

# The Gospel of John.

## The Conqueror of Death (Part 3).

### John 20:1-10.

#### INTRODUCTION:.

This morning we are continuing in the Gospel of John. We have arrived to chapter 20 which tells us of the resurrection of Jesus. So everything from here to the end of the gospel of John – just two more chapters – is about the risen Christ. You need to understand that the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not just *a* narrative concerning Christianity, it is **the** main event.

The resurrection is the proof that Christ's death on the cross **paid the price for our sins**. That is called redemption. God sent His Son into the world for the very purpose of redeeming His people and preparing them for their own resurrection to eternal glory so that they could worship Him forever. The very fact that Jesus rose from the dead is assurance that we too will be resurrected to eternal glory in glorified bodies. Because He lives, we will live also.

The resurrection is not only a demonstration of power, it is also a validation of His payment for our sins, because God was satisfied with the sacrifice Christ offered for the sins of His people. God raised Him from the dead, validating His work on the cross. When Jesus said, "It is finished!" God was pleased with His Son and raised Him from the dead. Then He ascended to eternal glory and sat down at the right hand of God to intercede for His people and bring them all into eternal glory spiritually and in resurrected form.

How do we know that it really happened? There is the empty tomb - that's a pretty good indication. There is angelic testimony, directly from heaven; and there were eye witnesses. All of that is going to be laid out in the twentieth chapter of John for us. As we come to his account and as we go through this, we will blend in a little from Matthew, Mark, and Luke at strategic points to help get a better understanding of what really happened.

John wants us to see the glory of Christ, even in His death. And he showed us the glory of Christ, because He showed us that Jesus literally was in charge of His own dying. And then He was in charge of His own burial. And now He is in charge of His own resurrection. This is to demonstrate to us "**that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,**" and in believing we may "have life in His name."

#### Stand and Read Scripture

##### **John 20:1-10 (NASB)**

20 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* removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> So she \*ran and \*came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and \*said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him." <sup>3</sup> So Peter

and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; <sup>5</sup> and he stooped to look *in*, and \*saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; however he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> So Simon Peter also \*came, following him, and he entered the tomb; and he \*looked at the linen wrappings lying *there*, <sup>7</sup> and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> For they did not yet understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the disciples went away again to their own *homes*.

## Prayer

In a nutshell, what John wants us to understand is that Jesus rose from the dead. And the proof of it, first of all, is the empty tomb. It is the first day of the week; that would be Sunday. The Jews numbered their days. They did not **name** them like we do Sunday, Monday, and so forth - they **numbered** them. Sabbath was the seventh day, because it commemorated the seventh day when God rested from creation, and they always worshiped on the Sabbath day. So this was the day following Sabbath, the first day of the week. This was our Sunday. It is early. It is so early it is still dark. So that's the scene as we come to verse 1.

## BODY:

### I. THE EMPTY TOMB.

#### **John 20:1 (NASB)**

20 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* removed from the tomb.

Mary Magdalene appears to be the first one to the tomb. She comes early to the tomb while "it's still dark," and it's light enough that she "*saw the stone already removed from the tomb.*"

Now we have a first line of evidence of the resurrection, the empty tomb. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. It was rolled away to let the witnesses in. Jesus did not need the stone to be removed to leave the confines of the tomb. If you remember He did not need the door to be opened that night when He showed up with the apostles. He came right through the door.

Mary arrives. She sees the stone taken away from the tomb and she fears the worst. She is assuming that Jesus is still dead and His body taken.

#### **John 20:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> So she \*ran and \*came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and \*said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him."

She runs Peter and John and tells them that **they** have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.".

I am not sure who the "they" are. But this verse is pretty clear that the disciples of Jesus had not planned to steal the body of Jesus. Mary obviously does not even expect a

resurrection. She is not part of a plot to fake a resurrection. **The apostles would never have submitted themselves to go out and preach and die as martyrs for something that they faked!**

There is a lot of running going on. Peter and John run also.

