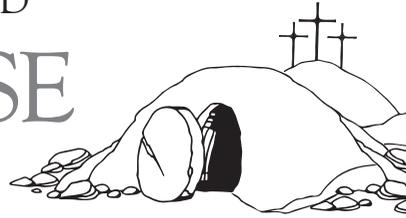


THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD EASTER SUNRISE

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Mark Schlamann



John 20:1-18 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle and evangelist John to write his Gospel sometime around 90 A.D. This reading takes place on Easter Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead.

¹ 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.

- All four Gospels note the events of the Resurrection took place on the first day of the week (Sunday). Luther: “These and other details...have been set forth in writing so that this article, ‘On the third day Christ rose again from the dead,’ might be made certain among those who are to believe...for our sakes, so that we, too, might believe.” (*Luther’s Works*, 69:285)
- Mary Magdalene and the women with her (mentioned in the other Gospels) “come within sight of the tomb, and to their consternation see that the stone has already been removed, the door is exposed. They all leap to the natural conclusion that the tomb has been rifled by the enemies of Jesus, the Jews.” (Lenski: *John*, 1334)

² So 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.”

- Luther: “With these words she reveals the passionate heart that she has for Christ and the great longing and desire with which her heart is full.” (*Luther’s Works* 69:291)
- The “other disciple” is John, human author of this Gospel. John never identified himself by name in his Gospel. The named “John” was John the Baptist.

³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb.

- “The message...stirred both Peter and John to quick action. They immediately made up their minds to find out the truth of this most astounding matter.” (P.E. Kretzmann: *Popular Commentary*, NT, Vol. 1, 522)

⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

- “Perhaps John was younger and lighter than Peter. In any case the account is very vivid and human. Both were anxious and ran strenuously. ‘First’ is an adjective, not an adverb. It denotes the order in which they arrived, not the order of things done.” (*Buls’ Notes*: John)

⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

- Scripture does not address why John did not enter the open tomb.

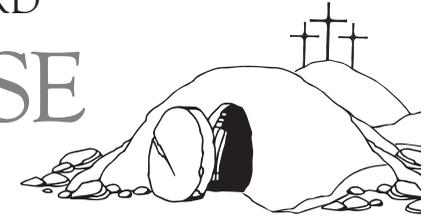
⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.

- “Then’ simply carries on the narrative. Peter passed John at the entrance of the tomb. Of John it is said that he ‘looked at’ the linen clothes. But of Peter it is said that he ‘saw’ which carries with it the idea of ‘gaze at.’” (Buls)
- Kretzmann: “But when impulsive Peter came along, there was not a moment’s hesitation. He went into the tomb; he viewed closely the gravecloths, assuring himself of their identity; he noted also the sudary, or napkin, which had been wrapped about the head of the Master. It struck him that this cloth was lying apart from the other linen wrappings, in a place by itself, and that it was folded or rolled together. ...It was certainly surprising enough

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to find all the cloths laid aside with such apparent care, with no sign of haste, as would have been the case had the sepulcher been violated and the body stolen.” (522)

⁸ **Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;**

- “When John saw the signs, he believed. Here was evidence that Jesus had risen as he predicted. Still, neither disciple fully realized that they were witnessing the fulfillment of Scripture (Psalm 16:10). Peter, more than John, left the tomb bewildered (Luke 24:12).” (*People’s Bible Commentary*, 258)
- The disciples would not realize this until Jesus, immediately prior to His ascension, “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead...’” (Luke 24:45-46)

¹⁰ **Then the disciples went back to their homes.**

- Buls: “Back to their homes’ means ‘to their own homes’ which might indicate...that they did not live in the same house.”

¹¹ **But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb.**

- Buls: “After Mary had informed Peter and John (verse 2), she must have followed them back to the grave. They must have left before she arrived and very likely took a different road or street than she did. In any case, here we have her again. It is clear from the entire account that Mary had an intense love for Jesus.”

¹² **And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.**

- Lenski: “...her eyes, blurred with tears, rest upon the two angels in the tomb. Though clad in white...and thus conspicuous in the shadowed tomb, Mary, though she sees them, really does not see them. She is neither startled nor does she address them.” (1350)

¹³ **They 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.”**

- Augustine: “Mary still calls her Lord’s inanimate body her Lord, meaning a part for the whole. It is the same as when all of us acknowledge that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, our Lord, who of course is at once both the Word and soul and flesh, was nevertheless crucified and buried, while it was only his flesh that was laid in the sepulcher.” (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*: John 11-21, 344)

¹⁴ **Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.**

- Kretzmann: “It was not merely that her eyes were dim with tears, but that Jesus now appeared in a form from which all lowliness had vanished, and which was also glorified, spiritualized.” (523)

¹⁵ **Jesus 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.”**

- Kretzmann: “She took Jesus for the gardener, the man that certainly should know something about the disappearance of her Lord. ...The idea may have struck Mary that the gardener had seen fit to take the body to some other grave nearby, because this tomb was to be used for another body. Note the love of Mary: Weak woman that she is, she will undertake single-handed to carry the body of her beloved Lord away.”

¹⁶ **Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).**

- Buls: “Jesus must have spoken in such a way that Mary recognized immediately. And, obviously, He was alive. That’s Gospel. He preached a whole sermon in one word. And her entire devotion came out in one word.”

¹⁷ **Jesus 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.’”**

- Kretzmann: “He gives her the reason for this prohibition: Because I have not yet ascended to My Father. After His glorification had been fully accomplished, His disciples might enter into closer communion with Him than ever before.” (523)

¹⁸ **Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.**

- We begin and end these study notes with Luther: “You hear this text preached almost every year for Easter, for it is a truly beautiful text...here is the summary: Christ who has risen from the dead wants to be and to be called the Brother of His disciples and all believers. ...What a word to make a Christian joyful and to stir and rouse him to love for Christ!” (*Luther’s Works* 69:305)



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