

JESUS IS RESURRECTED AND RESPECTED

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important that without it, our faith in Christ is vain (1 Cor 15:17). Jesus Himself gave it for a sign that He was the Messiah (Jn 2:18-22). His resurrection makes Him unique.

Mary Magdalene and two other women (Mk 16:1-2) were the first to discover the empty tomb (20:1). Mary Magdalene thought Jesus' body had been stolen, so she left the other women and ran to tell Peter and John (20:2). These two disciples quickly ran to the tomb and although they found the body gone, they found the wrappings were lying in the shape of the body with the napkin in a place by itself (20:3-7). When John saw that, he believed (20:8).

When the disciples left, Mary stayed. She dearly loved Jesus and grieved over the loss of His body. Jesus had cast out seven demons from her (Lk 8:2). However, her grief was changed to joy when Jesus, Whom she thought was the gardener, spoke her name. Then she discovered that He truly was alive. Once more she ran to the disciples, but this time she carried good news because she had seen and spoken to the Lord (20:10-18).

Jesus appeared twice to His disciples in Jerusalem. He first appeared to them the night of His resurrection, but Thomas was absent (20:19-25). As a result, Thomas doubted until Jesus appeared the second time one week later (20:26-29). Then he, too, believed. Jesus commissioned them to go and spread the gospel (20:21-23). Jesus' appearance to His disciples changed them from mourners into missionaries.

I. Jesus' Absence from the Tomb — 20:1-10

A. Discovered by Mary Magdalene — 20:1-2

20:1 — "First day of the week" - Since Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, Christians began to worship Him in their churches on Sunday, which they did in Troas (Acts 20:6-7). Also, the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus Christ to the Jewish believers at the festival of Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4).

"Mary Magdalene" — She is the one out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons (cf. Mk 16:9). She loved Jesus dearly for delivering her from those demons. She loved much because she was saved from much (Lk 7:47).

"Stone taken away" — Mary came with other women very early in the morning and found the stone rolled away and Jesus' body gone.

20:2 — Mary ran to tell Peter and John ("the other disciple") that Jesus' body was gone. This shows that she did not believe that Jesus spoke of the literal resurrection of His body when He said He would rise on the third day (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33, 34). She was devastated about the loss of His dead body. Peter and John were no help to her. They did not tell her that He was raised from the dead. No, they also were distressed over the loss of His body and ran to the tomb to discover who might have stolen it.

B. Confirmed by Peter and John — 20:3-10

20:3-4 — John arrived at the tomb first, perhaps because he was younger and could run faster.

20:5-6 — John stooped down to look inside the tomb and he saw the grave clothes, but Peter went right into the tomb and he looked at the clothes lying on the floor.

20:6-7 — The grave clothes apparently were laying neatly in one place and the cloth that covered His face was folded, lying in a separate place. There is no indication that the strips of linen cloth around Jesus' body were unwound, so His resurrected body passed through the linen windings without disturbing them.

20:8 — When John saw the clothes in this condition, he believed Jesus' body was resurrected. There are three Greek words used for the word "saw" in 20:1, 6 and 8. In 20:1, Mary "saw" - this is the ordinary word for "saw"; she observed the fact. In 20:6, Peter "saw" - this means he examined the clothes critically and carefully. In 20:8, John "saw" - this means he understood and comprehended what had happened to Jesus' body. He was the first to believe that Jesus body had been resurrected.

20:9 — They did not yet know the scripture concerning Jesus' resurrection, but Jesus opened their understanding later (cf. Lk 24:44-45).

II. Jesus' Appearance to Mary Magdalene — 20:11-18

A. Mary Alone and Weeping — 20:11

20:11 — Mary was brokenhearted and wept because Jesus' body was gone. She wanted to take care of His body to show her love to Him. She lingered alone at the tomb, no doubt, to figure out some way of finding Jesus' body. While weeping, she stooped down and looked in the tomb.

B. Mary with Two Angels — 20:12-13

20:12-13 — When Mary looked in the tomb, she saw two angels standing where Jesus had been laid. The angels asked Mary why she was weeping and she told them they have taken away "my" Lord and she did not know where they took His body. She spoke of Jesus as "my" Lord. Her relationship to the Lord was personal and very precious. Even the appearance of the two angels did not satisfy Mary's longing to see her Lord.

C. Mary with Jesus — 20:14-18

20:14 — When Mary saw Jesus, she did not recognize Him. This may have been because of tears in her eyes, or it may have been that His external appearance had somewhat changed.

20:15 — Mary "supposed" Him to be the gardener. "Supposing" can be the source of much trouble in a Christian's life. Christians need the facts of Scripture, not the assumptions of their minds, to make good decisions.

20:16 — When Jesus spoke Mary's name, she recognized Him immediately (cf. Isa 43:1; Jn 10:3, 4, 27).

20:17 — "Touch Me not" literally means "stop clinging to Me." From that time and on, Mary had a new relationship with Jesus: Now Mary would "touch Him" by faith through the Spirit.

"My brethren" — This is the first time that Jesus referred to His disciples as "brethren," which indicates a new relationship between them.

