

5157U

FLORIDA BIBLE SCHOOL -1993

THE GARDEN OF GOD

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Study 4: Resurrection Morning

Reading: John 20

Good morning my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord. Good morning! Hopefully by Friday I'll be able to hear you a lot louder on that!

We'll just take a summary! Apparently, I'm not too good at hiding myself, so what I'll do is I'll hide myself down here, can you see better? Okay, we'll take then a summary of what we did yesterday. We noticed that the first Adam was given the choice of the way of life or the way of death and, of course, he chose death and so in Adam all die! We noticed too, that we've all inherited his nature and not his sin, and there's a vast difference between inheriting Adam's sin and his nature. This is verified by the very first genealogy which we looked at in Genesis 5, when we noticed that in that chapter, 8 times we are told, '**and he died**'. This is also verified by the flood, everything that had the breath of life, not only man but birds and beasts died in the flood, because 'it repented the LORD that He had made man upon the earth'. All through the Old Testament God sent His prophets to point us in the direction of the way of life, back to the garden of God, back to the tree of life. Then finally, God sent His Son who taught and showed and found the way back to the tree of life. The way required a battle against sin in the flesh, and the battle was fought and won in the flesh of Jesus Christ when He submitted His will, that is, the will of the flesh to the will of the Father. All this happened in the garden of agony, and with your patience and God's grace today, we will look afresh at the garden of ecstasy!

Now the reading we did this morning, was taken from a gospel parallel; I realize that any gospel parallel that is presented by any particular brother is not always accurate, they're very difficult studies to do, there will always be little discrepancies but this is a study I enjoyed doing and I'm sure you'll have your own particular ideas and concepts in terms of the sequence of events, as we study this morning together. I want you to try and use your imagination that God has blessed you with, as I share these words with you.

It was early in the morning and dawn was breaking over the city of Jerusalem. It was early spring and trees that had once been withered by the icy grip of winter, were not

beginning to pulsate with new life. We can picture it as the first shaft of light pierced through the eastern sky and the cold night was now broken by the song of birds awakening from sleep. Trees and shrubs and flowers kissed by the early morning dew were bursting with new life. As we look down upon the scene we can imagine these sleeping clouds which still hug the Judaeian hills; it's still quite dark and we notice three cloaked figures entering into a garden. Not any garden, it was a special garden! It was the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, and behind them in a sense one can just see the first touches of light kissing the walls of Jerusalem near by. The apostle John tells us in chapter 19 verse 41, 'Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never yet man laid. There they laid the body of Jesus'.

Now it was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome who had prepared these spices that they might anoint the body of Jesus. But when they arrived at the tomb they had this great problem of how they would get to the body of Jesus, because before the tomb there was this great stone that was rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb. As they questioned with each other how they would remove this great stone, it was a mission of impossibility! humanly impossible! How would these women move it? and as they questioned with each other who would remove the stone, there was an earthquake. It wasn't just a small earth tremor, Matthew 28 verse 2 tells us it was a **great earthquake**; no doubt, still shaken from what had just happened, the 3 women gain their composure and they look again and they see an angel of the LORD descending from heaven and sitting on the stone; as if the angel was sitting on the stone and saying to them, 'after you, you may enter'.

Matthew 28 verse 3 tells us that the angel's countenance was like lightning and his raiment as white as snow'. That description of the angel is, 'countenance like lightning', seems to carry with it, this idea of speed, something that happened with great speed, so much so that the soldiers that were placed on guard did quake and became as dead men, the record tells us. So with the guards indisposed, as it were, on the ground lying in kind of a huddle, and the dazzling white angel sitting on the stone, the women enter into the tomb. Now Mark tells us that the tomb was hewn out of **a rock**; Matthew is very careful to tell us that the tomb was hewn out of **the rock**, we recall that many, many years before that it was Moses that entered into **the rock** to see and behold the glory of the LORD, and the LORD passed before Moses and proclaimed, THE LORD, THE LORD GOD, merciful, gracious, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin', and through our brother Don this morning we have looked at those characteristics that belonged to God; that God loves mercy, He loves grace. Here we see the glory of the LORD now seen in the resurrection of Jesus; **all His mercy, all His grace, all His longsuffering, all His forgiveness, all these are bound up in the empty tomb**, and in the face of the resurrected Christ.

