew comes the closest to describ-



5) he reassures them that Jesus is raised and instructs the women to go tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee;

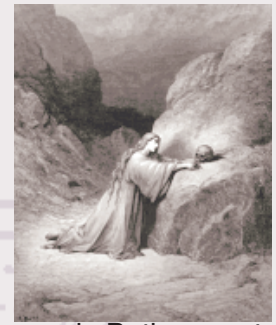
6) the women leave the tomb in great fear telling no one what they had seen out of fear.

ing the actual resurrection with his depiction of an earthquake accompanying the angel's rolling back the entrance stone. None of the other accounts include this. Also, he includes the fainting of the soldiers who were guarding the tomb, since he is the one who has included the account of Roman soldiers being posted by Pilate to guard the tomb.

The angels are variously described either as angels (ἄγγελος; Mt.) or a young men (νεανίσκος; Mk) or as two men (ἄνδρες δύο; Lk). Matthew and Mark stress one while Luke stresses two, but all three make it clear that these are angels, not humans. In all the accounts the women encounter an angel(s), while none of the disciples do. In John's account this comes after the disciples have viewed the empty tomb, rather than beforehand in the synoptic accounts. Luke highlights the difficulty of the believability of the women's story. The angelic instruction includes an invitation to confirm the absence of Jesus' body as well as a reminder of Jesus' earlier instruction either promising a resurrection and/or setting up a meeting time in Galilee.

Matthew, Luke and John include either Peter or Peter and John coming to the tomb in order to check out the women's story about the missing body. Mark's account is unclear whether the women just left the tomb in fear saying nothing until they told the disciples as per the angel's instruction or whether they never made it to where the disciples were. In Luke's account, verse 12 has considerable variation in its wording in many ancient copies and is completely left out in a few copies. This suggests some ancient uncertainty as to whether Luke originally included Peter's checking out of the women's report. John's account is the most detailed of any and includes the rather fascinating detail of Peter outrunning John to the tomb, but John not hesitating to go inside it rather than Peter. Interestingly, the men, after observing the empty tomb, simply "went home." The term is relative since all of them maintained a home in Galilee some 75 miles to the north of Jerusalem. Home in this instance simply meant back to where they were staying in Jerusalem, possibly the

to check out the women's story. Amazed he then went home.



home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany outside of Jerusalem.

Thus, although difference in details and sequencing of some of the details do exist, some basic commons run uniformly through all four narratives: 1) women/woman saw an empty tomb; 2) angels/angel appeared to the women/woman; 3) a report was made to the disciples; 4) at least Peter (and John) checked out their story and discovered the empty tomb before heading home.

One shouldn't be disturbed by these differences. The common elements provide sufficient evidence that this did take place. The religious significance of the accounts is the primary value of the stories.

John's account centers on [Mary Magdalene](#) coming to the tomb and discovering it empty. [She](#) is mentioned some twelve times in the New Testament. Luke 8:2 provides the additional detail that she had been healed from the curse of seven demons by Jesus. Otherwise, she is simply identified as the woman coming from the town of Magdala which is located on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias in far northern Palestine. Later church tradition has tried unsuccessfully to identify her with the woman who anointed Jesus feet in Lk. 7:36-50. Sometimes an attempt has also been made to link her to Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. A few, such as Mel Gibson's *Passion of Christ*, attempted to link her to the woman caught in adultery in John 7:53-8:1. Interestingly, an ancient myth about Mary appearing before the Roman emperor Tiberius provides one basis for the Easter Egg tradition. But the New Testament provides no basis for these identifications. Most of the more recent speculations comes from biblical scholars interested in sensationalism more than genuine scholarship. A helpful critique of the current speculation about Mary is Ben Witherington's [Mary, Mary, Extraordinary](#).

