

**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 20:2** 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.

**John 20:3** Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

**John 20:4** So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

**John 20:5** And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

**John 20:6** Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

**John 20:7** And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

**John 20:8** Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

**John 20:9** For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone that had sealed it had been rolled away.

Note: Mark identifies Mary Magdalene as the woman out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils—not as a prostitute.

*Mark 16:9* “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.”

Matthew 28 tells us that Mary Magdalene did not come alone when she first came to the grave; “the other Mary” was with her. Luke adds that Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and “others” were with her. At some point after they got to the grave, there was a great earthquake. At the same time an angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone that sealed the tomb. The appearance of the angel caused the men who were guarding the tomb to faint from fright.

Re the note at 19:30 - The more I think about it, it would make more sense to Matthew 27:52-53 to be referencing the same quake as Matthew 28 since it involved resurrection of the dead “after His resurrection.”

After reading the accounts in Mark 16 and Luke 24, I think that the earthquake and the rolling away of the stone must have happened before the women arrived at the tomb. Mark states that the women entered the tomb and saw “a young man” dressed in a long white garment sitting on the right side of the tomb, and it scared them. Luke tells us that there were two men in “shining garments” that caused them to bow down in fear. The women did not faint, and the angel spoke to them.

*Matthew 28:5-7 "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."*

*Mark 16:5-7 "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."*

*Luke 24:2-10 "And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles."*

Matthew again adds information. As the women were on their way to tell the disciples the message of the angels, Jesus met them.

*Matthew 28:9-10 "And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."*

John picks up at this point, focusing on Mary Magdalene as the messenger. She came running to Peter and John and told them that Jesus' body had been taken from the tomb and hidden from them. She must have been ahead of the others and missed meeting Jesus. Either she didn't believe the angels, or she took off before they told of the resurrection. The problems associated with these types of minor details are confusing, but not faith shattering. We are either missing something in the translation or there is another explanation that we will learn after our own resurrection.

Peter and John both ran to the tomb. John got there first and saw the strips of linen lying there, but he did not go in the tomb. Peter, on the other hand, walked right in when he got there. He too saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. This cloth was folded separately and was separate from the linen strips. (Doesn't this negate any validity to the shroud of Turin?) (cf with Lazarus in 11:44)

Finally, John too entered the tomb and realized that Jesus was gone. (John explains that they still did not yet understand from scripture that Jesus would rise up from the dead.)

*Psalm 16:10 "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."*

Although they may not have understood the scripture, Jesus had told them point blank that He would rise again the third day.

*Matthew 17:22-23 "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again."*

*Luke 18:31-33 "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."*

I think special mention needs to be made of the information in Matthew 28:11-15. When the guards who had been on duty recovered, they ran directly to the chief priests to tell them what had happened. The priests and elders gave money to the soldiers to bribe them to lie about what happened. They were to tell people that His disciples came and stole the body while they slept. They would personally intercede with the governor to ensure that they were not punished for failing at their duty. The soldiers gladly agreed.

**John 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.**

**John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,**

**John 20:12 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.**

**John 20:13 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.**

Peter and John returned home. Mary Magdalene had evidently followed them back to the grave. When they left to return home, she stayed outside the tomb and wept. When she bent over to look into the tomb, she saw two angels in white seated where Jesus' body had been—one at the place of the head and one at the feet. They asked her why she was crying. She explained that they had taken the Lord's body away, and she didn't know where to find it. By this time Mary was comfortable with the presence of the angels and responded naturally to their questions.

**John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.**

**John 20:15** 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.

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

**John 20:17** Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Verse 17 – “touch” – attach oneself to, touch

When Mary turned back around, she saw Jesus standing there; but she did not recognize Him. (I think partly because she did not expect to see Him and partly because our appearance is a bit changed in the glorified state.) Jesus asks her who she is looking for. She thought He was the gardener that had removed the Lord’s body and asked where he had put Jesus. Then Jesus said her name. She immediately recognized her name from His lips and cried out, “Rabboni,” which meant “Master.” (This brings to mind John 10:3-4.) He cautioned her not to grab Him since He had not yet returned to the Father. Then He asked her to go and tell His brothers (their position in the family as believers) that He was returning to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God.

