

April 10, 2022

"Jesus Lives!"  
Lesson 5 of Unit

John 20:1-10, 19-20

**Intro**

In Jesus' day, there were several options for how to take care of a loved one's body after death. It was important to prevent the body from being ravaged by wild animals. So some burned the body. Others buried the body or put it in a special room that could be sealed from animals.

Wealthier families in Jesus' day would carve tombs into the limestone rock faces of the region's hills. There were usually several bed-like shelves in the tombs. The entrance could be sealed using a round-shaped rock that rolled along a track (see Matt. 27:60). This stone was very heavy, requiring many people to move it. This is one detail that helps disprove the idea that Jesus' body was stolen by the disciples rather than resurrecting.

The Romans usually did not allow the bodies of executed criminals to be buried too soon. Those who were crucified were left on the cross for a long time, to be pecked at by birds. This was meant as a strong visual reminder to the people about what happened to lawbreakers. But Jesus' body (and those of the thieves) was taken down shortly after He died, because the Sabbath was almost upon them.

Jesus wasn't buried in a family tomb; that would have been in Nazareth, if there was one. Instead, He was put into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, who was a prominent leader of the Jews in Jerusalem. Matthew called Joseph a disciple of Jesus (Matt. 27:57), and Mark says that he was a "prominent member of the Council", meaning he was a member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43). John says that Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38). His actions in requesting the body and burying it in his own newly-carved family tomb would seem to reveal his connection to Jesus.

It is at this tomb of Joseph of Arimathea that the events occur in our study passage for today.

**Read John 20:1-10, 19-20**

1. vs. 1: The first day of the week is Sunday

The Jewish Sabbath day was the 7<sup>th</sup> day, as that was the day that God rested  
"It was still dark"

The Jewish day goes from sundown to sundown, rather than from sun up to sun up as we use in our world today

Mary could have gone to the tomb any time after sundown; "it was still dark", so it wasn't the next morning yet

Mary sees that the stone has been rolled away—this is a big deal, a big surprise  
(See the notes in the intro above)

Mary has come with other women to "anoint the body the spices" (Mark 16:1)

They were expecting to need some help to move the stone, but it's already rolled away!

2. vs. 2: The rolled away stone upsets Mary  
She perceives that someone has stolen the body of Jesus  
She runs to tell Peter and John  
This shows that they are the perceived leaders of the disciples  
This shows that Mary does not suspect them of having taken the body  
She says, “They have taken the Lord” NOT “Where did you put the Lord!”  
Note also that the idea of Jesus being resurrected does not occur to her  
She is like Peter and John in this (see John 20:9)
3. vs. 3-4: Both Peter and John are concerned about the news that Mary brings  
They both run to the tomb  
If they were in the house where the last supper was, it’s about a ½ mile away from the  
likely place where Jesus’s (Joseph’s) tomb  
They go right away  
They want to see it firsthand, themselves  
John runs faster, but Peter is not very far behind
4. vs. 5: John looks into the tomb but doesn’t go in  
He sees the strips of cloth used to wrap Jesus in, but sees no body
5. vs. 6-7: Peter goes into the tomb immediately after he arrives  
He sees the same strips of cloth  
He also sees another cloth  
This had been around Jesus’ head  
It is folded up, and not sitting near the other strips of cloth  
The description of these cloths suggests that Jesus “shrugged off” the body cloths, but he  
removed, folded and placed the head cloth  
Both of these details about the cloths argue against the body being stolen  
Thieves would not have taken the time to unwrap the body  
Thieves definitely wouldn’t have taken the time to fold up the head cloth
6. vs. 8: John now joins Peter inside the tomb  
This verse records John’s reaction: “He saw and believed”  
He saw the physical evidence; the question is, what did he believe?  
That Jesus was God?  
That Jesus rose from the dead?  
That the missing body indicated another miracle by Jesus?  
At the very least, John is indicating a strong measure of faith in Jesus
7. vs. 9-10: John acknowledges that neither he nor Peter understand Messianic resurrection Scriptures  
Peter’s message on Pentecost is 7 weeks after this event  
He’s had some time to reflect and gain understanding  
Paul’s letters were written 20-30 years after Jesus’ death and resurrection  
He had time to reflect and gain understanding  
John’s gospel was written about 60 years after these events  
He had a lot of time to reflect and gain understanding  
The Holy Spirit had obviously given them deeper insights than the initial ones

To be fair, we also don't always understand things as quickly as we might  
We too gain in understanding over the weeks, months, and years of study

8. vs. 19: This event happens in the evening of the same day as the events of vs. 1-10.

The disciples are together

They have no doubt been talking about the empty tomb and its meaning

They have the doors locked, "for fear of the Jews"

Jesus has been killed; are they going to be next?

Jesus comes to join them in His resurrected body

He utters the words of comfort they need: "Peace be with you!"

He has not come as an evil spirit, but as their risen Lord

They do not need to be afraid of what will happen to them

9. vs. 20: Jesus shows them His hands and side

This is proof positive of Jesus' identity

The wounds He suffered on the cross would be unmistakable

The disciples are "overjoyed"

They get to see Jesus again

They see that He is alive again, has risen from the dead

They celebrate His resurrected life

Application: Today's passage is a microcosm of our spiritual journey to and with Christ. The disciples followed Jesus, just as we follow Him. They got to a place where they didn't understand what His words and actions meant; that happens to us as well. But as their understanding grew of who Jesus was, their joy and excitement also grew. That is true for us as well. As we get to know Jesus better, understand Him more, our joy and excitement about being with Him and serving Him also grow.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for the truth and the reality of Jesus' resurrection. It shows us how much You love us, how much Jesus loves us. It gives us hope for the struggles of this life, and hope for our eternal future. Help us to live and celebrate this hope daily. In Jesus' name, Amen.