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John 20

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

John 20.

Topics.

- The disciple Jesus loved.
- Mary Magdalene, Peter and John go to the tomb.
- Christ left his grave-clothes behind.
- Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb the second time.
- Mary did not recognise Jesus.
- Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.
- Jesus appears to the disciples and breaths on them the Holy Spirit.
- If you forgive sins they are forgiven.
- Thomas cries, "My Lord and my God."
- Now Jesus did many other signs.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter it is still Passover Day the day before the Jewish high Sabbath, Jesus is brought before Pilate, Roman soldiers brutally beat him and forced a crown of thorns on his head and the crowd cries, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Jesus was crucified and cries out, "It is finished," and bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took his body and laid it in a tomb.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Mary Magdalene: was said to be possessed of devils, but delivered by Jesus she was present at the crucifixion, at the sepulchre and recognises Jesus after the resurrection.

JOHN 20:1-10

Mary Magdalene goes to the Tomb on the First Day of the Week.

- **John 20:1-10:** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³So Peter went out with the other disciple and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

The first day of the week: Jesus was crucified on Friday the 14th of the Jewish calendar month Nisan (also called Abid) this is the exact day Israel was delivered from Egypt (called the house of bondage) and protected from the death angel by the blood of the lamb on the door posts of their houses and the reason it is called Passover Day. On this very day Jesus became the eternal and perfect Passover Lamb for all who will come to

him. He was in the tomb part of Passover day, all day Saturday, (the Jewish high Sabbath) and part of Sunday the first day of the week. Many in Christendom are confused by the words of Jesus that state:

- For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40) (Jonah 1:17)

Because for Jesus to be in the belly of the earth for three full days and three full nights it means he would have to have been crucified on Thursday and this causes all sorts of problems with many other Scriptures, but when it is understood that the phrase:

- Three days and three nights.

Is a Jewish idiom for the third day every verse harmonises beautifully especially with Jesus own statement to the eleven apostles that:

- The Son of Man must be killed, and on the third day be raised (Luke 9:22).

And the fact Luke tells us it was the third day since he had been crucified when he appeared to the two men going to a village named Emmaus (Luke 24:21). For further information see the title:

- Three Days and Three Nights in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The disciple Jesus Loved: John writes, "Mary Magdalene ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved" (John 20:2). The disciple who Jesus loved was John, we know this because in the next chapter John says, "When Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved," and a few verses later says, "He was the disciple who has written the things in this letter" (John 21:20-24). Meaning the disciple who wrote the book of John was the disciple Jesus loved. It seems to be a principal of humble Bible writers to hide themselves in their letters to avoid using the word I. They will often say, "That disciple with them" or "That disciple with him" rather than say, "I was with him" or "I was with them" when they are referring to themselves it is a style of writing that avoids boasting. The spirit of the world is pride and the desire to feel important. If those in the secular world have contact with a famous person, they want to boast about it to their friends' biblical writers often avoid this by hiding themselves in their writings.

Mary Magdalene, Peter and John go to the tomb: when the Jewish High Sabbath was almost past Mary Magdalene is the first to go to the tomb very early Sunday morning the first day of the week (so early it was still dark) she arrives and upon seeing that the stone was no longer covering the tomb she runs to tell Peter and John (the disciple Jesus loved). Mary Magdalene tells Peter and John someone has taken the Lord from the tomb upon hearing this Peter and John run to the tomb. Mary Magdalene follows them but because Peter and John were both running, she lags behind. John outruns Peter and arrives at the tomb first, but he did not go in, but when Peter arrived, he entered immediately into the tomb then John followed him. Mary Magdalene is still coming up behind them. Though Peter and John believed Jesus was the Messiah and the Christ they still did not understand the Scripture that said, "He must rise from the dead" or the meaning of what Jesus had told them when he said "The Son of man must be killed and rise again on the third day." So, they returned to their homes not knowing what has happened to the body of Jesus (verse one to ten).