The question begs, “Why did Christ not want Mary to touch Him?” I found an explanation from Arthur Pink that was enlightening: “On this very day, the morrow after the Sabbath, the high priest waved the sheaf of the first fruits before the Lord while He, the First fruits from the dead (1Cor 15:23) would be fulfilling the type by presenting Himself before the Father. (Companion Bible)”

*1Corinthians 15:22-23 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”*

**John 20:18** Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

Mary quickly obeyed and ran and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and gave them His message.

I can’t help but wonder how much Jesus’ mother understood was going to transpire at the end of her Son’s life. You would have thought that Mary Magdalene would have gone straight to His mother, except that she was being obedient to Jesus’ request.

Even though the disciples didn’t understand about the resurrection, I can’t help but think Jesus would have explained it clearly to His mother beforehand. The mom in me would like to think so anyway. Even though she knew He was God’s Son, He was still her baby and child grown to manhood that she saw suffer cruelly at the hands of her people. She would have been eager to know He was alive and well. Then again, maybe the fact that she wasn’t there was a great

display of her faith in God's plan for her Son as announced to her by the angel before His birth, and probably affirmed to her by Jesus before His death.

From the wording in Mark 16 and Luke 24, it would seem that Jesus appeared to two more of His followers before appearing to the disciples. Cleopas is the name of one of the two according to Luke 24:18. These two followers were on the road to Emmaus (a city close to Jerusalem). Jesus comes near them, but they don't recognize Him because He is in "another form" (according to Mark 16:12). Jesus asks them what they are talking about and why they are so sad. Cleopas figures he must be a stranger if he hadn't heard the headline news of recent events. They proceeded to explain that Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," had been delivered by the Jewish leaders to be crucified. They were disappointed because they thought He was the Messiah who would redeem Israel. This had all happened three days ago. Just this morning they had heard from several of the women that they had seen angels at the tomb who told them that Jesus was alive and was no longer in the tomb. That had been verified by some of the disciples who went to the tomb to see for themselves.

I would assume Cleopas to be the husband of one of the Mary's identified as present at the cross (19:25).

At this point Jesus begins to speak to them.

*Luke 24:25-32 "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"*

The next few verses in Luke were a bit thought-provoking.

*Luke 24:33-35 "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."*

My first thought was that the other of the two followers was being identified as Simon. I looked at JFB, and after looking at the sentence structure several times felt that their understanding was better. When the two arrived at the location of the eleven and others, they found them abuzz about the fact that Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter. This understanding is supported by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.

*1Corinthians 15:3-5 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve...."*

Note: Cephas is another name for Simon Peter.

I agree with JFB that this is a very precious truth. Jesus is very tenderhearted toward those that endure much for Him. In Peter's eyes, he had failed His Lord. In God's eyes, he had learned a valuable lesson that would make him an even more valuable servant.

As the two were telling their story, Jesus appears in their midst. This is where John picks up.

**John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. John 20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.**

Still on the day of the discovery of the empty tomb, the disciples were together behind locked doors (for fear of the Jews) that evening. Jesus appeared and stood among them and bid them peace. He showed them His hands and His side to confirm it was indeed He, and the disciples were overjoyed to see their Lord.

Again, Luke 24 gives us more information regarding this meeting. At first they were afraid of Him because they thought He was a ghost. Jesus encourages them to touch Him; a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones.

This identification by the Lord as being flesh and bone has always stood out to me because of the verse in 1Corinthians:

*1Corinthians 15:50 "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

In thinking about why, I am assuming that our resurrected bodies won't be dependent upon the blood for life. There are many statements in the Old Testament that make it clear that the life is in the blood in the present age.

*Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood...."*

Our life in the coming age will be dependent upon the Spirit.

