

Matthew tells that after Jesus was buried, the chief priests and the Pharisees went back to Pilate to make sure that the tomb was secure. They remembered that Jesus said He would rise on the 3rd day, and they wanted to ensure that no one (His disciples) would steal the body and make that claim. Because this was a sepulchre, a tomb carved out of a rock in the side of a hill there was only one entrance, so the place of Jesus' burial was closed with a large stone. In addition, Pilate posted a Roman guard, and had the stone sealed with a cord secured with clay seals (official indicators that this was off limits to anyone!).

At this moment the religious Jews had nothing to worry about from the disciples. They were cowering in a dark room together, in fear of their lives. None of these, whether the Jews, the disciples, or Pilate, understood that no tomb, no rock, no clay seal, and no guard could prevent the Son of God from rising again.

It is very sad to note, that other than the religious Jews fearing someone would steal the body and make an outrageous claim, no one expected Yeshua to rise again. The resurrection apparently was the farthest thing from their minds. Once they saw Him being alive again, however, they went on to tell the world, most of them dying horrible deaths for their testimony. People very seldom willingly die for half-hearted belief. What they saw convinced them!

Once again we will consult the other Gospels for the full picture of this glorious day. We will find various details reported by each of the Gospel writers, some confirmed in others, some unique to that book. In order to grasp the events of that day, and the days that followed, we need all of these accounts together. There are no inconsistencies. Each writer was inspired to write only certain details, and for their specific targeted audiences.



Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

⁹ And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

¹¹ Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹² When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:1-15)

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

⁹ Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. ¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. (Mark 16:1-13)

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, '**The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.**'"

⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

¹⁷ And He said to them, "**What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?**" ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

¹⁹ And He said to them, "**What things?**" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

²⁵ Then He said to them, **“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”** ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

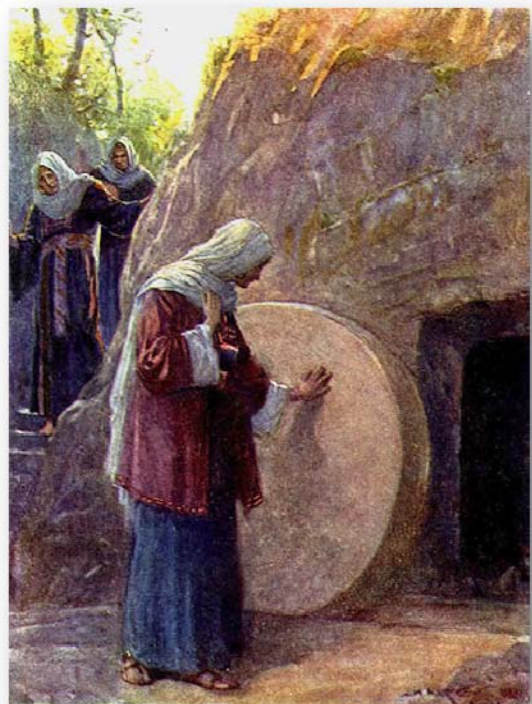
³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, **“Peace to you.”** ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, **“Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”** ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, **“Have you any food here?”** ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took it and ate in their presence. ⁴⁴ Then He said to them, **“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”** ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ Then He said to them, **“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”** (Luke 24:1-49)

Now the Gospel of John....

¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

- **“...the first day of the week ...”** The first day of the week on the Jewish calendar is Sunday, just like ours. If Jesus died on Passover, which is the 14th day of the month of Nisan, this day was the 17th day of the month of Nisan.
- It is very interesting to note that we have a reference to this day somewhere else in scripture, way back in Genesis. It “just so happens” that the ark of Noah came to rest on this day: **“Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.”** (Genesis 8:4)