The folded linen cloth: the fact the fine linen cloth (Mark 15:46) that Joseph had wrapped Jesus body in was left in the tomb and the linen cloth that had been wrapped around his face was folded was a sign that his body had not been stolen since thieves would not waste time unwrapping a body especially considering how many folding's the Jews used to wrap a corpse in and added this is the fact that any one stealing a body would rather carry it wrapped than naked. The fact that the linen cloth was

folded shows that the resurrection of Jesus was not hurried but orderly showing the grand tranquillity Jesus had risen from the dead with.

Christ left his grave-clothes behind: we are not told what clothes Jesus appeared to his disciples in, but we do know he never appeared to them in his grave-clothes, as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside because he arose to die no more; unlike Lazarus who came out with his grave-clothes on and was to use them again, but Christ in contrast to Lazarus was rising to immortal life and came out the tomb to be clothed with the robes of glory and set free from his graveclothes. Perhaps symbolising the following majestic truth:

- When we arise from the death of sin our perishable body will put on the imperishable, and our mortal body will put on immortality and when the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:53-54).

When this glorious event takes place our grave-clothes will be left behind with all their corruptions.

Testifying to Christ and the Good News of the Gospel: even though the Old Testament spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, Peter and John believed him to be the Messiah and he himself had often told them that according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament he would rise again; John tells us that neither Peter or John understood the Scriptures that stated:

- He must rise again from the dead (v9).

And therefore, though they believed he was their Messiah they neither had wisdom nor understanding of mind to explain his missing body. Luke in his writing's states that their lack of understanding was because:

- As yet Jesus had not opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-45).

The eleven apostles knew the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Christ, they lived with him for three years and he told them at various times that, "He would be put to death but will rise again on the third day," yet they still did not understand until Jesus opened their minds to the Scriptures. This should be a great encouragement and bring peace to the mind of all who witness or share their testimony, since it teaches us that the only power we have is to share our faith and testify to the Good News of the Gospel, but it is the Holy spirit that convicts the human heart and opens a person's mind to perceiving Christ and understanding the spiritual reality of his words, therefore no-one should feel despondent when those they are witnessing to do not receive their message, but rather rejoice in the knowledge that they have done all their Lord expects of them.

JOHN 20:11-17

Mary Magdalene arrives at the Tomb the Second Time.

- **John 20:11-17:** But Mary (Magdalene) stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They said to her "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

Peter and John have left the tomb and Mary Magdalene who was following them now arrives and while weeping because she did not know what had happened to Jesus' body she looks into the tomb, (this is the second time Mary is at the tomb) and sees two angels and after answering their question she turns and sees Jesus, but thinking he was a gardener asks him where he had taken the body of Jesus. Jesus then says, "Mary" and she immediately recognised him (v13-16), he tells her to go and tell the disciples that he is "Ascending to his Father and to Mary's Father, to his God and to Mary's God." Jesus comforts Mary by telling her that his heavenly Father is her heavenly Father and by extension the heavenly Father of everyone who faithfully follows His Son as Mary did.

Mary did not recognise Jesus: when Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb it was still dark (v1) so it would be difficult to see Jesus' face clearly it is possible Jesus kept his face hidden or turned as he spoke to Mary and since Mary was not expecting Jesus to be raised from the dead she would never have entertained the idea that he might be alive. Added to this Mary was not facing Jesus when he appeared because when he spoke the second time the verse states she turned and then recognised him this is most likely why she did not recognise him at first (v14-16).

Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father: the word cling (haptomai) (touch in KJV) means to touch or emotionally attach and fasten oneself to (In many implied relations) especially with the idea of setting on fire and kindling a light. Ponder for a moment and imagine the enormous joy and excitement of Mary Magdalene when she knew it was the Lord she would have been so excited and overwhelmed with emotion when she recognised him that it would have been an overwhelming natural response to hug and cling to him thinking he has returned to remain as the King of Israel to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy, and peace on earth as the prophets and Old Testament Scripture spoke. Thus, Jesus' words to her: -

- Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father (v17).

