09 Aug 2026 : Archie Falisi : Christ’s Resurrection, Ascension, and the Feast of Firstfruits

2026-08-09 13:03:20

00:00:00 Speaker 1
A very warm welcome to everyone here at the Chapel of the Open Book. We are the Berean Publishing Trust. Welcome everyone here at the Chapel, and also welcome to everyone on Zoom land. Thank you, everyone, for taking the time and effort to be with us for the Sunday Berean Bible study on the ninth day of August, 2026. Today we will continue our study series on the Ascension of Christ, and as you know, we’ve been looking at the various different Hebrew and Greek words which describe what it means to descend and to ascend. Today we’ll be going into the New Testament. We’re going to look at two Greek words: “soteo,” which means to seek and seeking to search, to look.

00:00:58 Speaker 1
Anabaino, which means to ascend, and the last reference that we have of this word in the Gospel of John, and that’s where we have been now for the last few weeks. The last reference is in John chapter twenty, verse seventeen, which the Lord mentions to Mary Magdalene during the morning of his resurrection. So we will need to really understand what the Lord is referring to and what he says to Mary Magdalene.

00:01:28 Speaker 1
That early morning of his resurrection in the garden of the burial tomb, and why this was something that the Lord made great emphasis upon to Mary Magdalene that He was going to ascend to the Father, and we will also look at that within its context as well. But we mustn’t get this confused with the Lord’s ascension that took place in Jerusalem, upon the Mount of Olives, where the Lord visibly and publicly descended from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem to his return journey back to heaven. That was witnessed by the disciples, by certain family members.

00:02:27 Speaker 1
And by other eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Christ, this ascension, which is mentioned in John chapter twenty verse seventeen, which will be part of our reading once we get into the New Testament, this ascension is a private, secret ascension. But the question is, why was it necessary for the Lord to ascend in a

private, secretive way to the Father? What was the importance of that? What was the urgency surrounding this ascension? Technically, the Lord ascended to the Father twice. One, while He was in the garden on the morning of His resurrection, and then, obviously, upon the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

00:03:26 Speaker 1
After he remained with his disciples for forty days prior to his ascension to heaven, which is recorded in the book of Acts, chapter one, verse nine to twelve. Today we'll go into Leviticus chapter twenty-three, verse one to twelve. This is really the background and the backdrop to why the Lord tells Mary Magdalene that he will be ascending to the Father. We have a clue in Leviticus 23, verse one to twelve. Then we'll go into Luke chapter two, verse forty to fifty, and then we'll make our way into the Gospel of John, and hopefully we'll have a better understanding, a greater overview regarding this theme and subject.

00:04:23 Speaker 1
If I can ask Michael Gosting to open up in prayer, and then we'll go into Leviticus twenty-three, verse one to twelve, and we'll work our way into the New Testament.

00:04:36 Speaker 2
Michael. My wonderful Heavenly Father, how favoured we are that we can gather around Your Word, with a great knowledge already of what You want, what You have done, what Your plans are. And what blessings await those who rightly divide Your word! Our thanks we give this morning because our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, has indeed accomplished all the Father's will. In this, we rejoice and realise that blessings come to us and will come to us because of that wonderful death, resurrection, and ascension. Bless us as we pursue.

00:05:20 Speaker 2
Our study this morning we ask in the name of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ

00:05:25 Speaker 3
Amen. Thank you, Michael. So we will turn to the book of Leviticus, chapter twenty-three, verses one to twelve. It's a long chapter consisting of forty-four verses, but our main focus will be the first twelve.

00:05:50 Speaker 1
Verses. It's the third book in the Old Testament. The third book written by Moses. The book of Leviticus is specifically written for the Levitical priests. Their duties and their responsibilities, their obligations, and what is really expected from them. So this is very important for the Levitical priests, the chief priest, the high priest. Everything's there for them regarding what their specific duties are. And in Chapter Twenty Three, Leviticus Chapter Twenty Three, verses one to forty-four, which is page one three one in the Chapel Bible, if you have it there before you. If you want

an overview regarding the seven annual feasts, the seven Jewish annual feasts, it's all here in Leviticus Chapter Twenty Three, verses one to forty-four.

00:06:48 Speaker 1
Some of us may be aware of what these Jewish feasts are and what they entail. What is difficult for us as Gentiles to understand, which I think we struggle with, are the Jewish months and the Jewish calendar, the Jewish months, the days, because there are two Jewish calendars. You've got the civil calendar, and then you've got the religious calendar. And sometimes, if you're not aware of what the differences are, you could end up becoming confused as to which month Passover takes place. What month does Pentecost take place? But the main thing is that as we now go into reading Leviticus 23, verse 1 to 12, you've got the weekly.