- This was before God turned the Hebrew calendar “upside down” in Exodus. The first month was formerly the fall month of Tishri. When God gave Moses instructions about the Passover, He also said: *“Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ... Now you shall keep it [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”*** (Exodus 12:1-3, 6) Here God is speaking to Moses in the month of Nisan, which was the 7th month, but God ordains it to be the 1st month on the Hebrew calendar at this moment, forever. So in the passage about the ark, the month spoken of as the seventh month is actually Nisan, now the first month.
- The **17th day of Nisan is the day the ark came to rest, and it is also the day that Yeshua rose from the dead.** It seems as if God was alerting us to something important thousands of years before it happened, as He did frequently. This is no coincidence. The resting of the ark on land signified new beginnings. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead also signified a new beginning for all those who accept His gift of salvation.
- Continuing with the story of Noah, although this is somewhat of a “side trip,” it is also noteworthy to see something else: *“And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry.”* (Genesis 8:13) Again, at this time, **the first month was Tishri** (in the fall). In this verse in Genesis, the first day of the first month is when all the waters dried up from the earth. And, it “just so happens” that this day coincides with the Feast of Trumpets (first day of the month of Tishri). Jesus died on the Feast of Passover, He was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, He was raised on the Feast of Firstfruits, the Holy Spirit came on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and now we find out that the earth was dry after the great flood on what would become the Feast of Trumpets. *Is all this a coincidence?* Hardly. Seems that the Feasts of God have great importance to Him, and to us. There is nothing in scripture that is of no value to us, even today. It is for a purpose, and if we investigate a little, we will find great treasure.
- **For years people have mistakenly called these the “Jewish feasts”** and for that reason they are “not important” to us (Gentiles). (When the early Church was organized under Constantine, they were decidedly anti-semitic.) **They are wrong on much more than one point.** First, the term “Jewish” is incorrect. The word “Jews” came into being only after the captives returned from Babylon to the land of Israel (*mostly from the tribe of Judah, where the word “Jews” comes from*). (*It is correct to say that all Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews! After the captivity, the term was applied to returning exiles, and came to mean all those Israelites who returned, who were primarily from the tribe of Judah, which was the largest group of the southern Kingdom of Judah, overcome by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon*). Secondly, these are God’s feasts, not given to one group, but to all His followers. *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.’”* (Leviticus 23:2) The correct rendering of the words “the LORD” anywhere it appears in the Old Testament (*when the word is in all caps*) is YAHWEH. These are Yahweh’s feasts. Yahweh is the name of our God. Some have called these feasts (found in Exodus 12 and 13, Leviticus 23) “God’s Prophetic Calendar.” He commanded the Hebrew people to celebrate them “forever.” It is very sad that the Church has little knowledge of these feasts, since we have chosen to not focus on our Hebrew roots hardly at all. However, great blessings and great understanding can be obtained when we go back to the beginning, and get our information from the Word of God, not from man’s narrow-minded interpretations. We must also remember that God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

- ***“...Mary Magdalene ...”*** Mary Magdalene is “Mary of Magdala.” She loved her Master Yeshua completely, the One who delivered her from the bondage of the enemy, and has come to the tomb even before dawn. She stayed with Him all the way to the cross, and now is the first person at the tomb. The other Gospels tell us she came with the other women, most likely to complete their chore of fully anointing Yeshua’s body for burial (because of the Sabbath, they could not complete it the day of His death.) She sees the stone gone from the entrance and assumes they have taken His body away somewhere. Even Mary, who was fully devoted to Jesus and knew Him well, was also apparently not expecting Him to rise.
 - ***“Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved,...”*** Mary runs, probably scared, to encounter Peter and “the other disciple whom Jesus loved.” Throughout this Gospel, the writer avoids using his own name. We have assumed that this writer, and this “disciple whom Jesus loved” is John. However, as we have stated before, we don’t know this. It is based on tradition alone. See our notes on Chapter 11, and the former chapter 19 as to speculation (*and it is only that, but based on some interesting scriptural clues*) of the actual identity of this “other disciple.”
 - Isn’t it beautiful and a wonderful title, **“the disciple whom Jesus loved”** ...Do you love Jesus? He definitely loves you.
- **COMMENTARY: All who have accepted the gift of Jesus can use this title for themselves. Jude 21 says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Keep yourself in the love of God, because you know that He loves you. You can’t keep Him from loving you! It is wonderful to take that position for yourself as [this writer] did: “the other disciple, whom Jesus loved.”**
- ***“They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb,..”*** Mary’s cry to Peter reveals that even she did not think Jesus would arise. At least at this moment, it hasn’t crossed her mind yet. Like the disciples, she wasn’t expecting the resurrection. In many ways that is very sad. He spoke of it, the Old Testament prophecies revealed it, but they could not put the pieces together until Jesus opened their understanding. This is a reminder to us that we also need that divine understanding that is only given by Him. We call on the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.
 - Remember as we read these passages from the book of John, to keep in mind the details provided in the other Gospels to see the entire picture. It appears here that the earthquake has occurred and the “door” to the tomb is open, Jesus’ body is gone. Mary rushes back into town and encounters Peter and “the other disciple.”

³Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

- Remember the disciples are hiding in a room somewhere, fearful of their own lives. They are certainly not expecting a resurrection. They are stunned with Mary’s news, and Peter and “the other disciple” run to the tomb.

- *“...and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in.”* “The other disciple” got there first. When he saw the linen cloths, he didn’t go in. Something stopped him there. The sight of the burial cloth wraps stopped him cold. Some have suggested that he didn’t want to defile himself, but we believe there is something more going on here. This “other disciple” had no difficulty coming into the tomb once Peter arrived. He wasn’t concerned about defilement at this point. This fits perfectly with the speculation that this “other disciple” may not be John, but rather Lazarus, the one Jesus raised from the dead. While others might have difficulty believing in Lazarus’ resurrection, Lazarus didn’t. He knew he had been dead, and now he was alive. Perhaps this is what is going through this “other disciple’s” mind at this point. Lazarus knew Yeshua had power over death – he had experienced it firsthand. Perhaps in this moment this disciple is understanding that He has power even over His own death!
- *“Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.”* Peter arrived shortly after, and he did go in. That’s just like Peter, rushing in. In his zeal and excitement, he just went forward, and he also saw the linen cloths. There’s something unusual going on with these linen cloths, in particular the one used to cover Yeshua’s face. There should have been a body in these linens, but it wasn’t there. And most likely if anyone were to steal the body they would not take the time to unwrap the linens. There is something very strange here!
- At burial, it was **traditional to bind bodies with strips of linens and anointing herbs and spices**. It would have been very time consuming to unwrap a body if you were stealing it, and virtually impossible for someone to free themselves from these strips which were closely wrapped around the body. (Recall when Yeshua raised Lazarus from the dead He told those around him to *unwrap him*. Lazarus couldn’t do this for himself.) Now, in Jesus’ tomb, these linens are lying there empty, and in fact, the small piece of cloth used typically to cover the face was neatly folded! It appeared as if the body has just disappeared, leaving behind a tidy pile of linens. Upon His resurrection, Jesus’ glorified body was not limited to our earthly laws of physics. Perhaps in a huge burst of light and defiance of earthly bonds, His body simply vanished, loosed from death, and loosed from these burial linens. The face napkin had been neatly folded. Was Someone “cleaning house” in the tomb?
- *“Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.”* Now the “other disciple” went into the tomb with Peter. He was temporarily stunned by what he saw on the outside. It was time for a closer look. Now the scriptures tell us that “he saw” and “believed.” What did he see? What did he believe? If this was indeed Lazarus, he knew full well about the linen cloths, having worn them himself, and also having to be loosed by others. He knew Jesus had raised him from death. And now it appeared He had raised Himself from the same situation. Of course! If Yeshua could raise others, He could certainly raise Himself. To this “other disciple” in this moment, all the pieces came together.