In this context carries the idea of being emotionally attached. Jesus knowing, he is only going to be on earth for a few days and how excited Mary was to see him and how she loved him is saying to her don't get attached because he will be ascending to his heavenly Father in a few days' time (v16-17). After telling Mary Magdalene that she cannot remain with him as he is about to ascend to God the Father, he tells her to go and tell the eleven apostles what she has seen and heard (v17).

JOHN 20:18-23

Jesus appears to the Disciples and Breaths on them the Holy Spirit.

- **John 20:18-23:** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her. ¹⁹On the evening of that day, the first day of the week (Sunday) the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

It is certain that Mary Magdalene immediately raced with enormous joy and excitement to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and most likely that they all remained together in joyful fellowship talking with absolute wonder about everything Jesus had spoken to them. On the evening of this very same day, the first day of the week (Sunday) they are all together in a room with the door locked because of the fear of the Jewish religious leaders. No-doubt they were in great anxiety after seeing

how cruelly and unjustly the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes had treated Jesus and feared that officers sent by them would storm their homes to take them captive as they did Jesus and treat them with the same brutal torture they had inflicted on Christ. But they were in for a great and joyful surprise, rather than their enemies storming their home their beloved and resurrected Lord appears in the room and speaks peace to them. To assure them that it is him and not some kind of ghost or spirit aberration he shows them the mark of the nails in his hands and the scar in the side of his body (v25-27) that had been pierced by a Roman spear. Remember though people in Jesus era believed in life after death it was considered more in the form of an eternal soul (i.e., some spirit like being or spiritual eternal consciousness) no-one (except a few prophets) thought the human body could be raised from the dead to eternal glory and everlasting life.

Receive the Holy Spirit: Jesus tells his disciples, "As the Father has sent him, he is sending them" (v21) and then breathes on them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v22) in doing this Jesus is showing that his Spirit is the Spirit of the Holy Spirit. God at Jesus water baptism poured out His Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) on His Son so Jesus in this act of breathing on the disciples is basically showing them that whoever receive him by faith receives the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) and therefore whoever confesses the Son has the Father also (1 John 2:23).

If you forgive sins they are forgiven: Jesus words, "If you forgive sins they are forgiven if you withhold forgiveness it is withheld" (23). Does not mean that God cannot forgive a sinner who is truly repent and seeking after Christ until the disciples forgive them, we know this because if a disciple could withhold eternal salvation from anyone who is humbly and honestly seeking God through Christ then Jesus would not be the only perfect and eternal High Priest for every sinner and for those who belong to him. Added to this is the reality that if another person was able to stop a repentant sinner from eternal salvation then Christs comforting words, "whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37) would not ring true. Rather it seems Jesus is giving those he has chosen the authority to offer forgiveness of sins in his name to whoever comes to them whereas up until now only he has been telling people their sins are forgiven. Obviously if they proclaim the message of forgiveness of sin in Christ name people will be forgiven, but if they do not proclaim it forgiveness is withheld. The apostle Paul stated:

- For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, but how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (Romans 10:13-14).

John the Baptist gives us another example of Jesus words:

- If you forgive sins they are forgiven if you withhold forgiveness it is withheld (23).

When the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the Pharisees) who believed they were righteous because they descended from Abraham came to John to be baptised by him rather than baptise them he called them a brood of vipers and told them to firstly show fruits fit for repentance (Luke 3:7-9) showing that there must be some kind of action in a person's life that shows or evidences that they are truly seeking God. In the Pharisees case it would have been to stop oppressing the poor and hungry and cheating people out of what was rightfully theirs by perverting the Scriptures to enhance their own selfish ambition and power and begin to show kindness compassion and mercy etc., and not bind up those who were seeking God with legalistic rules, laws and traditions. Likewise, when Jesus said to those he had chosen:

- If you forgive sins they are forgiven if you withhold forgiveness it is withheld.

He knows that they have enough love, compassion and mercy that they would not withhold forgiveness from any sinner who comes to them in godly repentance and that they have enough wisdom and understanding

that they would not baptise people like the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes who use their ministry to further their own selfish ambition unless there is some form of evidence of sorrow, and repentance toward God.

JOHN 20:24-31

Thomas will never believe unless he sees the Marks in Jesus Body.