When she noticed the empty tomb, she did a very natural thing. She ran to Peter and John to tell them that the Lord's body was missing and she didn't know what had happened. The tone of her words, "[we do not know where they have laid him](#)," implies sus-

picion that either the Romans and/or the Jewish religious authorities had secretly moved the body of Jesus. The first person “we” can imply John’s awareness of other women being present. At any rate she was greatly disturbed that somehow the body of Jesus was being violated. At minimum she was concerned that she would not be able to properly anoint Jesus’ body with the spices she had prepared for his burial. What we see from this is an expression of devotion to the Jesus who had changed her life. She was well known inside the ranks of followers of Jesus, and had been in the number of the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover observance.



When Peter and John arrive at the tomb, they discover Jesus’ body missing just as Mary had told them. The head covering was separated from the

other burial garments and neatly rolled up. This was a signal of an orderly removal of Jesus’ body, not something that would be expected if the authorities had tried to secretly remove the body, or if someone had stolen the body. John, the “other disciple,” saw this as indication of something supernatural. Yet, he did not know exactly what was going on “for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” How mixed must have been their emotions as they returned home that day. Something unusual was going on, but two plus two didn’t yet equal four in their thinking.

The connection of these verses to us today? First, Easter is here! Jesus is alive, not dead. Unlike most famous individuals, we Christians have no tomb where a body is buried and revered. In fact, we don’t know for certain where Jesus was even buried. Two locations have been suggested, the traditional site and Gordon’s Calvary. Why? Because a tomb is not important for Christianity. The empty tomb is what matters. No body exists to be revered. A living Christ is what matters.

Do we understand all this? No! Just like Mary and Peter and John, we see the empty tomb. Some sense comes of it, but full comprehension comes later. What we do know is that his body is gone and was not stolen. Something supernatural took place. This is what we celebrate on Easter.

b. Where is He? vv. 11-18

Greek NT

<20:11> Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον <20:12> καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. <20:13> καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι, Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ἦραν τὸν κύριόν μου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. <20:14> ταῦτα εἰποῦσα ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι

NASB

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus

NRSV

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus did not know that it was

NLT

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 "Why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. 15 "Why are you

Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν. <20:15> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; τίνα ζητεῖς; ἐκεῖνη δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρός ἐστίν λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτόν ἀρῶ. <20:16> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Μαριάμ. στραφεῖσα ἐκείνη λέγει αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί, Ραββουνι (ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε). <20:17> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπέ αὐτοῖς, Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεὸν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν. <20:18> ἔρχεται Μαριάμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι Ἐώρακα τὸν κύριον, καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ.

Notes:

This second segment has no direct parallel in any of the synoptic gospels. The Additions to the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20) in 16:9-11 contain a segment that collapses John (20:11-18) and Luke (24:10-11) into a single pericope: "9 #[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 But when they heard that

standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." 16 "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned toward him and exclaimed, "Teacher!" 17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." 18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.



he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.]” But this is a much later addition to Mark’s gospel that came many decades after the gospel itself was written. These additions were prompted by a strong desire to make Mark end with resurrection appearances just like the other gospels. But they are not genuine and represent a clumsy attempt at this objective. Consequently many different versions, both long and short forms, show up in copies of the later manuscripts of the second gospel. The form most

English Bible readers know (above NRSV translation) comes from the late Byzantine longer ending, but in no way is genuine to the original gospel of Mark. The details in this segment contradict both the tenor and details of the posture of the disciples found in the other accounts.

John's narrative centers on Mary standing outside the tomb weeping after Peter and John had left the area. With a second look into the tomb, possibly before she also left the area, she sees two angels now sitting in the part where Jesus' body had been laid. They ask her why she is crying. She answers that Jesus' body was missing and she didn't know where it had been taken. Before they can respond, she turns around and sees a third figure whom she assumes is the caretaker for the garden area. He asks her the same question as the angels. Mary responds that if he is responsible for removing Jesus' body all he need do is tell her where it is and she will go take care of it to see that it gets a proper burial.