The disciples wanted to believe, but were still hesitant; so the Lord asks for some food. They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb, and He ate.

**John 20:21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

**John 20:22** And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

**John 20:23** Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

When I looked up the word for *peace* in verse 21, I found an interesting implication. One of the meanings was "to set at one again." I thought that made good sense here. After the stress of the last few days, and after their doubts concerning their future in consideration of their recent expectations, they were probably not fully "unified" in their conclusions. Jesus's resurrection has just reestablished their connection and given them a direction for the future. They would be a team again, just as they had been during the previous three years of Jesus's ministry. Jesus explained that He was now sending them out as witnesses of the truth just as the Father had sent Him.

They were then given the authority to declare sins forgiven. In His name is understood I believe, because men cannot give blanket forgiveness of sins in and of themselves; they were Christ's representatives, ambassadors, who declared the truth on His behalf. Those who accepted that truth could be declared forgiven. Those who rejected it would be declared "still in sin." Forgiveness through faith in Christ results in His making us righteous.

The Holy Spirit is the person of God working in and through us. The action of "remitting sins" could only come from God through the disciples as directed by the Spirit. It's a result of their acting as instructed by Jesus in the great commission.

*Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

I think it is important to note that this is when the disciples were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Their empowerment or "baptism in the Spirit" came at Pentecost. In Acts 1:8 the Holy Spirit came "upon" (epi) the disciples for empowerment; here they were receiving the indwelling earnest of the Holy Spirit that secured their inheritance in Christ.

Again, Luke gives us more regarding Jesus' instructions to the disciples.

*Luke 24:44-48 "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."*

I think one of the key truths in this passage is that contained in verse 45—The Lord opened their understanding of the scriptures at this point.

**John 20:24** But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

**John 20:25** The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas, one of the disciples, was not with the others when they first saw the Lord after His resurrection. So when the others told him they had seen Jesus, he doubted them. He said that unless he saw for himself the nail marks in His hands and touched them and put his hand in the Lord's side, he would not believe them.

Another typical human reaction. We just don't want to learn unless we do it firsthand. If we had the common sense to learn from other's mistakes or experiences, we'd save ourselves a heap of pain and heartache. What's more—it is always the people we should be able to trust the most that we most often refuse to heed—like our parents. Thomas had spent three years with these men and the Lord. Why would he think they would lie to him?

**John 20:26** And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

**John 20:27** Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

A week later the disciples were in the house again, and this time Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus appeared and stood among them. Again He greeted them with "peace." (As I've grown older and wiser, I have come to realize that it is the most precious gift resulting from faith/trust in Jesus and the truth that He is in control. I guess that is why my favorite verse is Isaiah 26:3, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee.*") He spoke directly to Thomas next. He told him to touch His wounds with his hands and put his hands in His side. Jesus basically told him to "quit doubting; believe!"

I can't help but compare this with the first comments Jesus made to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection. She was told not to touch Him since He had not ascended to the Father. Here, He invites Thomas to touch Him. That tells me that He must have ascended to His Father and returned to encourage His disciples before sending them out in the power of the Spirit and returning to the Father to await His glorious coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. My logic is that He ascended after seeing Mary and before presenting Himself to the

disciples the first time. At that time, He was probably anointed as our High Priest.

**John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.**

**John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.**

Thomas immediately recognized Jesus and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." (I would assume his voice had a tinge of shame mixed in with total awe and joy. Little did he know he would go down in history as "doubting Thomas." He probably did many other very good things; yet we remember him mainly for his doubts. Interestingly, many of the disciples are presented "warts and all" as we would say. This is more encouraging than discouraging. We can relate...and we can have hope that we aren't hopeless.) Then Jesus pronounced a blessing for those who have not seen and yet have believed (like me).

**John 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:**

**John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

Then John tells us that Jesus did many miraculous signs that he did not record. The ones he did record, however, were intended to affirm our belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing we could have eternal life. This is the whole purpose John wrote his gospel.