



International Bible Lesson

International Bible Study Commentary

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

His Family Know His Voice

John 20:11-18

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master (John 20:16—KJV).

*Jesus *said to her, “Mary!” She turned and *said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher) (John 20:16—NASB).*

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher) (John 20:16—NRSV).

Prior to Jesus’ resurrection, His followers called Jesus, “Rabbi,” a title for human teachers. In some Jewish writings, the Jews addressed God as “Rabbouni,” the Teacher title reserved for God alone. Mary called Jesus “Rabbouni,” a title used only once in the Bible. When Mary heard Jesus’ voice and saw Him looking at her by the tomb, she addressed Him as “Rabbouni,” as God, as her Divine Teacher.

The Psalmists applied the title “Shepherd” to God. In Psalm 23:1, David prayed, “The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” In Psalm 80:1, Asaph prayed, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.” In John 10:11 and John 10:14, Jesus again applied the divine name for God, “I AM,” to himself when He declared, “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” and “I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.” In John 10:27, Jesus explained, “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow (obey) me.”

Jesus knew Mary and she knew Jesus by His voice. When Mary heard Jesus, her Shepherd, call her “Mary,” she knew that Jesus, her “Rabbouni,” her Teacher, had spoken. When Jesus talked with Mary, for the first time He called His disciples “His brothers;” then, Jesus told Mary to tell them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Mary obeyed Jesus and told them, “I have seen the Lord” (John 20:17,18). Jesus’ brothers and sisters still know His voice.

Thinking Further

1. After Peter and John returned home, why do you think Mary Magdalene remained weeping at Jesus’ tomb?
2. Why do you think Mary was unafraid when she saw the two angels dressed in white inside Jesus’ tomb?
3. Why do you think Mary did not recognize Jesus but thought he was the gardener? When did she recognize Him?
4. How did Mary address Jesus? Why do you think the title she used was important to her, and is important to all believers in Jesus?
5. What reason did Jesus give her for not allowing her to hold on to Him?

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Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083
and lgp@theiblf.com.