

Testimony to the Resurrection of Christ - part 1

John 20:1-18

Breaking news can come at any moment! Something important, even life-threatening can come upon us without notice. When you get news like this, you want the facts. You want accurate reporting. You're not interested in fancy speeches. You don't care how the reporter of the news is dressed. Just give the facts of what you know. Time is running out! Will we need to evacuate? Will we need to take cover? Get to a safe place? We've seen this week of the tragic wildfires in Hawaii taking the lives of at least 80 and many others unaccounted for. For all of us...we never know...when our "breaking news" might come.

The truth is this - the clock of life is ticking, and it will stop at any moment. How will we stand on that day, or that night when it happens? Are we saved? Are we trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is mighty to save from the raging fires of Hell?

John, Who writes this gospel, has been giving us warnings. He's not playing around. His witness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is true!

SEE John 19:35 21:24

In the closing chapters--- chp 20,21 John gives the testimony to the Resur of Jesus Christ.

What are we to do with it? so clear in Script.

- take it & believe / choose to ignore it, neglect it, to our own peril & demise.
- I pray everyone...truly believes the eyewitness testimonial of the Risen Christ.... If not, I pray God....give eyes....ears...grace to repent..before...too late
- For all of us ...who believe.... be stirred... to tell others... "I believe the Lord..I've seen the Lord, myself, with the eyes of faith.... He is for real...

HOW WE NEED TO BE STIRRED IN OUR INNERMOST BEING ABOUT JESUS... THIS IS MY PRAYER AND DESIRE....

Let's get our batteries charged up....in regard to our own testimony for Christ... TO DO THIS...

Let's get some help with witness for Christ.... we do that by looking at the people who were eyewitnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are REAL PEOPLE....telling their story....It's their Testimony

In chapter 20 we have two main parts:

- 1) #1 - the testimony of Mary Magdalene vv.1-18 What does she say? v.18
I have seen the Lord...
- 2) the testimony of the disciples vv.19-31 What do they say? v.25 We
have seen the Lord

You might think.....that's good for Mary Magdalene, and the disciples....because they ACTUALLY saw Jesus in His Risen, glorified Body..... but we were NOT there to see with our own EYES.....

Jesus helps us with that --- 20:29c "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Let's begin with Mary Magdalene's testimony.

I. The Testimony of the Empty Tomb

She gives testimony, first of all, of the empty tomb.

A. The visitation to the tomb. v.1 (Mary makes a visit to the tomb)

At first, she can only say, the tomb is empty. She doesn't know where the body of Jesus is. There's a lot of things she doesn't know. She can tell you this. He's gone!

Mary Magdalene, the one who had seven demons cast out of her, she comes to the tomb early the first day of the week. It's Sunday. It was still dark. According to the other gospel writers, she was walking with other women. For some reason, she gets to the tomb FIRST. All the women were talking among themselves about *how they would be able to anoint the body of Jesus because of the huge stone? Who will roll away the stone for us?*

Mary and other women were not coming to the TOMB of JESUS expecting a resurrection. They were expecting to see a corpse. They were not able to finish the burial custom of placing spices on their deceased friend on that previous Friday evening. They ran out of time. The first day past the Sabbath gave them their chance.

Mary Magdalene must have ran ahead. We know she is a runner due to verse 2 where we read how she ran and went to Simon Peter and John to tell them the Lord's body was gone. She got there before the other women arrived. *As soon as she saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb....she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."*

B. The Declaration of what she saw. v.2 (she tells Peter and John what she saw)

Mary is accusing someone of taking the body of Jesus away. Grave robbery was a common crime in those days. This is what happened according to Mary Magdalene. Since a possible crime has been committed. It's important to get information from one who was FIRST ON THE SCENE. I wonder if Mary would have suggested using "crime scene tape" to protect the crime scene. Protect it from those who might contaminate what might be some incriminating evidence. Check for footprints. In our time we would say, "check for fingerprints".