### **John 20:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb.

I am not sure if the disciples knew what had happened on Saturday because they had rested on the Sabbath as God had commanded them to do. The Sanhedrin got a Roman guard to guard the tomb, and then put a Roman seal on the stone so that no one would come to fake a resurrection. They put a Roman seal around the stone, which meant that it would become a violent crime, if you broke the seal. And they put a significant amount of Roman soldiers there.

## **II. THE MISSING GUARDS.**

We know the guards are gone, because Mary Magdalene never refers to them when she gets there. The other women never refer to them when they get there. Peter and John never refer to them when they get there. They are gone, startled by the angel and shaken by the earthquake, they know they have failed in their duty, and so they go right back to the Sanhedrin. And they are collective testimony that the body is not there, and they are trying to process this confusing reality in their minds.

I would like to go to Matthew's account to get a better understanding of what the soldiers went through.

### **Matthew 28:2-4 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. <sup>3</sup> And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards shook from fear of him and became like dead men.

It does not appear to me that the guards actually fell asleep on the job. They were professional soldiers, and that was a violation of duty that had severe repercussions. It appears that they actually may have experienced the earthquake and saw the angel roll away the stone and became deathly afraid. They somehow worked up enough courage to check inside and saw that Jesus was missing. So they fled from the tomb and went to report what had happened to the chief priests and reported to them all that had happened.

Matthew continues.

### **Matthew 28:11-15 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> Now while they were on their way, some of the *men from the guard* came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him while we were asleep.'" <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and keep you out of trouble." <sup>15</sup> And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews *and is to this day.*

One would think that once the Roman guards informed the chief priests of what had happened at Jesus' tomb, they should have realized that Jesus indeed had risen from the dead as He had prophesied and beg for forgiveness for their unbelief and sins instead of bribing the Roman guards to try to cover up what happened at the tomb.. They knew that Jesus had claimed that He would raise in three days. That is why they sealed the tomb.

### **Matthew 27:62-64 (NASB)**

<sup>62</sup> Now on the next day, *that is, the day* which is after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, <sup>63</sup> and they said, "Sir, we remember that when that deceiver was still alive, He said, 'After three days I am rising.'<sup>64</sup> Therefore, give orders for the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise, His disciples may come and steal Him, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

You may have wondered why the Roman guards went along with the plot after what they had experienced. "The large sum" of the bribe money must have been a factor but the Roman guards may have felt that they had no other choice. They had failed to defend the Roman seal placed on Jesus' tomb, so Pontius Pilate, the Roman "governor" had the right to execute them if nobody intervened for them. That is why they had gone to the Jewish chief priests in the first place instead of to their own barracks.

This is another line of evidence that the tomb is empty.

Meanwhile back at the tomb, Mary Magdalene has assumed that maybe somebody has stolen the body of Jesus. She has no thought of resurrection and she has run to tell Peter and John.

### **III. THE FOLDED LINEN WRAPPINGS.**

#### **John 20:4-8a (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, **faster than Peter**, and came to the tomb first; <sup>5</sup> and he stooped to look *in*, and \*saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; however he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> So Simon **Peter also \*came, following him**, and he entered the tomb; and he \*looked at the linen wrappings lying *there*, <sup>7</sup> and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> So the other disciple who had **first come to the tomb** also entered then...[Stop here](#)

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John wants us to know that he was faster than Peter. To make sure we knew he tells us **three times**.

John was a little more timid than Peter. When he arrived at the tomb "**first**" he stooped down and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there. Then Peter in typical "Peter fashion" arrived at the tomb and marched right on in. Then John followed in behind him.

What did they see when they entered?

No body! They just saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

Now you have to go back to the burial and remember that the Jews did not embalm - they wrapped bodies like a mummy. And in the case of Jesus, they had about a hundred-

pound weight of spices within those wrappings. So they would wrap a little and then dump spices, and wrap and dump spices, and more and more and more and more; and the spices were simply designed to overpower the stench of decaying flesh. And then they would wrap around and around and around and around the head adding spices as well. So the body was wrapped, and then the head was wrapped separately.