Then comes the shock of her life to that point. His answer is one word: *Μαριάμ*. Instantly, she recognizes that voice as Jesus' voice. She exclaims loudly in Hebrew:

Ραββουνι. This John needs to translate into Greek for his non-Hebrew readers who did not understand either Hebrew or Aramaic. *Rabboni* means Teacher.

The next scene in John's brief summation is of Mary clinging to Jesus' legs in a warm and fervent expression of love and devotion.

Jesus then tells her to let go of him. The reason: he hasn't yet ascended to the Father. Her devotion,

although genuine, is misplaced and is interfering with him carrying out the Father's mission. He also instructs her to tell the disciples about his ascension.

The pericope closes with Mary going to the disciples to tell them that not only had she seen the Lord alive but she conveyed his instructions to them as well. The next event in John ([20:19-23](#)) is the appearance of the Lord that Sunday evening to the disciples with Thomas absent from the group.

What we notice here is the distinctive Johannine manner in which information is carried from Jesus to the disciples. The essential point is the same as in the synoptics: Jesus is alive and will meet his disciples. But Mary is the messenger in John and the point of her message is the ascension of Jesus to Heaven. This will not happen for forty more days during which time Jesus will appear to the disciples several times both in Jerusalem and in Galilee.



What is the connection of this to us? More than anything else we learn that Jesus is alive and headed to the Father's presence from which he will intercede in our behalf. We may on occasion, like Mary, not recognize him at work in our world. And our devotion to him may need reshaping, like Mary's, in order to sync with our Lord's mission. But this we know -- He's alive and we now have hope!

Greek NT

<20:1> Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται πρωὶ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ βλέπει τὸν λίθον ἠρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου. <20:2> τρέχει οὖν καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, ᾗ Ἦραν τὸν κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. <20:3> Ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής, καὶ ἦρχοντο εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον. <20:4> ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής προέδραμεν τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ ἦλθεν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, <20:5> καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. <20:6> ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, <20:7> καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον. <20:8> τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐπίστευσεν· <20:9> οὐδέπω γὰρ ᾗδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι. <20:10> ἀπῆλθον οὖν πάλιν πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ μαθηταί.

<20:11> Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ ἔξω κλαίουσα. ὡς οὖν

NASB

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she

NRSV

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look F160 into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of

NLT

1 Early Sunday morning, F88 while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!" 3 Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. 4 The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. 5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. 6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side. 8 Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed – 9 for until then they hadn't realized that the Scriptures said he would rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home.

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 "Why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have

ἔκλαιεν, παρέκυσεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον <20:12> καὶ θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, ἓνα πρὸς τῆ κεφαλῇ καὶ ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. <20:13> καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι, Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι ἤρην τὸν κύριόν μου, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. <20:14> ταῦτα εἰποῦσα ἐστράφη εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν. <20:15> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Γύναι, τί κλαίεις; τίνα ζητεῖς; ἐκεῖνη δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρός ἐστίν λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν, εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀρῶ. <20:16> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Μαριὰμ. στραφεῖσα ἐκείνη λέγει αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστί, Ραββουνι (ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε). <20:17> λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς, Μὴ μου ἄπτου, οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα· πορεύου δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου καὶ εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς, Ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ πατέρα ὑμῶν καὶ θεόν μου καὶ θεὸν ὑμῶν. <20:18> ἔρχεται Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς ὅτι ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον, καὶ ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ.

stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, F161 "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. 15 "Why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." 16 "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned toward him and exclaimed, "Teacher!" 17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." 18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Greek NT Diagram

20:1

δὲ

Τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων

1

Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔρχεται

πρωί
σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης
εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον

2

καὶ
βλέπει τὸν λίθον

ἠρμένον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου.

20:2

οὖν

3

τρέχει

καὶ

4

ἔρχεται

πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον

καὶ

πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν

ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς

καὶ

5

λέγει αὐτοῖς,

α

Ἦραν τὸν κύριον

ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου,

καὶ

β

οὐκ οἶδαμεν

ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.