- We need a little lesson here about some Greek words that lose their full meaning when translated into English. In verse 5, as the “other disciple” got to the tomb first, he “... *saw the linen cloths lying there...*” The Greek word for “saw” (blepo) here means that he literally saw them, and took note. Then in verse 6 we have Peter looking and he “... *saw the linen cloths lying there.*” We have the same phrase in English, but not the same Greek words. In verse 6, “saw” is the Greek word *theoreo*, meaning to perceive and acknowledge. Peter understood there was something odd here. From the door of the tomb perhaps the “other disciple” did not immediately “see” what Peter saw. Then, in verse 8, as the “other disciple” actually enters the tomb, he “...*saw and believed.*” Here the word “saw” means to *understand, and know*. Not only did he see and understand, he knew and believed that His Master had indeed risen from the dead. This “other disciple” had not yet seen with his eyes the risen Messiah, but he already believed because of what he *didn’t see* in the tomb! And perhaps, what he knew from his own experience – the power and authority of the Son of God over death!
- Now we are told something that seems a little strange at this point: “*For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.*” Jesus had told them repeatedly that He would rise from the dead. Even though the Old Testament spoke of this resurrection and Jesus Himself prophesied it, they didn’t yet “get it.” At this moment at His tomb, however, at least one of them did. If this “other disciple” was Lazarus, and not John as we have assumed over the millennia, it is very fitting that Lazarus would understand this fact before any of the others.
- Not actually seeing their risen Lord, they didn’t know where He was, or even how to find Him. At this point it *appears they just went home*. But where was home? It says they went to their “own homes.” But remember we are in Jerusalem at this point. Most of the original 12 disciples were from the region of Galilee. Their original homes were several days walk from here. Once again we get our answer from the Greek. The word used here does not imply a physical “house” as we would understand it. It actually indicates that the disciples each went off on their own. They were separate. They were each in their own thoughts. They didn’t “go home.” They went out separately, alone, each to think through what he or she had just witnessed.

¹¹*But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb.* ¹²*And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* ¹³*Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”* ¹⁴*Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.* ¹⁵*Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”*

- The other disciples may have gone their separate ways, away from the tomb, but not Mary. She stayed there, weeping. At some point she turned back and looked into the tomb and this time she saw something very different – two angels flanking the place where Jesus’ body had been! The angels asked her why she was crying, and she told them. Something caused her to turn around, and she saw Jesus, but did not recognize Him. Jesus asked her the same question. Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?
- **Mary doesn’t seem to recognize her Master she loved so deeply.** Why not? Many have asked this question and many have speculated as to the reason. Some people said that her tears blinded her, but this is probably not the real reason.

- **COMMENTARY...**we are interested in the fact that she does not know Him. Do you know why? She does not believe that He is back from the dead. Unbelief is blind and unbelief is dumb, as in the case of Zacharias. She loves Him, yes, but love must be coupled with faith. She is weeping because she loves Him but also because she does not believe. How much is the glorified body changed? I don't know, but I don't think the change is so great that this accounts for her lack of recognition of Jesus. I believe that Mary is absolutely single-minded in her grief. Although she sees two angels, this doesn't seem to draw her attention in any particular way. They ask a question, not because they don't know the answer, but because they are trying to arouse some evidence of faith in Mary. She is single-minded in her answer. He is still dead, and the probable answer is that the body has been stolen, as Mary reasons it out. She does not expect to see Christ alive; and, in her unbelief, she does not recognize Him. (McGee)

- (We shouldn't be too hard on Mary....until this moment none of the others were expecting His resurrection either. They were all sure He was dead, and that was it.)
- There is an important lesson for us here. **Sometimes, in our own disbelief, we can miss the blessing of watching our God in action.** It isn't that we don't believe God is powerful....or is it? God says there is nothing impossible to Him. What is it about "nothing" we don't seem to understand? We believe that things won't happen, or can't happen. We pray, but we really don't believe those prayers will be answered. Why not? Perhaps it is time to start EXPECTING Him to answer, and to amaze us with how He works. The disciples, including Mary, had plenty of knowledge and warnings beforehand to expect the resurrection, but they didn't. Even though they had seen Him raise Lazarus from death, they didn't expect *Him* to rise. We must be careful not to limit God's power. It's time to start expecting Him to hear and answer in remarkable ways. We serve *El Elyon*, the *Most High God*.

¹⁶Jesus said to her, **"Mary!"** She turned and said to Him, **"Rabboni!"** (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, **"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"** ¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

- The Proverbs are full of statements that mirror and manage life. Mary went early to the tomb, not expecting to see a living Lord, but a dead body. But she was still seeking Him. Proverbs 8:17 says **"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."** There is one Hebrew word for our English phrase "seek me early." It is *shachar*, which literally means to search for something "painstakingly" with earnestness, early in the day. Mary didn't wait to go to the tomb. It was the first thing on her mind when she woke. The lesson for us is plain. As soon as we wake, our thoughts are to go to God, to seek Him and His plan for us as the first thing of the day. He is the top priority. What a beautiful promise with this verse – if we do this, we will find Him. Finding God is the ultimate goal of all that we do in life.



