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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**“…AND KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS.”**

**John 20:1-16**

***John 20:1, "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."***

John’s account of the resurrection is the most extensive of the four Gospels, with specific details of the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene was first introduced as one who looked on at the crucifixion (19:25). Jesus had delivered her from severe demon possession, and she followed Jesus, serving and supporting His ministry (Matthew 27:55; Luke 8:1-3). On the first day of the week, Sunday, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early in the morning. 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 Weekly sabbath. They could not go anywhere on sabbath. This day would soon be called the Lord’s Day. This would be the very first Easter (Resurrection) Sunday. The Synoptic Gospels inform us that Mary had gone to the tomb with other women to anoint Jesus’s body (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55–24:1). On arrival at the tomb, Mary unexpectedly found the large round stone at the tomb’s entrance had been rolled away, and she had also seen an angel (Mark 16:5). It should be noted that Mary was among the women who “purchased” the spices to anoint Jesus’ body after the Jewish “High” Sabbath which was Wednesday 6:00 p.m. to Thursday 6:00 p.m. was past (Day 1). From Thursday 6:00 p.m. to Friday 6:00 p.m. (Day 2) the women “prepared” the previously purchased spices and then rested on the Jewish Weekly Sabbath from Friday 6:00 p.m. to Saturday 6:00 p.m. (Day 3) fulfilling the scriptural requirement of Jesus’ body being in the ground for three days and three nights.

***John 19:31 “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”***

***Luke 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.***

***Mark 16:1 “And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.”***

***Luke 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.***

***Luke 24:1 “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.”***

***John 20:2-3***

***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."***

***3, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre."***

Mary ran to find Peter and John, the other disciple whom Jesus loved. The explanation of her flight is that she saw an angel inside the tomb (Mark 16:5). Based on Mary’s word, Peter and the other disciple proceeded to the empty tomb. 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 20:4-5,***

***4 "So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre."***

***5, "And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in."***

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. 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. When he saw the linen wrappings lying there, something prevented him from entering, perhaps respect or fear of ceremonial defilement associated with contacting a corpse. But Peter did not share this hesitancy.

***John 20:6-7,***

***6 "Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,"***

***7, "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 sepulchre. Since John waited for Peter’s arrival before entering the grave, Peter could be assured that when he saw the linen wrappings lying there, they were not repositioned by John. John’s delay provided for two authentic witnesses to the wrappings of the empty tomb. In contrast to the grave wrappings that bound Lazarus, Jesus’ face-cloth which had been on His head was lying separately, rolled up in a place by itself. Though it is impossible to say with any certainty, Jesus may have passed through the wrappings and left them right where He had lain. This orderly arrangement is evidence of resurrection, not robbery, and the separate face cloth makes it difficult to believe that a shroud that supposedly survived from Jesus’ burial is genuine. One of the many theories that men have concocted to explain away the resurrection is that Jesus was merely resuscitated. This theory proposes that after enduring the intense brutality of being beaten and crucified, Jesus was revived by the cool interior of the tomb. But this doesn’t explain why a half-dead man would remove his head cloth, neatly fold it, and place it separate from his intact linen wrappings! Nor does it explain how he could have had the strength to move the heavy stone blocking the entrance. As with other attempts by unbelievers to deny the resurrection, this one fails to adequately explain the evidence.

***John 20:8-10,***

***8 "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed."***

***9, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."***

***10, "Then the disciples went away again unto their own home."***

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. Previously he had believed in Jesus’s identity. Now he believed in the resurrection. Though Jesus had predicted his resurrection (Luke 9:21-22; 18:31-34), and Scripture foretold that the Messiah must rise from the dead (Acts 2:24-31), the disciples had not understood. They returned to the place where they were staying, no doubt still trying to piece things together and figure out exactly what had happened. 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 would rise again. Surely, they were thinking that something unusual had happened here, but they had not been able to figure out what. Since Peter and John went away again to their own homes, John would have announced Christ’s resurrection to Jesus’ mother, Mary, who was now staying at his home (John 19:27).

***John 20:11-13,***

***11 "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,"***

***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."***

***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."***

Jesus’ first resurrection appearance was to a woman, Mary Magdalene. This (1) confirms the historicity of the resurrection (no first-century writer would have created a narrative with a woman in such a critical role unless it actually transpired this way), and (2) highlights the importance of women in Jesus’ ministry. Mary returned but remained outside the tomb weeping. Even Jesus' body had been important to Mary. Her thought must have been that they had taken all contact with her Saviour away. Still crying, she looked into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white. The presence of angels alone should have alerted Mary that Jesus’ body was not stolen and something supernatural had taken place. That the angels were seated where the body of Jesus had been lying also testified to His resurrection. The angels did not explain to Mary that Jesus was raised. They simply asked, Woman, why are you weeping? as if to suggest that there was really no reason for sorrow. Mary answered the angels, explaining her theory that the body was stolen. Mary’s sorrow, soon turned to joy, would fulfill the promise Jesus gave the disciples. 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 20:14-15***

***14 "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus."***

***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."***

This seems to be a strange Scripture, but truly it is not. When Jesus called her woman, she represented all of suffering humanity. Mary is so bereaved that she is still inquiring of Jesus' body. Then she saw another person, only this one turned out to be Jesus! He also asked her why she was crying. But she didn’t recognize him and supposed he was the gardener. He must have looked like a natural man, or she would not have thought Him to be a gardener. She even wondered if he’d moved the body. Jesus, The Son of God, the King of creation, had risen from the dead, Just as He said He would, and he was mistaken for a gardener by a devoted disciple! Mary thought the voice was that of the gardener. Perhaps he had placed the body elsewhere. However, Jesus was giving Mary the first view of His resurrected body. Similarly, our bodies will be changed from a fleshly body into a spiritual body before they go to heaven. At death 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, His Spirit rejoined His body. His body was transformed into a Spiritual body.

***I Corinthians 15:51-52***

***51 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."***

***52, "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 20:16, "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."***

When Jesus affectionately called her by name, Mary turned around and immediately knew it was Jesus. When she heard the man say, Mary, she finally knew this was her teacher. Initially, she hadn’t recognized him by sight but when he spoke her name, her eyes were opened.

***John 10:4 “And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”***

***Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

***2 Corinthians 5:7 “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)”***

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, 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. Although she had often called Him Lord, she addressed Him as Rabboni, which means Teacher. “Teacher” is the most common form of address for Jesus in the Gospels but is never used of Him after the ascension.

**QUESTIONS**

1. When did Mary Magdalene come to the sepulchre?
2. What did she see that surprised her?
3. When was the Jewish “High” sabbath?
4. When was the Jewish “Weekly” sabbath?
5. Who did Mary run and tell?
6. Which of the men arrived first at the sepulchre?
7. What did they see inside?
8. Where did they return to?
9. Who stayed behind?
10. What was Mary doing at the sepulchre after the men left?
11. Who did Mary see at the head and foot of where Jesus had lain?
12. What did they ask Mary?
13. When she turned she saw whom?
14. Who did she think He was?
15. What does Mary call Jesus?