The world had waited 4,000 long and dreary years for this moment in time. This new day, this brand new day, this first day of a new week, nay, not the first day of a new

week, the first day of a new creation. Astonished and bewildered, perplexed and frightened, their eyes searched the darkness of the tomb, for the body of Jesus; and suddenly in the darkness they see two men, standing, arrayed in dazzling apparel as their eyes grow accustomed to the darkness. They are frightened and they fall to their knees with their faces to the ground, they hear the voices of the men, 'why seek ye the living amongst the dead, He is not here, He is risen!' No doubt, rubbing their eyes and still a little confused about what is happening in the tomb, they look again, and they don't see two men now, they see one, not standing but now **sitting**, not in dazzling apparel but now arrayed in a white robe. Of course, that illusion, that illusion is not unusual if we look at the circumstances; just think of the transfiguration, and when they looked they saw three and afterwards they saw just one **standing**.

The angel speaks calmly to the frightened women and he says, 'Be not amazed, you seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him' (Mark 16:6). Don't you remember that when He spoke to you while He was yet in Galilee and how He said that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and **on the third day be raised again?**' They had witnessed the death of Jesus and all of a sudden they realize that this was the third day, this was the day that He would rise again. So the young man says to the women, 'Go quickly and tell His disciples and Peter (remember that Peter still had to be restored, Peter still had to have that private meeting with the Lord Jesus, when the Lord would restore him to full fellowship because at the last he had never spoken of his Master, he had denied his Lord). 'Go and tell His disciples and Peter, He is risen from the dead and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee, there ye shall see Him. Lo, I have told you; and at this they fled the tomb and they were astonished at what they had seen and heard. They trembled with excitement as they went and spoke to no one on the way; because they were afraid'.

With the angel's words reverberating in their minds, they meet the apostles and other disciples and they tell them everything that they'd heard and seen, but the record tells us 'that their words appeared in their sight as idle talk and they believed him not'. Frightening! How often has not the Word of God been transported in the mouth, in the gentle words of a loving sister and because we as brethren and because of the hardness of our hearts and because we are insensitive to the way they speak, we believe them not? It was true of the apostle!

It seems that at this point in time that Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb. I take you now to John 20, perhaps it was because the apostles had **refused** to believe, perhaps it was because after not eating and not sleeping for those 3 days, she might have doubted her own sanity, perhaps she only thought it was a vision and she wanted to go back to the tomb and see once again. Bearing the agony of her Master at the cross until the last breath of life came from Him; those last three sleepless nights would have been very difficult for her to deal with. So she returns and I'm reading from the AV, John 20 verse 1, 'On the first day of the week comes Mary Magdalene early while it was yet dark unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb' (notice here that the

stone is away from the tomb), this is the **second time** she's at the tomb. Notice this time that Mary Magdalene is **by herself**, she's not with the other women and notice that it is still dark, so it seems that the apostles were very near by, perhaps in Jerusalem. Now Mary, convinced that her previous experience at the tomb was not simply a vision or perhaps a figment of her imagination, she now returns to the apostles, but this time she is not going to speak to all the apostles, she's going to speak only to the apostles with whom she can confide, who she believes will give her a fair hearing, and she's going to speak to Peter and John.

So verse 2 of John 20, 'She runneth therefore and cometh to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said unto them, (no doubt with tears of confusion and anguish still running down her cheeks) They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we know not whence they have laid Him! Verse 3, 'Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and they went towards the tomb'. (Here's impetuous Peter again, notice that! he's the first one, no doubt, John following) and they ran both of them together and the other disciple did outrun Peter (there's John what a wonderful record that is, and he came first to the tomb. But John's too scared maybe, I don't know why, but again impetuous Peter notice) and stooping and looking in he seeth the linen clothes and yet he entered not in; then cometh Simon Peter following him and went into the tomb and what did he see? He saw linen clothes lying and the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore, the other disciple also which came first to the tomb and he saw and believed. For as yet **they knew not the scripture**' (how many times had they been taught? how many times do we have to be told, b&s) 'for as yet, even now at this point, for as yet, they knew not the scripture that He would rise from the dead. So the disciples went away unto their own home'.

