

Post Easter Bible Study: John 20 & 21: Good news for prisoners—even for prisoners who’ve locked ourselves in and those of us who’ve fled and gone fishing.
April 2024.

Before we read: John is different. John’s Jesus is different. John’s resurrected Jesus is different. For ex: The Holy Spirit can’t wait for Pentecost. [We’ll talk as we go along]

John 20: Two Stories: Both stories open with the disciples and continue with one character [Mary Magdalene in the 1st/Thomas in the 2nd].

Women are the brave ones [even if they are terrified: Mark 16] [20:2 ‘We’] Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb in the dark. [20:1]. They’ve taken...

The race from and to the tomb: How/Why Peter & the beloved disciple [20:2-5]

Jesus as ‘tidy man’ & Belief: The difficulty with 20:8 & 9: Who believed and who didn’t? By the way: Where is Mary during and after the race? **And then, home(s) again!**

Mary Magdalene at the tomb: ‘Why are you Weeping?’ [Twice: 13 & 15] Plus: 2 turns (vs. 14 & 16) but the verb tenses are different.

The Gardener [15]: Called by name then ‘Paββουvi!’ [16] [B.T.W. see note in your New Testaments: It’s not Hebrew-pace John-it’s Aramaic] We could tell a few stories about the tomb and the gardener and lots of trees turned into commentaries.

Resurrected Jesus in John: Don’t keep clinging Present Imperative: με μου αππού!! [17] [lots more interpretations- yikes! — ‘Don’t touch’?]

Ascension! “I am ascending.” John’s ‘Timetable’ Look at Synoptics] John isn’t Luke but...
I Cor. 15: The earliest post crucifixion/resurrection account. [NB the difficulty The synoptics-it’s ‘Acts’ and the church’s long-term requirements.]

Commission: The First Apostle: ‘Go...Tell...’. [17] “Mary Magdalene comes announcing...” [αγγέλλουσα!] [18] [See Romans 16.]

We've locked ourselves up: see Mark 16-- They were afraid.

Peter and the beloved disciple ('the disciples) disappear ('to their...') until Mary 'preaches' to them (they are part of the crowd of disciples). [18]

Jesus comes into a fearful crowd in the evening: Shalom! [Εἰρήνη

ὑμῖν!]. [19] Peace is the first word—not judgement 'not no how': I know what my first word would have been. Jesus would be the lynch pin of the next verses. After show [20] (wounds) and tell (again Peace!) [21] it's:

Commissioning: Disciples become apostles: Breath! [22]: Receive (the) Holy Spirit [John's 'Holy Spirit' isn't flames and tongues (Acts 2): It's power to forgive.]

Pentecost [22-23] in the lock up: It's the gift of forgiveness for all— after all, if Jesus forgives these jerks, he'll forgive you and me too. [1

Cor 15: 21ff] Now, if you thought there was a lot of squabbling on "Don't Touch," take a look (a very long look) at the conversations re: forgiveness and who's in charge: Who gets to forgive and 'not'? We'll talk. [Again: John's 'timetable' is different—life abundant (John 10:10). Peterson's take on 20:23: --Sins are held or retained- 'κεκρατηνται' but then, Peterson asks: What are you going to do with the sins you've retained?

The Thomas story in 5 verses:

[24] Thomas—during the commissioning—has been out and about (Mary Magdalene's fellow adventurer? No wonder he ended up in India and MM has been everywhere.).

[25] Quest for certainty: seeing and feeling is believing.

[26] Jesus returns to the locked room: Peace again! Thomas gets his wish. [27]

[Oh, oh: more controversy: why does Thomas get to touch—even place his hand in-Jesus side and Mary was told 'hands off.' Do we really want to 'go' there? Well, 'going there,' lots of scholars have gone on to storied careers.]. But most important the 2nd moment -- not just T's confession [28]

The last Beatitude [29]: Blessed are those who don't see: John and seeing.

Reflect on John's use of 'seeing' throughout his Gospel from 'Come and See!' (1:39ff)

Again, it's the blind who 'see' (9:41) and the Greeks who 'would see Jesus' (12:21). And it's Jesus who bursts into tears after he asks the mourners where they had laid Lazarus (their answer: 'Come and See') (11:34-35). Here, the blessing is liberating for all of us blind ones who've loved darkness more than light. It's Shalom for sure.

The end: 'These things are written so that you...may have life in the name of him.' [31]

Next week it's renegade apostles: "I'm going (back to) fishing!" John 21-and we'll spend time with Luke 24—disciples running way away and Jesus—the nudge! –goes undercover to recover and there's breakfast on the beach!

