

"IN THE FOLD" JOHN 20:1-9

Jesus was crucified on Friday, April 3, A.D. 33 and was raised from the dead the following Sunday. Christians have celebrated the resurrection by meeting together on the first day of the week ever since. It didn't take long for the tradition to develop. According to one writer: "At first, especially when many Christians were converted Jews, their holy day was Saturday. However, because the Resurrection and the beginning of Creation had both occurred on the first day of the week (Sunday), the church soon observed that day instead. (More Gentiles were becoming Christians as well, which contributed to a desire to shake off Jewish customs.) By the end of the first century, Sunday worship was the norm . . . It's important to note that the Sabbath was not simply moved; Christians altered the observance as well as the day. Hallmarks of the early Christian 'Lord's day' celebration, according to Justin Martyr (ca. 100-ca. 165), included readings from Scripture (particularly the Gospels), a sermon, communal prayer, and Communion-very different from Jewish Sabbath observance. By Jewish standards, Christians don't keep the Sabbath at all." (Elesha Coffman, "When Did the Christian Church Switch the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday?" (www.christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/when-did-christian-church-switch-sabbath-from-saturday-to.html).

Paul's words spoken in Troas on his third missionary journey point to this change. "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread" (Ac 20:7), he says, reflecting the fact that Christians met on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Jesus death and resurrection.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

– Paul

This Week's Core Competency

Hope – I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Our hope as Christians is inexorably linked to the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. Apart from his resurrection we have no hope. Paul makes this perfectly clear in 15:13-28 of First Corinthians:

"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied*" (vv. 13-19).

The resurrection of Jesus was a key point in the apostles' presentation of the gospel. Peter's sermon recorded in Acts 2 illustrates this perfectly. Here Peter uses the Old Testament to confirm that Jesus is the Messiah based on the testimony of David: "you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay" (v. 27; cf., Ps 16:8-11). Peter makes it clear that David was speaking prophetically not about himself but about the Messiah. This had to be the case because David had died, been buried, and had remained in his tomb (v. 29). But God has "raised Jesus to life," Peter says, "and we are all witnesses of it" (v. 32). What's more, following the resurrection, God made Jesus both Lord and Messiah by exalting him to his own right hand (vv. 33a, 36).

Paul goes on to affirm, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those

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who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power."

So, because Christ has been raised from the dead, we who belong to him will also be made alive to enjoy an embodied life after, life after death. But all who believe will not be raised at the same time, but sequentially. Christ was raised first; those "in Christ" will be raised at the rapture (1Th 4:16), while Old Testament saints will be raised at our Lord's glorious appearing (Rev 20:4).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

John 20:1-9

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Cf., Luke 24:1-12

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Draw a line from "early" to "dark" in v. 1.

* Box "so" indicating *result* in vv. 2, 3.

* Underline "Peter/Simon Peter" with one line throughout.

* Underline "the other disciple" with two lines throughout.

* Circle "they" in v. 2.

* Circle "we" in v. 2.

* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 4.

* Bracket "looked" in v.5, "saw" in v. 6, and "saw" in v. 8.

* Highlight v. 8b.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. John sandwiches the story of Peter and John at the tomb (vv. 3-9) between two stories about Mary Magdalene at the tomb (vv. 1-2, 10-18). Why do you think John arranged the stories to tell them in this order?
2. Verse 2 begins with "so" indicating *result*. Explain the relationship of verse 2 to verse 1.
3. Who in the world is "the other disciple"?
4. Does Mary's inference given the open tomb (v. 2) surprise you? Explain.
5. So why *exactly* do you think Peter and the other disciple ran for the tomb?
6. Peter and the other disciple are *contrasted* in verses 4-8. Give an example or two.
7. Describe the tomb evidence and what it indicates to you?
8. Verse 8 says the other disciple "saw and believed." Believed what?
9. **Discussion:** What did the disciples *not* understand, and when did they *not* understand it?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

"In the Early church supreme importance was attached to the resurrection of Christ. Without the Resurrection the New Testament loses its soul and the Christian faith its central pillar. Without a risen Christ, the Christian message becomes meaningless and the Christian's faith futile (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). 'A person cannot give himself to a dead man, nor can he expect anything or receive anything from a dead man', yet the apostolic proclamation called for personal surrender to a man who had died (Acts 10:39, 43; 16:31; 20:21; 25:19) and the Christian claimed to have received eternal life from a man who had died (John 10:11, 28). Both the staunchest defenders of the Resurrection and its most remorseless critics recognize the centrality of the resurrection of Christ in apostolic Christianity: the earliest message was basically 'Jesus and the resurrection' (Acts 17:18; cf. 4:2, 33; Rom. 10:9)" (Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament*, 5). The resurrection of Jesus is the basis of our hope, and our hope is the hope of our own resurrection. No wonder all four Gospels record what happened on the first day of the week following Christ's death on the cross and burial in Joseph's tomb.