Now if somebody stole the body, you would have to think that they would not unwrap it. Why would you do that when it would be a whole lot easier to carry a body all wrapped up and at least smelling reasonable than it would be to unwrap a corpse and touch the flesh itself? Nobody would do that. But if, perchance, they might do that, you would not see the linen wrappings from the body lying in one place and the wrapping from head lying in another. There would be linen all over the tomb. They would have had to pull the linen and roll Him out of it. But the linen wrappings were lying there where the body had been, and the face wrappings where the head had been, because He had just gone through them.

This is no grave robbery. If the disciples had done this, they would not unwrap the body. No grave robber, regardless of who they were, would take the time to unwrap the body. The disciples would not do it, because they did not even expect a resurrection. Look, the body was there on Friday - everybody knew that. Everyone knew He was dead. The Roman executioners knew He was dead; that is why they did not break His legs.

Then they ran a spear into His side and out came blood and water, the indication that His heart had burst. He was dead. Several hours went by as they were wrapping Him and putting Him in the tomb. Clearly He was dead. Everybody knew He was in the grave. The entrance to the tomb was covered by a large stone that was rolled in front of it and it was sealed with a Roman seal and guarded by Roman soldiers. No one could come and steal the body.

#### **IV. THE UNBELIEF OF THE DISCIPLES.**

##### **John 20:8-9 (NASB)**

**<sup>8</sup> So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> For they did not yet understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead.**

I do not know just exactly what John believed. Maybe it was just the fact that Mary was telling the truth. But we do know that they did not yet understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. The point that I want to make to you is that Peter and John as well as the women had no expectation that morning that Jesus would rise from the dead.

The fact that the disciples were changed from unbelievers to believers is also testimony in itself. All of the apostles, with the exception of John, died as martyrs. And they died because they preached Jesus crucified and risen. If they had faked His resurrection, that would have been absolutely the most idiotic thing they could have ever done. How could they live a hoax their whole life and die as martyrs?

I think the Jewish leaders had more fearful that Jesus would rise from the dead than the expectations of the disciples were. The Jewish leaders were afraid of Him. They knew He raised Lazarus from the dead, and they were not dealing with the Messianic disaster that the Jewish believers were dealing with. Let me explain what I mean.

The apostles expected the Messiah to reign eternally on earth, yet Jesus died. So this seemed to them to be the absolute end. The Jewish leaders simply did not believe that

Jesus was the Messiah. They saw Him as a blasphemer. But they were frightened of His power, and they actually admitted He had power, but they said His power is from hell. They were afraid of hell's power raising Him, as well as perhaps the disciples' trying to steal His body. So they put a guard and sealed the tomb. Clearly His body was there, and then it was gone.

Now go back to John for just a closing thought.

**John 20:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> So the disciples went away again to their own *homes*.

What a confusing day! What were the disciples to do? The body of Jesus is missing. An angel has told the women that He has risen. The eleven disciples don't fully believe until they see Him and touch Him. So they just went home.

**CONCLUSION:.**

I want to remind you that the purpose of John in writing his gospel, every account, is that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing have eternal life in His name.

**John 19:35 (NASB).**

And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that **you...also** may believe. .

So let's put it together. The tomb is empty. The women testify to an empty tomb. The soldiers testify to an empty tomb. Peter and John testify to an empty tomb. The folded grave clothes testify to an empty tomb. The stone rolled away from the front of the tomb testifies to an empty tomb. The Sanhedrin testifies to an empty tomb, and comes up with a ridiculous concoction to explain it away. No one **ever** denied the empty tomb - **no one!**

John, an eyewitness of the cross and the events that followed, recorded them for us as true testimony. What it tells us, along with the resurrection, is that Jesus conquered death. He brought about His own death, controlled the events after His death, controlled His own burial, and then exerted the power to rise from the dead. This is important for us to know, because the promise to every believer is that we, just like Christ, will also one day rise from the dead and our newly created bodies will be joined with our glorified souls to prepare us for an eternity in heaven.

**Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as Lord*, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart *a person* believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

**He is Lord!**