

Can We Believe the Resurrection?

John 20:1-10

Now 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."

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

Let your mind go back 2000 years to ancient Jerusalem. It is the third day since Jesus was crucified. The disciples have all lost hope. All that they had longed and strove for is now only a nagging regret. There seems little else to do but to return to what you were doing three years ago before you met this stranger from Galilee.

The women are preparing to go to the tomb to further preserve the body according the Jewish customs.

I. The Experience of the Resurrection

A. The report of the women.

1. C.I Scofield in his study Bible on Matthew 28:1 gives the best explanation I have read.
2. John only mentions Mary Magdalene because she is the one necessary for his part of the story.

B. What you see is what you get,

1. The word see is used 3 times in this passage.
2. But there are 3 different Greek words used here that have very different meanings.
 - a. NT:991 blepo (blep'-o); a primary verb; to look at (literally or figuratively):
 - b. NT:2334 theoreo (theh-o-reh'-o); from a derivative of NT:2300 (perhaps by add. of NT:3708); to be a spectator of, i.e. discern, (literally, figuratively [experience] or intensively [acknowledge]):

- c. NT:1492 eido (i'-do); a primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent NT:3700 and NT:3708; properly, to see (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perf. only) to know:

C. John believes.

II. The Surety of the Resurrection

A. What did the women see?

- 1. The stone rolled away.
- 2. The empty tomb.

B. What did Peter and John see?

- 1. The grave clothes.

C. Why is the empty tomb never spoken of in the book of Acts as proof of the resurrection?

- 1. Because once you have met the risen Savior face to face you need not go to the empty tomb.

III. The Wonder Resurrection

A. It is an incredible story is it not?

B. The women cannot believe what they are seeing.

C. The disciples did not believe the women.

D. The disciples did not believe the two from Emmaus.

E. And Thomas did not believe anyone.

F. Even just before His ascension there were still some who doubted.

- 1. Matt 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. NKJV

IV. The Transformation of the Resurrection

A. These same men who for fear are hiding will soon proclaim Jesus everywhere boldly.

B. Even those unbelievers in Jesus own family will become followers.

C. And through their witness many will follow Jesus.

D. There is a difference though, we do it by faith, they did it by sight.

- 1. John 20:24-21:1

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵ The 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."

²⁶ And 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!"²⁷ Then 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."

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

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."

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. NKJV

The disciples had no need of proof of the resurrection after they had seen the risen Christ in His glorified body.

It is on their testimony that our faith is based. But not totally. For those who have experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in their lives no further proof is needed.

And for those who have the Holy Spirit resident in them, they have moved as close to seeing as you can in this life.