What does she do? She immediately, without even looking in the tomb, goes to find Simon Peter and John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. John never mentions his own name in his gospel account. What does she say?

they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and WE do not know where they have laid him.

Mary says, "WE", indicating the other women at some point were with her. And the other women would have no clue as to where the Lord's body was taken. Maybe, Mary Magdalene heard another woman scream out, "He's gone". "there's nobody here."

Mary is the FIST to the empty tomb. She is the First to report her findings to the leading Disciples. She does not say, "it must be true, He is risen" NO, she was not looking for the resurrection.

Mary - was the first - to arrive at the empty tomb.

She was first to tell the Disciples Peter and John about the empty tomb.

Let's look at verse 3 and see Peter and John's confirmation of Mary's report.

C. The confirmation of her story vv. 3-10 (Peter and John confirms her report)

Peter and John go together to the tomb. Did they both have to go? Why not just one? Why two?

2Corinthians 13:1 In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

v.3 both of them were going to the tomb

v.4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

John is that "other disciple". Now John could have called Peter that "OLDER disciples" since he was slower than John. John outran Peter. Was that necessary to include in the Holy Scriptures? Is it important for us to know John got there before Peter? Was John sort of bragging about his athletics abilities here?

I believe John was just being honest. He's humble and honest because in verse 5, we read,

"And stooping to look in, he (that's John) saw the linen cloths lying there, but **he did not go in.**"

HE DID NOT GO IN. I think John is a little timid, very unsure if it was appropriate to go in.

PETER, when he gets there, he goes right on in. He does not hesitate to enter. Peter being much bolder, goes in. **He went into the tomb.**

What did Peter notice?

- He saw the linen cloths lying there. Peter saw the same thing John saw. But there's something else.....
- the face cloth..... which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but FOLDED UP in a place by itself.

Peter has CONFIRMATION of something different from what Mary Magdalene has suggested. There's no grave robbery here. Mary Magdalene did not focus on the linen cloths, and the face cloths. If someone was going to steal a corpse, they wouldn't take the time to unwrap it from all the linen cloths. The Jews did not embalm their dead. They wrapped them up like a mummy. They would wrap pouring in spices, and then wrap again pouring in more spices.

Peter saw the linen cloths....and the face cloth FOLDED UP in a place by itself. Someone took the time to neatly fold the FACE CLOTH. We don't know exactly what Peter was thinking. I believe he had confirmation of one thing---- no one took the body.

And the other disciple.....

John v.8 and John couldn't resist again to let us KNOW he got there first....

he went in, and he saw and believed.

There was something about those linen cloths that were so carefully and snugly wrapped around the body of Jesus. The cloths were NOT cut away. the cloths were not strewn all over the place like a child opening up Christmas present or birthday present and gift wrappings are tossed all over the room. NO. There was order. Face cloth folded up neatly. And the linen cloths gave evidence that the body came through the cloths. the cloths were still in tact, but sunk down because it's contents was GONE.

OF John it is said that----- **he saw and believed. Nothing is said between Peter and John.** We are not told what Peter was thinking at this point. ONLY John tells us what he was thinking.... HE SAW and BELIEVED. He believed Christ had Risen. But both Peter and John still had a problem getting understanding with the Scriptures concerning the Lord's resurrection. That's okay. Before the day is finished, they will be able to connect the Scriptures with the Risen Christ. Jesus, Himself, will open their understanding. Jesus will speak with his disciples and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets he will interpret to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)

Here we have Mary Magdalene's testimony of the Empty Tomb. She said "someone had taken the body" but that could not be her testimony. She didn't know if someone for a fact took the body of Jesus. All she could say with certainty is this --- the tomb is empty. She knew it was empty. Peter and John knew it was empty. And we haven't spent time on this, but the soldiers who guarded the tomb knew it was empty. The chief priest and Pharisees (the Jewish leaders) knew the tomb was empty.

The Jewish leaders heard the story from the guards who were assigned to guard the tomb.