- **"Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'"** When Mary looked at Jesus, she did not immediately recognize Him. But when He spoke her name, there was no question. She knew immediately this was her Master. When our Master speaks to us through His indwelling Holy Spirit, just like the sheep of any shepherd, we recognize His voice.

- **“...(which is to say, Teacher)...”** This Gospel writer’s purpose was to convince people that Yeshua was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Savior of the World, and God Himself. AND, that by this knowledge people would be saved. He is not just writing to the Jews. He is writing to *all* peoples. The writer takes the time to carefully explain what some of the typically Jewish phrases meant, so there would be no question for those who were not familiar with Hebrew. This is an indicator that this Gospel was written to the entire world, Jews and Gentiles, not merely to the Jews. The other Gospel writers did not have this purpose in mind, and did not take the time to explain typically Jewish terms.
- **“Do not cling to Me, ...”** Some translations will say “touch me not” here. Using the word “cling” is more appropriate, since the original Greek word implies a literal attachment to someone, not just a mere touch. What Jesus is saying to Mary is that she should not attach herself (emotionally) again to Him, since He would be leaving soon. When Jesus spoke her name, her response was probably very emotional and visceral, and she would want to touch him and “hang on” to Him. She could not keep Him there, and He did not want her to think He would remain. He is telling her that very soon He would return to the Father. This statement is not a reprimand or an indication that Mary couldn’t touch Him. Later he encouraged the disciples to touch His wounds and see they were real. This is about understanding that Jesus must leave earth soon and return to the Father.
- **“...I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”** This is a beautiful statement, full of the warmth of a new relationship with God. Jesus has used the word “brethren” (brothers), and has called *His* Father YOUR Father, *His* God YOUR God. How comforting this is! We are brothers and sisters of our Master, and His Father is our Father, and His God is our God!
- Jesus told Mary to find her “brothers” and His – the disciples – and tell them He was alive and would be returning to the Father. Mary obeyed immediately. **What Yeshua told Mary to do is precisely what we are told to do – tell the world the Savior is alive**, He is in heaven reigning with the Father, and He is coming back for us soon.
- The order of events here can be confusing, especially when considering the records given in all the Gospels, together. It must have been quite a morning for all of Yeshua’s followers. Apparently Mary and her women friends came very early to the tomb to complete the process of anointing Jesus’ body. When they found the body gone, Mary ran to tell the disciples. They didn’t believe her, and thought she was telling “tales.” But it did prompt at least two of them to run to the tomb to check it out themselves. We see that reported earlier in this Gospel. Now apparently Mary has returned to the tomb heartbroken, not knowing where her Master’s body is. This is when Jesus appears to her, she is overwhelmed with joy, and Jesus tells her to now tell the disciples that He will be returning to the Father.
- It is also interesting that **Mary seems to be the first to whom Jesus appeared**. This is quite an honor, and should tell us something about Jesus and how he viewed women. It wasn’t important to appear to a *man* first. Mary is honored in this way because she **loved Him, and “sought Him early.”** (*See the first note on this passage*).
- Even when we put all the Gospel accounts together, we cannot possibly comprehend the events, the emotions, and the joy the disciples experienced that morning. No one was expecting Him to return from the dead. They could have spared themselves a lot of grief if they had. This was the highlight of our Savior’s FIRST coming. He is coming again. How many are also not expecting Him? Although we live in troubling times, we have the joy that our Messiah is returning for us. We watch and wait...and EXPECT Him to come soon.

