

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

11-12-25

John 20

Discovery Of The Empty Tomb – Verses 1-2

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

20:1 Other women came to the tomb along with Mary Magdalene. The other Gospel accounts give their names. The stone was not rolled away from the entrance to the tomb so Jesus could get out. He could have left easily without moving the stone. It was rolled away so others could get in and see that Jesus was gone.

20:1-2 People who hear about the Resurrection for the first time may need time before they can comprehend this amazing story. Like Mary and the disciples, they may pass through four stages of belief. (1) At first, they may think the story is a fabrication, impossible to believe (20: 2). (2) Like Peter, they may check out the facts and still be puzzled about what happened (20: 6). (3) Only when they encounter Jesus personally are they able to accept the fact of the Resurrection (20: 16). (4) Then, as they commit themselves to the risen Lord and devote their lives to serving him, they begin to understand fully the reality of his presence with them (20: 28).

Peter And John Run To The Tomb – Verses 3-4

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

20:3-4 Peter and John heard the news from Mary and immediately started for the tomb. In keeping with the author’s humility, John did not refer to himself directly, but only as the other disciple. They both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. By tradition, Peter was older than John. We might picture a man in his late forties or early fifties like Peter running to the tomb with great labor, and a man in his mid-twenties easily outrunning him.

Peter And John Examine The Empty Tomb – Verses 5-10

⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

20:5-7 The strips of linen were left as if Jesus’ body had simply vacated them. The cloth that covered Jesus’ head was still rolled up in the shape of a head, and it was at about the right distance from the

wrappings that had enveloped Jesus' body. A grave robber couldn't possibly have made off with Jesus' body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it.

20:8-9 As further proof that the disciples did not fabricate this story, we find that Peter and John were surprised that Jesus was not in the tomb. When John saw the strips of linen looking like an empty cocoon from which Jesus had emerged, he believed that Jesus had risen. It wasn't until after they had seen the empty tomb that they remembered what the Scriptures and Jesus had said— he would die, but he would also rise again!

20:9-10 Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? (1) Just as he said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised. (2) Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God's eternal kingdom. (3) We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end— there is future life. (4) The divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life. (5) The Resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

20:11-13 Mary stood outside the tomb weeping: Peter and John examined the evidence of the empty tomb and John was persuaded that Jesus rose from the dead, though he did not yet understand the meaning of it all. Mary did not yet have the confidence that Jesus was resurrected, so she wept. As she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb: Mary wanted to see what Peter and John saw, so she made her own examination. Yet in the moment between their examination and Mary's, something was different in the tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting: Mary didn't notice the burial wrappings and their curious arrangement; now there were two angels in the tomb. Mary didn't seem to react with shock or fear; she probably did not immediately perceive that they were angels (Hebrews 13:2).

Mary Meets Jesus – Verses 14-16

¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

20:14 She turned around and saw Jesus standing there: Mary wondered and worried about where Jesus was, but He wasn't far away. Mary certainly knew who Jesus was, and it was strange that she did not immediately recognize Him. Some think it was because she was emotionally distressed and had tears in her eyes. Others speculate it was because Jesus looked somewhat different, retaining at least some of the marks of His suffering.

20:15 Why are You weeping? Whom are you seeking? Jesus did not immediately reveal Himself to Mary. It wasn't to play some trick on her; it was to break through her unbelief and forgetfulness of Jesus' promise of resurrection. Tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away: "Her

words reveal her devotion. She never paused to consider how she would carry the corpse of a full-grown man or how she would explain her possession of it.”

20:16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” Jesus had only to say one word, and all was explained. She heard in the name and the tone the voice of her beloved Messiah, and instantly called Him Rabboni (as did another Mary in [John 11:28](#)).

Jesus Sends Mary To Tell The Disciples – Verses 17-18

¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

20:17 Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. She had not yet understood the Resurrection. Perhaps she thought this was his promised second coming (14:3). But Jesus did not want to be detained at the tomb. If he did not ascend to heaven, the Holy Spirit could not come. Both he and Mary had important work to do.

20:18 Mary didn’t recognize Jesus at first. Her grief had blinded her; she couldn’t see him because she didn’t expect to see him. Then he spoke her name, and immediately she recognized him. Imagine the love that flooded her heart when she heard her Savior saying her name. Jesus is near you, and he is calling your name. Can you, like Mary, regard him as your Lord?

20:18 Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. She responded with joy and obedience by going to tell the disciples. We cannot meet Christ until we discover that he is indeed alive, that his tomb is empty. Are you filled with joy by this good news, and do you share it with others?

Jesus Appears to His Disciples – Verses 19-23

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

20:19-21 Jesus again identified himself with his Father. He told the disciples by whose authority he did his work. Then he passed the job to his disciples of spreading the gospel of salvation around the world. Whatever God has asked you to do, remember: (1) Your authority comes from God, and (2) Jesus has demonstrated by words and actions how to accomplish the job he has given you. As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sends his followers...and you.

20:22 This may have been a special filling of the Holy Spirit for the disciples, a foretaste of what all believers would experience from the time of Pentecost (Acts 2) and forever after. To do God’s work, we need the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. We must avoid trying to do his work in our own strength.

20:22 There is life in the breath of God. Man was created but did not come alive until God breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). God's first breath made man different from all other forms of creation. Now, through the breath of Jesus, God imparted eternal, spiritual life. With this inbreathing came the power to do God's will on earth.

20:23 Jesus was giving the disciples their Spirit-powered and Spirit-guided mission— to preach the Good News about Jesus so people's sins might be forgiven. The disciples did not have the power to forgive sins (only God can forgive sins), but Jesus gave them the privilege of telling new believers that their sins have been forgiven because they have accepted Jesus' message. All believers have this same privilege. We can announce forgiveness of sins with certainty when we ourselves have found repentance and faith.

Jesus Appears To Thomas – Verses 24-27

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." **26** A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

20:24 Have you ever wished you could actually see Jesus, touch him, and hear his words? Are there times you want to sit down with him and get his advice? Thomas wanted Jesus' physical presence. But God's plan is wiser. He has not limited himself to one physical body; he wants to be present with you at all times. Even now he is with you in the form of the Holy Spirit. You can talk to him, and you can find his words to you in the pages of the Bible. He can be as real to you as he was to Thomas.

20:25-26 Jesus wasn't hard on Thomas for his doubts. Despite his skepticism, Thomas was still loyal to the believers and to Jesus himself. Some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, and questions lead to answers, and if the answers are accepted, then doubt has done good work. It is when doubt becomes stubbornness and stubbornness becomes a prideful lifestyle that doubt harms faith. When you doubt, don't stop there. Let your doubt deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answer.

20:27 Jesus' resurrected body was unique. It was not the same kind of flesh and blood Lazarus had when he came back to life. Jesus' body was no longer subject to the same laws of nature as before his death. He could appear in a locked room; yet he was not a ghost or apparition because he could be touched and could eat. Jesus' resurrection was literal and physical— he was not a disembodied spirit.

Thomas responds in faith – Verses 28-29

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

20:28-29 Some people think they would believe in Jesus if they could see a definite sign or miracle. But Jesus says we are blessed if we can believe without seeing. We have all the proof we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers. A physical appearance would not make Jesus any more real to us than he is now.

The Purpose Of John's Gospel – Verses 30-31

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

20:30-31 To understand the life and mission of Jesus more fully, all we need to do is study the Gospels. John tells us that his Gospel records only a few of the many events in Jesus' life on earth. But the gospel includes everything we need to know to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, through whom we receive eternal life.