Guards - Let's tell our story. We were guarding the tomb. That was our job. The chief priest and Pharisees believed the disciples would come into the night and steal the body. Then they would say, "He is risen". To prevent that from happening, a Roman seal was placed on the Rock that is rolled in front of the tomb. No one was to tamper with this seal which is put there by the Roman Government. Here's what happened. You won't believe it, but here it is.

During the night.... we experienced a powerful earthquake, you must have felt it. It was a **great earthquake**. We saw an angel come down.....an angel of the Lord ROLLED back the stone and he sat on the stone. His appearance was like lightning.... his clothing --- white as snow. All of us guards....fell over...we were so afraid....it knock us out COLD!

We got up.... we saw the stone was moved away from the entrance to the tomb. The tomb is empty. This man called Jesus.... he's not there! We've checked it out....He's not there.

Chief priest and the elders took counsel -- Listen soldiers....we've got some money for you. It's a lot of money... Here's what you are to say to people. " **His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.**"

If you are afraid of getting into trouble with PILATE, don't worry, we've got you covered. We will take care of Pilate for you.....

So this story has been told down through history--- The reason for the empty tomb is this—the disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

There's a lot of problems with that lie..... let me give you two problems:

#1 Tell me, you guards, tell me this.... how do you know the disciples came by night and stole away the body if you were asleep? If you were asleep, you don't know what happened.

#2 Why would the disciples fabricate a lie, and then preach the resurrection and be persecuted for it, and die as martyrs for Christ? That simply does not make sense at all.

Here's the Truth of the Empty Tomb..... There's EVIDENCE INSIDE.....it's the linen cloths.... they tell the true story.... Peter and John saw the linen cloths, and the face

cloth folded up in a place by itself. Peter doesn't say anything, but John, it says.... HE SAW and BELIEVED. They were not able to pull in all the Scriptures to make the connection, but that will come later.

II. The Testimony of the Angels

vv.11-13

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Mary is overcome with grief....she's weeping constantly..... even the sight of angels does not stop her weeping. She talks with the angels as if she knew them. The guards passed out in fear by looking upon these same angels. Not so with Mary Magdalene. She's not looking for the Lord's messengers. She's looking for the Lord of the messengers. Her focus is not on Heavenly Beings. Her focus is on the Lord who is above all the Heavenly Beings. Nothing and No one will deter this Mary from her mission. Angels will not distract her. The very sight of angels will not quench her deepest thirst for Christ.

Matthew's account says one of the angels had this message:

Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. (Matthew 28:5-6)

Luke tells us this: The angel said - "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." (Luke 24:5-7)

The testimony of the Angels is clear. There's no need to weep. "Woman, why are you weeping?"

Why are you crying? We don't say that to those who are grieving over a deceased loved one.

That would be a disrespectful thing to say to someone who has just seen their dearest friend die. It would be of the utmost discourteous word to speak to one who has just witnessed the burial of the love of their life. Unless! Unless! the love of their life is NOT dead, but alive. Not just "hanging on to life" but more alive than ever.

The Testimony of the angels is this --- you have no cause to cry! Implying He's alive!

The angel did not go into detail, because the reality of it all was about to hit Mary right in the face!

The angel could have pointed to Jesus who was standing close by, but it would be the delight for Jesus to disclose Himself to Mary.

Next time, we'll look at the Testimony of Jesus to Mary Magdalene.

-----outline for church bulletin-----

The Testimony of the Risen Christ

John 20:1-18

Breaking News! Christ has Risen! The testimony is true!
21:24

see John 19:35;

I. The Testimony of the Empty Tomb vv.1-10

- A. Mary's Visitation v.1 "to the tomb"
- B. Mary's Declaration v.2 "to Peter & John"
- C. Mary's Confirmation vv.3-10 "from Peter & John"

2Cor. 13:1 "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

II. The Testimony of the Angels vv.11-13

Matthew's Gospel - "He is not here, for he has risen" Matt. 28:5-6

Luke's Gospel - "Why do you seek the living among the dead" Luke 24:5-7