

Explore the Bible: April 9

I have Seen Him • John 20:1-18

By Clay Anthony



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No, we were not eyewitnesses. We must take God at His word that the story of Easter is true. Through faith we read the story from Scripture and believe. Our homes and churches have affirmed this story is true through the witness of loved ones.

An amazing facet of our faith story is how it began in the first place. It involves a borrowed tomb that some thought was the wrong tomb. Then there is a body that has gone missing, along with an overlooked issue of a sentry of soldiers that for some reason are absent from their post.

We read in Scripture that chaos and confusion is running rampant among all the “players” on the scene of this first Easter morning.

The confusion gives way to a good deal of examination (vv. 1-10). The early hours of the morning give a group of women cover to go and attend to the hastily buried body of Jesus. They had seen the horror of the past Friday and know well that Jesus is indeed dead and know the location of His burial spot.

We are told that Mary first notices that the two-ton burial stone has been removed and the soldiers have left. Would you not want to know why? At this time, she has not fully understood all that Jesus had promised.

A brief conversation with two angels has not calmed her grief (v. 12). Only an encounter with the risen Lord changes her perception from shocked mourner to vocal witness. She quickly relays the news to disciples Peter and John who in turn begin their own investigation.

Keep in mind that in Jewish culture of the time, the word of a woman could not be used in a court of law. The word of two or more men would be needed (see Deut. 19) to give credibility to this wild claim of a resurrected Jesus.

Imagine being called into court to explain what you saw that first Easter Sunday. You would be required to give more info than a simple, "Yes, I saw what happened." The court would require details from you.

If you are going to prove believable, the better picture you paint, the more facts you point to, then the more people will be led to believe you. The testimony that these two men give is quite detailed (vv. 5-8).

I imagine that while standing in that empty cave the words of Mary are replaying in the ears of these two men: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Who took Him? Why would they? Where is He? Such questions would have dumbfounded Jesus' followers.

All examinations and questions come to a screeching halt in the next moment. Seeing a dead man come back to life has that effect on people. The last time Mary sees Jesus, He is being wrapped up for burial. This is after she has witnessed His death on the cross.

She is beyond heart broken. Now we are told that she's seeing Jesus once more – but not in grave clothes or hanging from a cross. Having defeated Mary's greatest enemy, Jesus now stands victorious.

If you read through the New Testament, there are many instances of people falling before Jesus (Mark 5; Luke 5; John 11). This is a sign of adoration and worship. Mary falls before Jesus and grasps Him tightly around the legs. This is what is meant by, "to cling." She is holding on to Jesus in such a manner that He must tell her to let Him go.

John has a good reason to include this tidbit of information. Jesus is not some ghostly, untouchable form. No, He had really and bodily returned in the flesh. To read this scene in modern English would sound more like: "Mary, turn Me loose. I must go home. Go tell my disciples I'm going home but I will see them first."

In the end there is no doubt that Mary sees, talks with, and touches Jesus. Whether her words are legally binding or not is for another day. This lady is convinced. We must be as well. Jesus is alive!

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