So notice that John was the first one to the tomb, but Peter the **bold**, Peter the **brave**, enters into **the rock** and what did he see? He saw the grave clothes lying; the face napkin rolled up by itself, in a place by itself. There's a picture here, b&s, I don't know what this picture is, I just want to paint it for you and I don't know what it means and I'm hoping that collectively we might look at this picture and see what the meaning is here. We've got the grave bands, the grave clothes here and we're told that the napkin which was about His head, which is a face napkin (it's a little square piece of cloth that was placed over the face and then they would take these grave bands and wrap them around the body. If you need any verification for this, you can go back to the raising of Lazarus and you will see that in John 11, it's the same idea, this little square cloth which was the face napkin and then bound around). Now we're told here that the bands and the face napkin were lying separate, I don't know why! why? and the face napkin **rolled up**, (and if you looked at a face napkin, something that was a face napkin, rolled up, what would you look at, what would you be seeing?) a scroll? that it covered the face of Jesus? 'For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the **face** of Jesus Christ'- 2 Corinthians 4 verse 6. Whether we can develop that theme or not, I don't know, but whether we can or whether we can't, but all we do know that the Christian

hope, everything that we believe, everything that we are, everything that we've ever been is centred here in this empty tomb, this tomb that was empty. Even the enemies of Jesus admitted that this tomb was empty, that they couldn't explain where the body went, go and tell the people that the disciples have come and stolen away the body; even the enemies of Jesus knew that there was something that they could not explain. Even at this point in time, neither Peter nor John understood that Jesus must rise from the dead; although John believed he did not understand.

So the disciples leave, but Mary's there, she had followed them, and Mary stood without the tomb weeping. Mary Magdalene out of whom was cast 7 demons; that's the way she is introduced to us in the gospels. One wonders in what state the Lord Jesus Christ had found Mary? the casting out of seven demons was the customary way of saying, in effect, that she had been cured of an incredibly severe mental illness. But whatever way Jesus found her in, one thing we can be absolutely sure about, is that she was never the same again. From that point in her life, from the time that Jesus had healed her, from that point she learned to love the Lord Jesus, and her affection for Jesus deepened into devotion of the loveliest kind. This lonely woman from Magdala, a sister with a capacity to love and care for others, she was a sister of whom it was recorded, 'ministered unto the Lord of her substance'; it's very easy to minister unto brethren and sisters with words, Mary Magdalene ministered unto the Lord **of her substance**. She was always there for others but now she stands alone weeping outside the tomb, she was there for Jesus on that last memorable journey from Galilee down to Jerusalem, and she together with a few other faithful women trod with Him that dusty path, tending to His needs and observing with deep concern His weary and exhausted frame, as that time for His supreme sacrifice drew near. Not only that, b&s, she was there when the other apostles and other disciples had fled, she was there at the foot of the cross, that crude stake onto which the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed. As He suffered the agonies of bodily pain and suffocation, because that's what crucifixion was all about, **dying by suffocation**. This tireless woman, no doubt weeping, was still there ministering unto her Lord and offering the Son of God the kind of comfort that only a woman can give.

Magdala, Magdala means 'tower' (3093), Magdala means 'greatness', and one wonders if she wasn't just that! a tower of strength in times of trouble? But now, that tower of strength seems to crumble, and alone she sobs in the garden; the walls of Jerusalem now are being bathed by the early morning sun, the Judean valleys begin to shed their blankets as the mist rises. Many things had happened over the past 3 days, and to be sure, Mary Magdalene went in confusion; although the vision of angels may have gladdened her heart, unbelief, the unbelief of the apostles had caused her to doubt, and grief started creeping back into her heart and she began to think that maybe she had only imagined a vision. So hope turned to despair! Three days of mourning for those who had lost a loved one, we spoke about it yesterday; you **cannot eat**, three days of mourning without food, without sleep, with little desire for anything, had caused her now to be heavy indeed, but yet how true the promise that God will lay no more upon His children, than that they are able to bear, but will with the temptation, provide a way of escape.