- **John 20:24-31:** Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." ²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord (kurios) and my God!" (theos) ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Thomas extreme unbelief is amazing, he lived with Christ and the other ten apostles for three years and Jesus told him more than once that he would be raised from the dead and he still did not believe until he saw the nail marks in Jesus hands and the scar in his side. Jesus words, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (v29)" refers to all who come to Christ from the time of his ascension to the time of his return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

Thomas cries, "My Lord and my God." Thomas' words, "My Lord (kurios) and my God!" (theos) Is often used by some religious teachers to support the theory that Jesus is God, but this is reading more into what Thomas is saying than Thomas ever intended.

Lord: comes from the Greek word (kurios) and from Strong's Concordance means, supremacy, it carries the idea of one in supreme in authority and control and by implication it is used as a respectful title and can mean any of the following, God, Lord, Mr (as a respectful title), master and sir.

God: comes from the Greek word (theos) and from Strong's Concordance means, deity, and carries the idea of the supreme divinity, figuratively it means a magistrate and in the Hebrew language it carries the idea of being, a very exceeding God or one who is godly.

Jesus was everything to Thomas tears would have flooded his eyes as he saw him and he was no-doubt overwhelmed and in absolute awe when he realised Jesus had been raised from the dead In this enormous excitement and joy he cries out in overwhelming wonder "My Lord and my God!" Thomas use of the word Lord in this context is used as a highly respectful title that carries the idea of a master who is the supreme in authority. And his use of the title God carries the idea that Jesus is supreme Holiness and exceeding in divinity. Thomas is not saying that Jesus is God the Father, but declaring that he is his God amongst men, it is an expression of the highest exaltation. We know this because in the very same conversation Jesus tells Thomas to have eternal life, he must believe that:

- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (v31).

In fact, there is not one verse in the entire Bible that says, "To have eternal life we must believe that Jesus is God, in contrast to this there are multitudes of Scriptures that state:

- Whoever believes Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if Jesus for a moment thought Thomas was calling him Jehovah God he would have told him to have eternal life he must believe that Jesus is God rather than believe he is the Son of God so that Thomas and by extension all who are seeking God and eternal life would clearly know what to believe to be saved to eternal life. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).

In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Jesus did many other signs: the words, "Jesus did many other Signs so that you may believe," (v31) show that Jesus miracles were to testify that he is the Christ, the Son of God so that whoever believes in him will have eternal life. The stunning miracles Jesus performed authenticated and testified that he was the prophet to come like Moses, the promised seed of Abraham and of David, Israel's Messiah the Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world. No man on earth could do the things Christ did without the full power of God flowing through him, thus his sign miracles evidenced that he was approved of God, sent by God, had God's favour and was God's beloved Son and the one Moses and all the prophet spoke of (John 20:30-31). We know Jesus miracles were to authenticated that he was sent by God the Father because when John the Baptist was in prison, he sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one who is to come and Jesus answered them with the following majestic words:

- Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me" (Matt. 11:2-6). (Luke 7:18-23).

It is stated in the Old Testament that the Christ will open the eyes of the blind, heal the ears of the deaf, cause the crippled to walk and the mute to speak with joy (Isaiah 29:1-24) (Isaiah 35:1-10) (Isaiah 42:1-10) all the miracles that Jesus did and Jesus when speaking to the Jews said:

- The works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me and the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard. (John 5:36-37).

NOTE: the reason the Scriptures are written is so that people will have evidence that Jesus is the Son of God, but eternal life is not in having abundance of intellectual Bible knowledge, but in believing in Jesus the Christ and Son of God and faithfully following him. The Scriptures are written to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ to those seeking God so that they may believe in him and be saved to eternal life. We know this because Jesus told the Jews (primarily the religious leaders of his generation):

- They do not have his word abiding in them because they do not believe the one whom the Father has sent (John 5:38)

Then he rebukes them by saying:

- They search the Scriptures because they think that in them they have eternal life; but it is the Scriptures that bear witness about him, yet they refuse to come to him that they might have eternal life (John 5:39-40).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