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, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”* ²⁰*When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

- This disciples (probably all the followers who could fit in the room!) apparently gathered again and were hidden away because they were scared. They were afraid of “the Jews.” As mentioned before, “the Jews” is a reference to the religious Jewish leaders, the very ones who were behind the plot to kill Jesus. The disciples were afraid they would be arrested and crucified as well. That is definitely something to be afraid of! The doors were shut, which actually means they were locked. Now, in the middle of a crowded room full of scared people, without the benefit of using the door, Jesus appears right in the middle of them all!
- **“Peace be with you.”** Can you imagine the pandemonium breaking out as the risen Master appears right in the middle of this cowering group who was not expecting Him to be alive? He didn’t knock. He didn’t use a password. He simply appeared, and in doing so revealed His power and authority over all things in this physical world. And we should note, that each time humans encounter the supernatural appearance of heavenly beings, or witness things that are supernatural in origin, the message is either “Fear not!” or “Peace be with you!” That’s something we need to remember. In this moment, in the darkened, hushed and confused room full of frightened disciples, it probably took a bit for that peace to sink in!
- **“He showed them His hands and His side. ...”** The disciples think they must be dreaming. As we mentioned, they weren’t expecting Jesus to be alive. Now He has to prove who He is by revealing the wounds in His hands and His side. We shouldn’t miss the importance of this simple act. It shows us that Jesus’ had a physical body after resurrection. His resurrection didn’t just involve His spirit, but His actual body. And, of course, this new body does not seem subject to physical laws anymore, since He didn’t even bother to use the door!
- It is very interesting to note that **He apparently has scars** (although they are healed!) to indicate that this was indeed their Lord. Even though He is risen and glorified, he still has nail prints and a pierced side. Some speculate that none of us will have scars on our new resurrected, incorruptible bodies, but Jesus still does, because they are the scars He bore for us. He bears the scars so we can be presented without spot or blemish before the Father. He took our sin, and His scars will be the evidence for all eternity.
- This simple passage can also provide some information about our own resurrected bodies to come. In his first letter, this Gospel writer states **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”** (1 John 3:2) While Jesus’ body seems physical enough, it certainly is not subject to the laws of physics. He materialized from “thin air.” In the next chapter we will see Jesus eating breakfast on the beach with His disciples. Some people are thrilled (including this writer!) to know we will be able to eat!
- **“Then the disciples were glad...”** This has to be one of the greatest understatements of all time! Can you imagine what is happening in this room at this moment?



²¹*So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”*
²²*And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

- In all the commotion going on at Jesus’ sudden appearance, He spoke again, urging them to be at peace, to not be afraid. Sometimes God must do that with us as well, reminding us there is no need for fear. We are probably not told the entire conversation happening in this room, but we can imagine that Yeshua was answering one quickly asked question after another, perhaps even reminding them that “He told them so.”
- ***As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*** The work Jesus came to earth to do has been completed. He was sent by the Father. Now that our redemption has been accomplished, Jesus will in turn send His disciples on a mission. Jesus mentioned this “sending” in His prayer in the Garden: ***“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”*** (John 17:18). Jesus had already sent the disciples on “training runs” before His death.
- It is easy to see, even with such limited glimpses of the behavior and seeming lack of understanding the disciples displayed, that they are not ready to take on this mission. At least not in this moment. They need something critical to the mission. Actually, *Someone*.
- ***“He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*** This phrase reminds us of another time God breathed on someone ***“...LORD God [Yahweh] formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”*** (Genesis 2:7) God’s breath into Adam is the only other time this phrase is used. It is very easy to see that the Holy Spirit is the very breath of God. Here the disciples are also having new life breathed into them by God. Yahweh breathed life into Adam. Yeshua breathed life into the disciples. They are to receive the Holy Spirit, which will complete their preparation and ensure their success as people sent on a mission for God. Their spiritual life began at this moment.
- **Yeshua’s breath of the Holy Spirit was a foretaste**, a precursor, to the fullness of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit still to come in a few weeks from this moment on the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot* [Hebrew], *Pentecost* [Greek]) recorded in Acts chapter 2. These disciples are now regenerated. Before this time, the Holy Spirit had not filled them. Jesus will be leaving earth soon, and here He is keeping His promise that He would not leave these disciples as “orphans.” His Holy Spirit will live inside them, accompany them wherever they go. He will in fact remain with them “until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