"My Father and your Father" — The double reference to "Father" does not refer to different Fathers, but to a different bond to the same Father. Jesus has an eternal relationship with His Father as the Son of God. There never was a time when He was not the Son of God. His disciples and all believers begin their relationship with God as their Father when they trust in Jesus to be their Savior. That is when they are born of God and become spiritual children of

God. There are many "sons" of God, but Jesus is the unique, one-of-kind, Son of God.

"My God and your God" — This statement has to do with authority. When Jesus says "My God," He shows He is under the authority of God (His Father), but so is all creation. In the end, however, God will put all His enemies under the feet of Jesus, which gives Him authority over Satan. Unbelievers are under the authority of Satan, but those who receive Jesus as Savior are set free from his authority and are directly under the authority of Jesus Christ. This gives believers a higher authority than Satan's. When Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire, Jesus will submit Himself to God showing He has supreme authority (1 Cor 15:24-28). Jesus' authority under God is much higher than the believer's authority under God. That is why Jesus said, "My God and your God."

20:18 — Mary obeyed Jesus' command to tell the disciples that she had seen Him and told them what He had told her.

III. Jesus' Appearances to the Disciples — 20:19-29

A. In the Absence of Thomas — 20:19-23

20:19 — The first meeting of Jesus with His disciples was on Sunday.

"Fear of the Jews" — The disciples were gathered together in a room (possibly the Upper Room where they ate the Passover Supper with Jesus). The door to the room was locked because they feared the Jewish leaders. Why? (1) The Jews had just crucified Jesus. (2) Jesus had predicted earlier they would be persecuted (15:20). (3) They were already being accused of stealing Jesus' body (cf. Mt 28:11-15).

"Jesus . . . stood in the midst" — Jesus miraculously appeared unto them in a glorified body which was not hindered by a locked door, by a stone tomb or by linen grave wrappings.

"Peace be unto you" — Cf. Jn 14:27; 16:16-22, 33. This was especially significant when He showed them the marks on His body (v. 20).

20:20 — "Saw" - They comprehended and understood what had happened to Jesus.

20:21 — "As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you" - All of them were commissioned by Jesus to go and do the work of evangelism that He had started.

20:22 — Jesus "breathed on them" - This was not the same thing that happened at Pentecost, but was an enabling power to do their work until Pentecost, which came 50 days later.

20:23 — "Sins . . . remitted . . . retained" - The disciples and others were in the room when Jesus said they could remit and retain sins (Lk 24:13-48), so they were meant for all believers, not only for the apostles. So what did Jesus say to them? He said they were to declare what God had done to the sins of believers and unbelievers. God treats their sins according to the way they treat His Son. He forgives the sins of those that receive His Son as Savior. He fastens the sins on those that refuse His Son. The verbs "remitted" and "retained" are in the Greek perfect tense, which means God's act is done once, but the result continues. This is what happens when sinners make their decision to receive or refuse Jesus as their Savior: God forgives believers their sins now and forever. God fastens the sins of unbelievers on them forever. The verbs "remit" and "retain" are in the Greek aorist tense, which means that the act is done at a particular time. On the basis of what sinners do with Jesus, believers know what God has done with their sins. If sinners receive Jesus as Savior, believers can declare their sins have been forgiven. If they refuse Jesus as Savior, believers can declare their sins have been fastened on them. So the work of the believer is simply to declare what God has done. So God's work is done in the Greek perfect tense, but a believer's work is done in the Greek aorist tense. The sinner may later repent of his earlier decision to reject

Jesus and receive Him as Savior. Then God's judgment of that sinner will change and the believer's word to that sinner will change. The word "are" in this verse would better be translated "have been" so it does not sound like any believer can forgive sins or refuse to forgive sins. Then the verse will read: "Whose sins you remit, they have been remitted to them; and whose sins you retain, they have been retained." Peter did not say he would forgive the sins of the people in Cornelius' house, but God had appointed Jesus to be judge to forgive the sins of all believers (Acts 10:42-43).

B. In the Presence of Thomas — 20:24-29

20:24-25 — Thomas did not believe the report of the ten disciples and said he would not believe without physical evidence.

20:26 — One week later on Sunday Jesus appeared to the disciples again. This time Thomas was present.

20:27 — Jesus showed His omniscience by knowing what Thomas had said about not believing He had risen until he could put his finger in the nail wounds in His hands and thrust his hand into spear wound in His side. He also showed His grace by inviting Thomas to feel His wounds.

20:28 — Thomas knew it was Jesus and acknowledged, "My Lord and my God."

20:29 — Jesus pronounced a special blessing on those who believe without seeing Him (cf. Heb 11:1, 3, 6). Today, some people have told their experiences of meeting Jesus on earth and talking to Him. This is contrary to the Bible. He is at the right hand of His Father in Heaven interceding for all believers. In a rare and special occasion, Stephen and Saul saw Jesus in Heaven, but never on earth. It is better to believe without seeing Jesus than to see Him like Thomas demanded. Believers are born into God's family by faith in His Word (1 Pet 1:23, 25) and they are to live by faith that is developed by His Word (Rom 10:17; Heb 10:38). We are blessed if we believe without seeing Jesus.

IV. John's Account for Writing — 20:30-31

20:30-31 — Jesus did many miracles in His earthly ministry, but John wrote about those things that would promote faith in Jesus. He gives two reasons: (1) that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and (2) that by believing Jesus, they would have life through His name.