Notice what happens next, John 20 verse 11, 'But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping. As she wept she stooped down and she looked into the tomb, and beholdeth two angels sitting one at the head and one at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain'. She is in the Holy of Holies because before her she sees **a perfect pattern of the ark**; the mercy seat with one cherub and another cherub looking down; these aren't cherubim, these are angels, but the pattern is identical. Looking at where the body of Jesus had lain, the veil had been rent from top to bottom and the way into the holy of holies was now made manifest. She is in **the rock** but she is in the Holy of Holies, a perfect pattern of the mercy seat, with the two cherubim looking down with expectancy and anticipation.

Verse 13, 'And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him! Verse 14, 'When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and peering from the tomb up into the early morning light, she saw Jesus standing. She **knew Him not** (she didn't know it was Jesus, verse 15) Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? and she supposing Him to be the gardener, said unto Him, Sir, if Thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away'. Then perhaps because of her watery, tearful vision, or perhaps because of the bright morning light coming through the entrance of the tomb, she failed to recognize her Lord and Master; but whatever the reason, those echoes those illusions from the garden of Eden should not be lost; the LORD God planted the garden eastward in Eden. The LORD God was the first gardener, the first Adam was the second gardener, he was commanded to dress and keep the garden. Is it any wonder that we have this little word tucked away here, 'she supposing Him to be the gardener'; here we have a picture of paradise, a man and a woman together before their God, bathed in the early morning yellow light in the midst of the tranquillity of a garden. But now comes the time when God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more sorrow, there will be no more crying, there will be no more pain.

Not a long explanation, not a long exposition, not even a sentence, but a single word! a single word perhaps wouldn't have meant much to you or me, but it meant everything to Mary. It wasn't only what He said, I believe, but how He said it, verse 16, 'Then Jesus said unto her, **Mary!** and as Jesus breathed out her name, she **immediately** recognized Him, and she turned unto Him and said unto Him, (in Hebrew the RV tells us) **Rabboni**, which is to say, My Master'. So true to His word **He calleth His sheep by name**; He leadeth them out and the sheep follow Him, for they **know** His voice. Now there's a little suggestion here in the RV that she spoke to Him in the Hebrew tongue, there is also a suggestion that when the Lord Jesus appeared to the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, that He spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue; if this can be sustained, if this idea can be sustained it would strongly suggest that the language, the pure language of the kingdom will be Hebrew. Be that as it may, I think the important point to notice here, that if she spoke to Him in the Hebrew tongue, it would suggest too, that she knew her scriptures pretty well, because the Hebrew scriptures were

written in that particular language. It would suggest that she was learned!

So another little tapestry begins to emerge out of this verse, that is, the prophetic picture of the second Adam and the second Eve, surrounded by the tranquillity of Eden restored. There's another side of the coin that needs to be looked at here, Jesus **calls her** and it's not as if she knew Jesus, but **whether He knew her!** Of course, there's that little picture there that we find in the gospels, 'I never knew you', so obviously Jesus knew her and revealed Himself to her. The second Eve, the collective bride of Christ which we are as brethren and sisters in Christ, once possessed by 7 demons, now redeemed by our Lord's love and supreme sacrifice. As we try to freeze this picture of glory of this man and this woman in this garden of God, let us briefly consider for a moment, the thoughts of the Lord Jesus as He emerged from death!

I bring you to Psalm 16, that great resurrectional psalm of David quote by Peter on the day of Pentecost. Psalm 16 and there are some very beautiful little patterns that emerge, and I'm going to suggest to you that perhaps these are the thoughts; quite often we find in the psalms the thoughts of our Lord Jesus during His life, during His ministry, in His death and in His resurrection. Verse 8, 'I had set the LORD always before Me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope, for Thou shalt not suffer Thy holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy: in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore'. Just going back to verse 8 again, in the Acts the way Peter uses this, for he says, 'For I have set the Lord always before my face, because He is at my right hand', think about that for a moment! how can that be? 'I have set Yahweh, I, Jesus, have set Yahweh always before Me', so Jesus is face to face with Yahweh His Father. 'Before My face', in the Acts that's what you'll find, 'because He's at my right hand'; well, how can He be at my right hand if He's facing me? Well, He'd have to be to the right of where I am, so that I'm at His right hand and He's at my right hand; I wonder if that's where the apostle Paul got the idea of the right hand of fellowship? there's certainly a picture here of that relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father. 'Thou wilt not suffer thy holy One to see corruption', and the RV margin gives that as 'My beloved', 'I will not suffer My beloved to see corruption', and you remember that Lazarus was dead for four days; behold, his body stinketh, he'd already started the process of corruption, but the Lord in three days never saw corruption.