²³***“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”***

- Only God can forgive sins. Yeshua is not giving these disciples the power to forgive people’s sins. That authority and power belongs to God alone. It is HIM we have sinned against. It is HE who must forgive and “take away” those sins. And the removal of sins is only accomplished by the blood of Jesus. What He is saying here is that by PROCLAIMING the availability of the forgiveness of their sins, they are making it possible for people to receive that forgiveness from God. The only way we can “forgive” others is to teach the good news of the atoning work of Jesus at the cross. One commentator put it this way:

COMMENTARY: “Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins was the prominent feature of the apostolic preaching in the Book of Acts. Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) the privilege of announcing heaven’s terms on how a person can receive forgiveness. If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. If a person rejects Jesus’ sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is not forgiven.” (Walvoord and Zuck).

- As the disciples, and now all believers, go forward with the mission, it is our responsibility to proclaim salvation, and its accompanying forgiveness. This is a huge responsibility!

²⁴Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

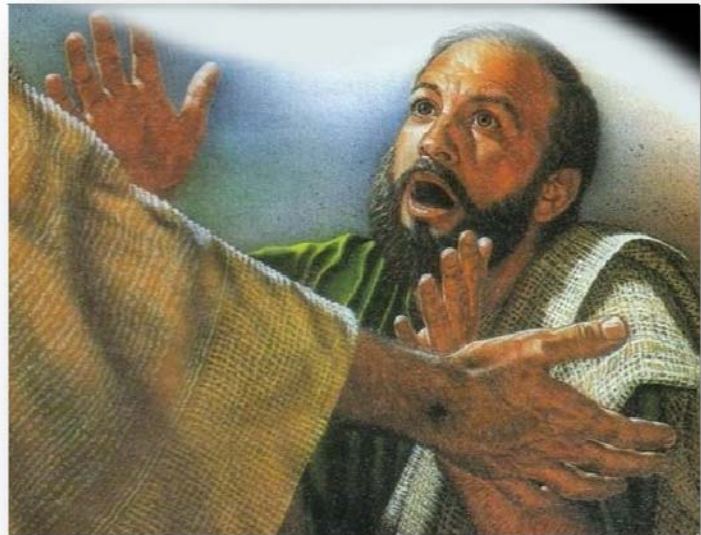
- Thomas had traveled with Jesus and learned from His teaching for at least three years, but **he wasn’t about to accept the fact that Jesus was alive, without proof.** And that proof meant he had to see Him face to face, and literally touch His wounds. We often give Thomas a hard time, and call him “doubting Thomas.” However, we need to remember that ALL of the disciples were in the same boat. None expected His resurrection, they had the benefit of seeing Him appear in their midst in Thomas’ absence. Perhaps we would ALL fall into this group. It is interesting to wonder if God allowed Thomas to be somewhere else when Yeshua appeared first to the disciples, just so He could have and record this encounter with one who initially doubted, but then completely believed. The words Jesus had for Thomas are a comfort to us.
- We can imagine the disciples had quite a bit more to say to Thomas after he rejected the idea of His resurrection. The others had seen Jesus with their own eyes and they probably spent a good deal of time trying to convince this skeptic.

²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

- Eight days later Jesus reappears to the disciples, in the same incredible manner (without opening the door!). Once again He calms their fears with the greeting of “Peace to you!” This time Thomas is with them. As we said above, it is possible God allowed Thomas to miss the initial appearance, just so He could make a grand and wonderful statement to all followers of Yeshua, not just Thomas. This is OUR blessing, as well as for Thomas.
- Now Jesus responds to Thomas not in anger, but **with a genuine invitation to “check Him out.”** He isn’t mad at Thomas for not believing and needing proof. We believe God honors genuine questioning, and even honest doubts. But in order to get our answers we must approach God with the questions. We won’t find them in books or other people. All the answers are with God, and He welcomes us to come to Him and lay out those doubts and questions honestly before Him. He already knows our hearts, and desires to show us the answers. We are talking here about HONEST doubt. There is a difference between this and “dishonest doubt.” One commentator has an interesting statement about that:

COMMENTARY: “God will meet the honest doubt of a man, but I do not think He deals with dishonest doubts. Many people say they can’t believe the Bible. They claim their problem is intellectual. Friend, most people will not believe the Bible because of moral problems. A man told me just the other day that he couldn’t believe the Old Testament. Later I learned that he is living in adultery. The Old Testament says “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). He doesn’t want to believe the Old Testament. However, I am confident that God will always meet an honest doubter. (McGee)

- **“My Lord and my God!”** We don’t have any record that Thomas actually touched those scars. He didn’t need to. He knew His Master on sight. We don’t really understand what a remarkable thing this was for Thomas to say. All Israelites are fiercely MONOTHEISTIC. They believe in ONE God. For their entire lives they have grown up hearing the “Shema” which is from Deuteronomy 6:4 **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”** (Technically, this is “Yahweh our God, Yahweh one.”



- Or “Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is the only one.”) Now Yeshua arrives on the scene and says He is One with the Father. This must have confused the disciples. So what does this mean? Are there TWO Gods, not just one? They could see He was probably the Anointed One (the Messiah), but aligning Him and joining Him with Yahweh, was a particular problem for the Hebrew mind. After all, it’s a problem for ours, too! No human can grasp this concept. It is accepted by belief, not logic. The Israelites were the only culture who believed in ONE God, not multiple gods. So this statement by Thomas reveals much. He acknowledges His risen Master, Yeshua immediately. But he ALSO acknowledges Him as His God. There is a great deal in this proclamation by Thomas. These disciples were finally beginning to put all the pieces together.
- The **whole purpose of this Gospel writer is contained in this one verse.** In just a few more words, he will reveal that purpose (verse 31). Thomas joyfully blurts it out. He believes now, not only in the work of Jesus for Him, but also that He is indeed God Himself.
- John’s purpose, to demonstrate the deity of Christ, climaxes in this confession of Thomas. John affirms that, if unconvinced by His birth, life, works, and death, even a doubter like Thomas found irrefutable proof of Jesus’ deity in His resurrection.

²⁹ **Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

- Now here is the statement by Jesus that **blesses every believer from Thomas to today.** While not chastising him, Jesus is telling Thomas his belief is based on seeing with his eyes. But there is a special blessing for all those whose faith and belief is a result of seeing with their hearts and spirits.
- The word “blessed” is the Greek *makarios* which literally means “supremely fortunate and well off.” We are, of course supremely fortunate in our belief, because it is what enables our fellowship with Him forever. But perhaps in this special blessing to all believers who have not had the privilege of seeing Him face to face, there is even greater blessing than what Thomas obtained.

³⁰*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;* ³¹*but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

- As is typical in Hebrew literature, we **finally come to the statement of the purpose** of this Gospel writer in the latter portion of this book. What we would call a preface was commonly placed at the back of writings. The purpose of this Gospel is to prove that Yeshua is the Anointed One, the Messiah who sacrificed His life for the world, God Himself, AND that such knowledge may inspire belief in Him, leading to eternal life.

Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience, to convince them that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and truly was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Mark wrote mostly to Gentiles, to those new in the faith. His gospel is quick, laser-like and records the major actions and events of Jesus' life, including His death, burial and resurrection. He portrayed Jesus as the servant to all mankind.

Luke was a Gentile doctor, who seemingly wrote to a wealthier Gentile population. His goal was to record as much detail ("an orderly account") as he could from eye witnesses. He highlighted the humanity of Jesus, His physical life, while acknowledging His divine nature.

John was written many years after the others, not to record details already given in the other gospel accounts, but to focus on proving the deity of Jesus, and convince people to accept Him as Savior for eternal life. His audience was both Jew and Gentile.

- *"Jesus did many other signs ..."* The **use of the word *sign* here is deliberate**. This writer has already presented seven distinct signs that point to the deity of Jesus, and His fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the Messiah. He is not merely speaking of miracles or amazing things Jesus did, but specific signs that revealed Him as Messiah. This Gospel writer has chosen the material he has written because he had a definite purpose in mind, stated in the final verse of this chapter. It is likely he could have given more "signs" (*other indicators Yeshua is the Messiah*), as he states here. However, we know that the number 7 means perfectly complete. Seven signs is a perfectly complete list to show that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah.

