

Evidence for the Resurrection

International Bible Lesson

John 20:1-10, 19-20

Sunday, April 8, 2012

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"Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2—KJV).

"She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'" (John 20:2—GNB).

"So Mary Magdalene 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'" (John 20:2—NRSV).

After Jesus' friends took His lifeless body down from the cross and laid it in a tomb, they never expected to see Jesus alive on Earth again. They lost all hope, forgot His teachings about rising from the dead, and feared even more the enemies who crucified their Lord. Since Jesus' disciples required convincing physical proof before they would believe that Jesus was alive again, their former hardheadedness is another good reason to believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

When Mary Magdalene visited Jesus' tomb and found His body gone, she assumed that someone had removed it—perhaps His enemies, who would bring more defilement and dishonor to His dead body. When Peter and the beloved disciple, most probably John, rushed to investigate, they saw His grave clothes, but His body was gone. Why would anyone defile themselves by removing a dead body from a tomb after first removing the grave wrappings? John wrote that as they stood in the tomb and looked around, "they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead" (John 20:10).

In order for His disciples to believe that He lived again, Jesus had to meet them and convince them himself; therefore, He appeared in the midst of them, He spoke words of assurance to them, and He showed them the healed marks in His pierced hands and side. After they saw Jesus was alive and well, they believed and rejoiced because He had risen from the dead (John 20:19-20).

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Thinking Further

1. Why do you think John omitted from his Gospel some of the important events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus that the other Gospels included; such as, the presence of the guards?
 2. Compare these verses from John (John 8:18; John 15:26-27; 1 John 1:1-2; 1 John 4:14) to Luke 1:1-4. How does Luke's Gospel differ from John's Gospel?
 3. What reason did Mary Magdalene give Peter and John for why the tomb was empty? Why do you think she assumed this? Why is her assumption important evidence in support of the fact of the resurrection?
 4. What importance do you place on the emphasis John placed on the tomb being empty except for the burial wrappings?
 5. John said he believed. What do you think he believed? Give a reason for your answer.