00:07:45 Speaker 1
Feasts, and you've got the annual feasts. The annual feasts would be Passover, the unleavened bread, the feast of the unleavened bread, which coincides together at the same time. Then you've got the feast of the first fruits, which will be our main focus. You've got followed by that, you've got the feast of Pentecost, which usually takes place 50 days after the Passover feast. Looking at Leviticus 23 verse 1 to 12. Let's get acquainted at least now with these feasts and what the Lord has to say regarding these important feasts. Seven in total. The first four, which I'll quickly mention, occur during the spring season, and the last three occur during the autumn season.

00:08:44 Speaker 1
Beginning at chapter twenty-three, verse one, and the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations. Even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh is the Sabbath rest, the Sabbath of rest.' And holy convocation, you shall do no work therein. It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. So this is the weekly one that they are supposed to keep, which the Jews did. Sabbath after Sabbath, they would work six days, and on one day, which is the Sabbath day, they would rest, recover from their work. Then come the annual feasts, beginning at twenty-three, verse four. These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy.

00:09:41 Speaker 1
Complications which ye shall proclaim in their seasons, and this is important that these annual events happen in their seasons—a specific month, a specific date, during a specific season, whether it'll be spring or autumn. So now we're moving on to the early spring feast. Chapter 23, verse 5, in the 14th day of the first month at even or evening is the Lord's Passover, and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread. Unto the Lord seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein, but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days.

00:10:39 Speaker 1
In the seventh day is a holy convocation. You shall do no civil work therein. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Now we're moving on to another feast, which is the feast of firstfruits. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I gave unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, ye shall bring a fifth of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Sabbath, the priest shall wave it, and ye shall offer that day when ye shall wave the sheaf and a lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering.

00:11:38 Speaker 1
To the Lord. Reading all this at face value, you could be scratching your head, thinking, "I've understood regarding the Passover. I've understood regarding the unleavened bread. But once we get onto this specific one, which is the feast of the first fruits, what is God requesting? And what is it that we have here?" It took a while for me to really understand this myself. I had to read and reread and research. Is this spring feast has to do with the produce of the land? This is a spring feast, and notice that when you come into the land, verse 10. Remember, they're still within the wilderness; they haven't reached the promised land yet. This feast cannot be.

00:12:31 Speaker 1
Put into practice or be put into place until they entered the promised land. We must understand that they could not celebrate this function, this feast, in the wilderness because the wilderness was barren, and nothing was really growing there, and they survived basically on the manna bread that God supplied for them for that forty year journey. But here the Lord is saying, once you enter the land, this is what I expect from you, because God is going to bless the land. The Lord mentions many times to the children of Israel that the land will be abundant with milk and honey, meaning that it will produce much. That the land will produce plentiful for them regarding food, regarding wheat, regarding fruit, vegetables.

00:13:27 Speaker 1
Autumn is gone. Once autumn and winter are gone, and they enter into spring, is that with the spring harvest? Once the crops start to grow and yield their fruits, they would present to the Lord a bundle of grain in stalks, like wheat, in a bundle. It will be given to the high priest, and he will wave it before God, as a symbol of gratitude. That's their way of saying thank you, Lord, that you've blessed this land with much produce. This is the first produce of the land, and we know that you will continue to bless this land because there's more to follow. Hence, you have the autumn harvest, where the land will produce much more crop.

00:14:27 Speaker 1
And wheat, vegetables, and fruit, and this their way of saying, "Yep, winter is gone. Spring is here. The ground is fertile. Things are starting to grow again." And this their way of saying, "Lord, you've blessed this land. This the early signs of growth,

from the ground being dead, not producing anything, to now actually producing wheat crop."

00:14:57 Speaker 1
Barley, all the necessary things which a farmer would need. We know at the moment, because of the droughts which we are experiencing, that farmers are struggling to grow anything from the ground, that the ground is dry. So the farmers today, due to the heat, are really struggling because there hasn't been much rain. But all the Jewish feast, the seven annual Jewish feast, they are prophetic and point to Christ. For example, the Passover feast has to do with the Passover lamb, that points to Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, as mentioned by John the Baptist in John chapter one, verse twenty-nine. The Passover feast points to Christ, his sacrifice, redemption. The unleavened bread.

00:15:56 Speaker 1
Bread without yeast is a symbol of corruption. It represents sin. By eating unleavened bread, it points to Christ and His perfection, that He is sinless and without sin, His righteousness. The best way to understand the Jewish feasts is through the seven ars. The Passover feast represents redemption, the Lord's death, His sacrificial death, the crucifixion and His sacrifice for the sins of the world. The unleavened bread represents His righteousness, bread without leaven.

00:16:54 Speaker 1
Or yeast symbolises sin and corruption, and repeating what we studied last week in John chapter six, verse twenty-two to fifty-nine, the Lord's statement: "I am the bread of life. I am the true bread that came down from heaven." And by representing Himself as the true bread that came down from heaven, they are to feed from Him, they are to feed from His. His body, His blood, is because the Lord is sinless. He is perfect. He is righteous. So the unleavened bread represents the Lord's sinless and righteous character. Then we move on to the first fruits, which we've just read here, and from verse nine to twelve, there are to.