20:3

οὖν

6

Ἐξῆλθεν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής,

καὶ

7

ἦρχοντο

εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον.

20:4

δὲ

8

ἔτρεχον οἱ δύο

ἑκαστοῦ·

καὶ

9

ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής προέδραμεν

τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου

καὶ

10

ἦλθεν

πρῶτος

εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον,

20:5

καὶ

παρακύψας

11

βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια,

μέντοι

12

οὐ εἰσῆλθεν.

20:6

οὖν

13 **ἔρχεται καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος**
ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ
καὶ

14 **εἰσῆλθεν**
εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον,
καὶ

15 **θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα,**
καὶ
τὸ σουδάριον,
ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ,
μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων
οὐ...κείμενον
ἀλλὰ
χωρὶς
ἐντετυλιγμένον
εἰς ἓνα τόπον.

20:7

20:8 οὖν
τότε

16 **εἰσῆλθεν καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητῆς**
ὁ ἐλθὼν
πρῶτος
εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον

καὶ

17 **εἶδεν**
καὶ

18 **ἐπίστευσεν·**
20:9 γὰρ
οὐδέπω

19 **ἤδεισαν τὴν γραφὴν**
ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι.

20:10 οὖν

20 **ἀπῆλθον...οἱ μαθηταί.**
πάλιν
πρὸς αὐτοὺς

20:11 δὲ

21 **Μαρία εἰστήκει**
πρὸς τῷ μνημείῳ
ἔξω
κλαίουσα.

οὖν
ὡς ἔκλαιεν,

22 **παρέκυσεν**
εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον
καὶ

20:12

23

θεωρεῖ δύο ἀγγέλους

ἐν λευκοῖς
καθεζομένους,
ἓνα πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ
καὶ
ἓνα πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν,
ὅπου ἔκειτο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

20:13

24

καὶ
λέγουσιν αὐτῇ ἐκεῖνοι,

Γύναι,
τί κλαίεις;

γ

25

λέγει αὐτοῖς

ὅτι **Ἦραν τὸν κύριόν μου,**
καὶ
οὐκ οἶδα

δ

ε

ποῦ ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.

20:14

26

ταῦτα εἰποῦσα
ἐστράφη
εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω,
καὶ

27

θεωρεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν

ἑστῶτα,

28

καὶ
οὐκ ᾔδει

ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν.

29

20:15

λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς,

Γύναι,
τί κλαίεις;
τίνα ζητεῖς;

ζ

η

δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρός ἐστίν

30

ἐκεῖνη...λέγει αὐτῷ,

Κύριε,
εἰ σὺ ἐβάστασας αὐτόν,
εἰπέ μοι ποῦ ἔθηκας αὐτόν,
κάγῳ
αὐτὸν ἀρᾶ.

θ

ι

31

20:16

λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς,

Μαριάμ.

κ

32

στραφεῖσα
ἐκεῖνη λέγει αὐτῷ
Ἑβραϊστί,

Ραββουνι

λ

(ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε).

33 ^{20:17} λέγει αὐτῇ Ἰησοῦς,

μ

Μὴ μου ἄπτου,

γὰρ

οὐπω

ν

ἀναβέβηκα

πρὸς τὸν πατέρα·

δὲ

ξ

πορεύου

πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου

καὶ

ο

εἰπέ αὐτοῖς,

Ἄναβαίνω

πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου

καὶ

πατέρα ὑμῶν

καὶ

θεόν μου

καὶ

θεὸν ὑμῶν.

34 ^{20:18} ἔρχεται Μαριὰμ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ

ἀγγέλλουσα τοῖς μαθηταῖς

ρ

ὅτι *Ἐώρακα τὸν κύριον,*

καὶ

σ

ταῦτα εἶπεν αὐτῇ.