

Lord and God

Introduction

John 20vs1-31 is made up of four encounters between Jesus' disciples and the fact of His resurrection. In the first, Mary Magdalene, noting that the stone has been removed, runs to Peter and the beloved disciple with the news. On their arrival at the tomb, they 'see' the strips of linen and the burial cloth and we are told that the beloved disciple "saw and believed" - an experience which John (probably the beloved disciple) then qualifies with reference to their failure to understand Jesus' resurrection in the light of Scripture. Mary who has remained behind then encounters the risen Lord, though again, she fails to understand at first that it is He. She is instructed to bear witness to the resurrection and to Jesus' impending return to the Father in fulfilment of what He had said to them. That evening Jesus appears to the disciples and commissions them to be His Spirit empowered representatives. Finally, Thomas encounters Jesus and the 'seeing is believing' principle, while upheld in Thomas' case, makes way for a declaration of the blessedness of those who believe, not by seeing, but through the testimony of those who have seen. Thus while Thomas' declaration that Jesus is Lord and God, should be echoed by every true disciple, the path to that faith and the life it brings is very different from that of the early witnesses to Jesus' signs.

Study Questions

These questions help you to see clearly what the text is saying. This is a vital first step towards understanding what the text means. The questions should be answered from the text itself.

Read John 20vs1-31. Answer the following questions:

1. What did Peter and the beloved disciple see when they reached the tomb? What effect did it have upon them?

2. According to John, why did they have to see in order to believe?

3. Why did Jesus not permit Mary to hold on to Him? What did He mean by these words? (*Hint* Look at how Jesus describes God in John 20vs17)

4. What does Mary say to the disciples on her return from the tomb? (John 20vs18) How does this compare with what the disciples later say to Thomas? (John 20vs25)

5. What commission does the risen Lord give to His disciples? What provision does He make for them?

6. What does Thomas demand in order to believe? What does Jesus command him to do? (*Hint: Note the key word*)

Think it Through

How does John's purpose statement in John 20vs30-31 tie in with what John 20 as a whole is saying?