When we read John's account, we must keep in mind that his purpose was not to give a blow-by-blow description of what happened. The Gospels are testimonies concerning the life, death, and resurrection of the one and only God-man to set foot on planet earth and not mere history books. He wrote his Gospel to convince people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that by believing they might have eternal life in his name (20:21). To convince them that Jesus is the Christ, he concluded his book by inviting them to look into the empty tomb and see that it was empty because Jesus had risen from the dead, not because his body had been taken away. What's more, he gave them his own example to follow, the example of one who looked in and believed without seeing the risen Lord.

The opening paragraph of John 20 tells of Mary's early morning visit to the tomb. Other women went with her according to the Synoptic Gospels, but John only mentions Mary because he wants to sandwich the story of Peter and John at

the tomb (vv. 3-9) between the story of Mary at the tomb part one (vv. 1, 2) and Mary at the tomb part two (vv. 10-18). Telling the stories this way highlights the faith statement of the other disciple found in verse 8. Peter saw the empty tomb and didn't know what to make of it. Mary saw the empty tomb and presumed that the Lord's body had been removed by his enemies; only after seeing the risen Lord did she believe. John on the other hand saw the evidence of the burial clothes and believed without seeing the risen Lord.

Mary got to the tomb early in the morning; so early it was still dark. She may have arrived before the other women. If she did, she would have been the first to see the open tomb. Presuming that the body of Jesus had been moved, she then ran to tell Peter and John. The other women would have arrived later, entered the tomb, and been told by the angels that Jesus had risen. If she arrived with the women, she saw the open tomb at the same time they did. Then based on her presumption she ran to tell Peter and John. The other women then entered the tomb and were told by the angels that Jesus had risen. What's important is that she believed his body had been moved; she did not believe that he had risen.

Upon hearing from Mary, Peter and John run to the tomb. By this time they can see plainly that the tomb is open. What's more, they can see plainly that it's empty except for Jesus' burial clothes. John gets to the tomb first, looks in and sees the strips of linen. As he contemplates what he sees, Peter arrives, goes in, and looks closely at the strips of linen and the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. On one hand, he doesn't know what to make of the evidence. On the other hand, when John goes in, he sees clearly that Jesus' body has not been taken away; Jesus has risen from the dead. (For possible chronological sequence of events associated with the resurrection see J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 495-98).

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

Look into the empty tomb and see that it isn't empty because Jesus' body has been taken away, but because he has risen from the dead.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.

Put what the empty tomb means for Christian theology in your own words.

Put what the empty tomb means for you in your own words.

Put what the empty tomb means for the world in your own words.

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **still dark** "All the Gospels indicate it was about dawn, but Mark 16:2 notes that the sun had risen. Yet John states that it was still dark (*proi skotias*). Both Gospels, however, use the term *proi*, 'early,' and 'dark' is a relative term. Also Mark's 'very early' suggests that that sunrise had barely occurred. More important, the reader should remember that time and temperature reading in John are also theologically oriented statements (cf. 3:2; 10:23; 13:30). It was indeed early morning when Mary Magdalene saw a sign of the resurrection—the removed stone—but she was still in the dark concerning its significance" (Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, NAC, 290, 91).

v. 1 **Mary Magdalene** "The name 'Mary Magdalene' refers to Mary who came from the Galilean village of Magdala (located north of Tiberias on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee). She appears in John for the first time at the cross (19:25) and enjoys this lengthy and important episode on Easter Sunday. Elsewhere in the Gospels she is mentioned in Luke 8:1-3 among a list of women in Galilee who followed Jesus devoutly. Jesus had expelled numerous demons from her and, along with other women, she followed Jesus to Jerusalem to care for his needs (Matt. 27:55) and was even so bold as to stand with him on Golgotha (John 19:25)" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 552).

v. 2 **the other disciple** I.e., the "beloved disciple" is traditionally identified as John the Apostle. "From the other Gospels we know that Peter, James and John formed a trio (and that they were singled out as especially close to Jesus). As James was martyred early (Acts 12:2), this leaves John. This may be supported by the curious fact that John is not mentioned by name anywhere in this Gospel" (see Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, 10ff.; cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 3, 4).