Psalm 16 verse 11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore', so in this fleeting picture, and as it's frozen for a moment we see Jesus who is still to ascend to the Father, He's not going to remain with Mary because it is only when He ascends to the Father, when He's in heaven, when He's in God's presence according to verse 11 here, that He will experience **the fullness of joy**, because only at God's right hand would there be pleasures for evermore.

Just move to Psalm 22, that great prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus and, of course,

there's that great parallel that we always need to teach our Sunday School, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 is a portrait of the Lord Jesus seen from where our prospective is, we are looking at the cross of the Lord Jesus, and 'we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'. But here

in Psalm 22 we see a picture of the Lord on the cross looking down at His surroundings. 'The dogs have compassed Me, they have pierced My hands', we want not to focus on the crucifixion, we want yet to focus on the resurrection, the thoughts of the Lord Jesus as He emerges from the tomb.

Verse 22 of Psalm 22, 'I will declare thy name, (I will declare Yahweh's name) unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee', notice here that Jesus will declare the name of His Father to His brethren, not His own name, there's no co-equality, co-eternity in these words of the resurrected Jesus; I'm going to declare Thy name unto **My brethren**. Isn't that wonderful? I wonder whether it's just by chance that the brethren and sisters of this dispensation are called **brethren of Christ?** Christadelphians! Hebrew- Ackim Bacashea? brethren! Verse 25, 'My praise shall be of Thee, in the great congregations I will pay my vows before them that fear Him. Verse 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek after Him: your heart shall live for ever'. So we see in Mary this microscopic picture of the multitudinous bride of Christ, the great multitude which no man can number, from every nation and kindred and tongue and verse 27, 'All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindred of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and He is the Ruler over the nations'. Verse 30, '**A seed** shall serve Him (that is Yahweh, I'm reading from the RV) It shall be accounted to the Lord (that's Adonai, that's Jesus) it shall be accounted unto Jesus for His generation (here's a specific prophecy of those of Jesus day and generation that were to be redeemed). Verse 31, 'They (that is those brethren and sisters of the first century, the apostles and disciples of that time, they are the ones spoken of here in verse 31) 'They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness' (whose righteousness? this is the righteousness of Christ; the apostles and disciples of the first century are going to come and declare the righteousness of the Lord Jesus) 'unto a people that shall be born' (all the brethren and sisters that came into the covenants of promise from that time forward, even unto us, until a people that shall be born) 'that He (the Lord Jesus) has done it'. Indeed, **He had done it**, He had cried with a loud voice, It is finished! He had conquered sin in the flesh. Herein lies the victory! herein lies the ecstasy of this garden, and now we need to return to John and to unfreeze the picture of the Lord and Mary standing in a picture in a garden of paradise restored.

John 20 verse 17, and Jesus knowing that He was still to ascend to the Father, He says to Mary, 'Jesus said unto her, Touch Me not', the RSV says 'do not hold onto Me', Weymouth says, 'do not cling to Me', the Septuagint says, 'do not cleave to Me', 'do not hold onto Me for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go to my brethren (catch those words from Psalm 22) go unto My brethren, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren) 'and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God , and to your God'. Here this tender loving Shepherd cares for the feelings and

emotions of Mary; He has work to do after His ascension. He is to ascend to the Father on high, His name is to be no longer called 'Ben-owniy'(1126) (the son of my sorrow in the garden of agony), His name is now to be changed to 'Ben-yamiyn'(1144) the son of my right hand, He is now to ascend to the Father. So, obedient to the end with the morning sun still lining her hair, she turns with **joy in her heart**, and she leaves this garden of ecstasy to report all that had happened to His brethren!