The Empty Tomb

John 20:1-18

Introduction:

I. The Puzzled Disciples – 20:1-10

A. They Received of the News – 20:1-2

1. What Mary Magdalene Saw – 2:1

“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.”

The first day of the week of course, was Sunday.

Mary Magdalene was:

* Devoted to Jesus
* Demon Possession (7 demons) (Luke 8:2)
* Was at the cross - John 19.25

She had watched as they closed the tomb, by rolling the stone over the opening. (Matt. 27:60)

Now! She saw that the stone had been rolled away. That was, no doubt, on her mind, if she was going to “anoint the body” (Mk. 1:1)

2. What Mary Magdalene Said – 20:2

“Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the ﻿﻿other disciple, ﻿﻿whom Jesus loved [John], and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

“She ran” - She had not looked in; she assumed that he body was gone. Why else would anyone open the tomb?

It was not a long run. The tomb was just outside the Gate of the city. She found Peter and John (What’s ’is name) together.

Note: Why did Mary say, “we” do not know…” “We” includes the other women who were with her. (Make 16:1)

B. They Respond to the News – 20:3-10

1. First Response – 20:3-7

a. Peter and John Start for the tomb – 20:3

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“Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.”

This is a logical response. I’ll see for myself!

b. John Arrives First – 20:4-5

“So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first.”

John was younger than Peter. So he ran faster and arrived first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw (βλέπω) ﻿﻿the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in.

John looked in, but he didn’t go in.

c. Peter Enters First – 20:6-7

“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.”

2. Further Response – 20:8-9

“Then the ﻿﻿other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw (εἶδεν > ὁράω) and believed.”

John followed Peter in and saw – with perception- and believed. The context is not salvation. He believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

“For as yet they did not ﻿﻿know the ﻿﻿Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.”

The reason for their ignorance is that they did not know the Scripture.

It was available in the O.T. and Jesus had told them many times. Yet they did not put that teaching with the events they had witnessed. John alone, in this context, must have put these events together with what he remembered from Jesus’ teaching and believed.

Note: the tomb was not opened to let Jesus out, but to let the disciples in.

3. Final Response – 20:10

“Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.”

II. The Perplexed Disciple – 20:11-18

A. Mary and Her Royal Messengers – 20:11-14

1. Mary’s Anguish – 20:11

﻿“But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.”

The disciples went home, but Mary Magdalene was not satisfied. She stayed at the tomb. Perhaps she wanted to see what Peter and John had seen. It seems that John did not share his belief with either Peter or Mary Magdalene.

2. Mary’s Answer – 20:12-13

“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. Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

The angels know the situation. They know that Jesus has risen. They are leading Mary toward that same conclusion.

“She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

That is a good reason to be weeping. The cure for it is to see Jesus. That is next.

3. Mary’s Apathy – 20:14

“Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and ﻿﻿did not know that it was Jesus.”

Mary was not interested in seeing anyone but Jesus. So, her problem is not solved yet. Why did she not recognize Him? Some ideas BKC:

 1. His appearance had changed.

 2. Spiritual blindness, Emmaus Road Luke 24.

 3. Tears in her eyes.

B. Mary and Her Resurrected Master – 20:15-17

1. Her Despair – 20:15

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.”

She was separated from Jesus physically. This was the last place Mary had seen Him, physically, so she thought that this was the best place to find Him.

When we are separated spiritually, we should do the same thing. Remember from where you have fallen and return. (Rev.2:5) She found Him where she left Him; so can we. He called her by name and he will call us by name. “He calls His sheep by name and they know His voice”. And they follow Him. (John 10:3-4) imHim

2. Her Delight – 20:16-17

“Jesus said to her, ﻿﻿“Mary!” “She turned and said to ﻿﻿Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

Her long wait is over and it was worth it! She may have hugged Him, or at least attempted to and He said:

“Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ﻿﻿ascended to My Father;

Clinging to Him would detain Him from His next step toward completing His mission, returning to His Father. I don’t want you to “cling to me”;

“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.”

He has already elevated them from servants to friends. Now He elevates them to brothers. And He is not ashamed to call brothers. (Heb. 2:11)

C. Mary and Her Resurrected Lord’s Men ? – 20:18

“Mary Magdalene came and told the ﻿﻿disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.”

Conclusion:

When we started this chapter we saw Mary Magdalene, one of the least likely people to be a messenger of God. She was at the cross while He was dying (John 19:25), and she went to His tomb early on Sunday morning (20:1).