v. 2 **they** "Likely refers to the temple authorities (cf. chs. 18-19), Jesus' opponents who now (possibly) have done something further to him" (Burge, 553). "Her second statement indicates that the early Christians had no sense that the tomb would have been empty. The contemporary thought that they could create a resurrection hoax or experience a joint encounter with some mystical Christ as some have suggested is absurd, given the defeatism that enveloped Jesus' followers after they realized Jesus was truly dead. The only possibility that crossed Mary's mind was that the body must have been stolen in clear violation of Jewish burial integrity and of Roman practice" (Borchert, 291, 92).

v. 4 **tomb** "The type of tomb described in the Gospels for Jesus was typically characterized by the following elements: (1) A rolling stone. The door of the tomb was a heavy, wheel-shaped stone anywhere from four to six feet tall which was placed in a shallow trough and held upright by a short wall on either side of the tomb opening . . . (2) A burial chamber. Upon entering the tomb, one entered a square preparation room, encircled by a stone bench running along the room's perimeter. Here the body was laid and prepared for burial. When the Synoptics say that 'Jesus was laid in his own new tomb' (Matt. 27:60), they refer to this bench. (3) Burial niches (or *kokhim*). The prepared body was then slipped into a small, six-foot tunnel (height about 24 inches) that was carved in the wall, usually above the bench (or in another chamber where these niches would be cut. Here the body rested until it decomposed. (4) Bone boxes (or ossuaries). After decomposition, the bones would be gathered into a decorated limestone 'bone box' and kept on the tomb floor. When John notes that Jesus is placed in a 'new' tomb, this means that there are no ossuaries and no used burial niches. He is the first laid in a newly cut *kokh*" (Burge, 536; see also Borchert, 283-85).

v. 6 **looked in** "Until his companion caught up with him, the beloved disciple contented himself with peeping into the tomb from outside (which is what is meant by the verb *parakupto* used here). He could see the grave clothes lying unoccupied, which suggested that it was not just a simple removal of the body that was involved" (Bruce, 385 italics added). By this time it was light enough for him to see what Mary could not see earlier.

v. 6 **strips of linen** "In the first century, bodies were prepared for burial by wrapping them tightly with cloth and spices . . . At Herod the Great's death, hundreds of servant carried spices (Josephus, *Ant.* 17:9.8 [199]), and when Gamaliel the Elder died in the first century, eighty pounds of spices were burned. Such spices are a signal of Jesus' honor" (Burge, 535, 36).

v. 7 **burial cloth** A cloth (*soudarion*, lit., "sweat-rag" [cf. Lk 19:20; Ac 19:12]) . . . Small cloths like this were wrapped under the chin and tied on the top of the head of the corpse to keep the mouth from falling open. Lazarus came out of the tomb with one around his face (Jn 11:44) (554).

v. 8 **believed** Peter and John reacted differently to the physical evidence in the tomb. "Peter must have been thinking, 'Why would a grave robber have left the clothes in this order? Why take the body of Jesus?' But John perceived that the missing body and the position of the grave clothes was not due to a robbery. He realized that Jesus had risen from the dead and had gone through the grave clothes" (Edwin A. Blum, "John" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 342; cf. Lk 24:12).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I recently heard an amazing speaker discuss creative family discipleship moments that were very encouraging. I'll be the first one to tell you that I'm not a crafty parent. When I think of creative discipleship, I start to sweat because I know there's a trip to the craft store in my future. I don't really love glitter or paint or anything that requires a lot of clean up, and I get overwhelmed with the supplies that go into crafts. Unfortunately, I often quit before I start because, well, it's intimidating. The beauty of this speaker's creative discipleship was that she used things around the house. Around the house means time spent with my kids, glorifying God without a run to the craft store with a supply list a mile long. It means simplicity and fun and discipleship! As parents, you are called by God to be the primary teacher of his Word. Easter is fast approaching and the perfect time to share God's truth with your kids. Using things around the house we can create empty tomb cookies or resurrection rolls or go on an Easter scavenger hunt highlighting the gospel. We can demonstrate washing each other's feet as Jesus did (John 13) or finding the folded cloth as the disciples did in John 20, which means your kids have to fold the towels. This Easter, I pray you have moments of discipleship with your kids that glorify God and result in beautiful family memories.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read John 20:1-9

1. What happened to the stone guarding Jesus' tomb?
2. What did Mary think happened to Jesus?
3. Describe how the disciple found the linen and the burial cloth.

What Do You Think

What do you think the "other disciple" believed (verse 9)?

What R U Going To Do

With your parent's help, make Empty Tomb cookies or resurrection rolls (recipe can be found online). Discuss what each ingredient represents and its importance.

Core Comp

Hope – I can cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:6 – *He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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