

JOHN 20:11-18 | MARY MAGDALENE SEES THE RESURRECTED JESUS

- Verses 11-12 –
  - Having brought Peter and the other disciple to the tomb, Mary (Magdalene, v. 1) lingers, **weeping**. This gives testimony that the belief in verse 8 is *not* of the resurrection, for *weeping would not be an appropriate response*.
  - Mary **stooped down** (to look in the traditional tomb, with its short door). This time she saw **two angels in white...where the body of Jesus had lain**. Bullinger speculates that these two angels are Gabriel and Michael, but such is only speculation. It does seem to declare the importance of the event.
  - While John does not mention it, it appears that these two angels were present with the women first arrived earlier in the morning - compare Luke 24:1-9.
- Verse 13 –
  - Even with the earlier declaration (see Lk. 24:6), Mary has still not come to the full realization of what has taken place. At this point she shows no signs of believing in the resurrection.
- Verse 14 –
  - There are a number of potential reasons why Mary **knew not that it was Jesus**.
    - Her overwhelming grief.
    - Her tears.
    - She did not turn full around. The Greek says “she turned toward the back,” indicating that she just glanced backward, perhaps just catching Jesus in her peripheral vision.
    - Jesus’ appearance could have been different.
- Verse 15 –
  - The fact that Mary first mistook Him for the **gardener** indicates that Jesus did not have any kind of *angelic or glorified presence*.
  - It could be that the weeping woman does not want to turn to face this “stranger.”
  - Once again, there is no indication that Mary thinks anything other than that the body of Jesus has been moved to another place.
- Verse 16 –
  - As Jesus spoke her name, she instantly recognized Him, as indicated by her response.
  - The scripture records her response in Hebrew, **Rabboni**. The word **Master** is διδάσκαλος [didaskalos], which is *teacher*, the main function of a Rabbi.
- Verse 17 –
  - This verse is somewhat mysterious, and likely will always be. The other gospels do not include this account, so we have no comparison.
  - Many believe that the emphasis on the command to **Touch me not** is not a mere touch, but to *cling to excessively*. I do not see the grammatical evidence of such a claim.

- For example, the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, which rarely gives commentary, does give commentary on this verse, saying, “Or rather, ‘embrace me not,’ or, ‘cling not to me,’ μη μου απτου, ‘Spend no more time with me now in joyful congratulations: for I am not yet immediately going to ascend to my Father; you will have several opportunities of seeing me again; but go and tell my disciples that I shall depart to my Father and your Father.’”<sup>1</sup>
    - Such emphasis does not seem to be the natural reading of the text, either in English or Greek.
    - In like manner, John Calvin said, “They fixed their attention on his bodily presence, and did not understand any other way of enjoying his society than by conversing with him on the earth. We ought, therefore, to conclude, that they were not forbidden to touch him, until Christ saw that, by their foolish and unreasonable desire, they wished to keep him in the world.”<sup>2</sup>
  - It appears there is to be some sort of presentation before the Father before the Lord should be touched.
    - In my estimation, this likely has to do with the feast of firstfruits, which took place on this very day.
    - Leviticus 23:11 says that **on the morrow after the sabbath** of the Passover week, the priest would wave **a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest** (Lev. 23:10) before the Lord.
    - Paul later refers to Christ as **the firstfruits** of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23).
    - This interpretation requires some sort of presentation before God the Father on this day. Since Scripture gives us no further information, we are left without knowing.
  - What if she *had* touched Jesus? This is speculation that is impossible to answer. She likely had such deep fear and respect at the moment that such a thought is unthinkable.
- Verse 18 –
  - Mark 16:10-11 mentions this incident (without the detail of the ascension) and explains **the disciples** of this verse to be **them that had been with him** and that when she arrived, they **mourned and wept** and when she said that she had seen Jesus alive they **believed not**.

#### JOHN 20:19-23 | JESUS' FIRST APPEARANCE BEFORE THE DISCIPLES

- Verse 19 –
  - It could be presumed that these events take place in the “Upper Room,” since it seems to be the most common meeting place for the disciples in Jerusalem. However, since **the doors were shut...for fear of the Jews**, perhaps they had changed location.
  - While it is universally assumed that Jesus appeared without opening the doors, the text does not specifically say as much.
- Verse 20 –
  - This verse is actually the first record of the disciples recognizing Jesus as the Risen Lord. One wonders if a *Resurrection Sunday evening service* would not be more significant than a *morning service*.

<sup>1</sup> B. Blayney, Thomas Scott, and R.A. Torrey with John Canne, Browne, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, vol. 2 (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, n.d.), 81.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/comment3/comm\\_vol35/htm/x.iii.htm](https://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/comment3/comm_vol35/htm/x.iii.htm) (Accessed 08/18/21).