00:17:54 Speaker 1
Produced the first firstfruits, i.e. the sheaf, and that represents the third R, resurrection. Remember what I said about the ground not producing anything during the winter period. It's only in the spring that everything comes alive. That represents the Lord's resurrection, his death and resurrection. Then we have the festival of weeks, which is mentioned later on in this chapter, which is the feast of Pentecost. That has to do with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is mentioned in Acts chapter two, verse one to fourteen. That has to do with renewal, and that has its own topology. It's got its own meaning.

00:18:51 Speaker 1
Which we need not really go into great detail at this precise moment, and just quickly going to the autumn seasons, the autumn feast during the autumn seasons.

You've got the Feast of Trumpets, which is the regathering of the Jewish people coming together, and we know that this will happen during the end of the age, during the Great Tribulation, that the Lord will gather elect from the four corners of the earth at the final trumpet sound. Because we know in Revelation, in the book of Revelation, there are seven trumpet sounds with seven judgments. But at the final trumpet sound, that's when we have the regathering, and also it's connected to the resurrection, the transformation that will take place for the believer.

00:19:47 Speaker 1
Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which has to do with repentance and restoration, will take place when the Lord returns, when the Lord physically returns to the land of Israel, specifically in Jerusalem, and we know that in Zechariah 12 verse 1 to 10, when the Lord does return, within one day they will receive forgiveness, the sin of rejecting their Messiah will be forgiven, and they will be restored to the nation of Israel. Last but not least, we have the Feast of Tabernacles, which is on the seventh month, and that's when the Lord will give rest and rejoicing upon the earth during His reign, His thousand-year reign upon the earth, where the Lord will

00:20:46 Speaker 1
Give rest to the human race. Give peace and prosperity. That rest will come because we know that during the Lord's thousand-year reign, the enemy, Satan the devil, will be captured. He will be bound and imprisoned for a thousand years. No more satanic interference within the human race.

00:21:15 Speaker 1
Let's now turn to the New Testament.

00:21:39 Speaker 1
Let's turn to Luke chapter two, verse forty to fifty.

00:21:46 Speaker 1
The Gospel of Luke.

00:21:57 Speaker 1
Page sixty-three in the Chapel Bible. We went through this last week on Wednesday, and I think it's worth going through once again. There's a few things which I would like to highlight today, which I did on Wednesday. This is a very important account, which focuses on the Lord's early childhood and what took place in Jerusalem. What we have here is, in fact, the Lord's first recorded words. I asked a question to everyone last week.

00:22:44 Speaker 1
Where do we find in the Gospels the Law's first recorded words? What were the first words which are recorded within the four Gospels? It's here in the passage which we are about to read. But the Law's first recorded words come in the form of a

question. This is very important because this will coincide once we go into John chapter 20, when the Lord speaks to Mary Magdalene. There is a connection, which at first may not seem to be apparent. John chapter, Luke chapter two, verse forty to fifty-two. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

00:23:43 Speaker 1
So here we have the occasion. Why are the parents in Jerusalem? The reason is that they're to celebrate the feast of the Passover. They are to attend the Passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread and the feast of Pentecost, which were three feasts where every Jew must go to Jerusalem for these three specific feasts. They had to physically go there. So here we have Mary and Joseph, along with the Lord, who are now in Jerusalem for this specific feast, the feast of Passover. So we have the occasion, the feast of Passover, and we have the location, which is Jerusalem. Just obeying what they know.

00:24:41 Speaker 1
With what we've read in Leviticus chapter 23, verse 42 tells us the Lord's age. And when he was 12 years old, he went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it, but they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kin and acquaintances. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. That's the Greek word, zeteo. Verse 46. And when it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors.

00:25:38 Speaker 1
Both hearing them and asking them questions, and all they heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed. And his mother said unto him, "Son, why hast thou dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought this sorrowing, we have looked and searched for you anxiously, which will be the modern way of expressing it, but how does the Lord reply to this at the age of twelve, knowing that he brought distraught and distress to Mary and Joseph? Chapter two, verse forty-nine, and he said unto them, "How is it that you that ye sought me, wish ye not that I must be about my father's business?" And they understood not.

00:26:36 Speaker 1
The saying which he spoke unto them, the last two verses, verse 51 and 52, and he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. As I mentioned last week, we begin with wisdom, Sophia, in the Greek. In verse 40, and we end with wisdom, Sophia again in

verse 52. And what this is telling us is that the Lord, in his humanity, was learning; he was growing. Like any child, he would be learning and experiencing things for the first time. For example, when the Lord was born,

00:27:32 Speaker 1
Didn't just automatically stand up and walk. He would learn first how to crawl, how to stand up, and gradually walk. He didn't learn Hebrew, the Hebrew language, automatically. He would have to learn it from his parents. The Lord was learning, but he was increasing in his knowledge. What we have here is the case, the worst case scenario for any parent when you are out with your child in a big public place with lots of people, with a big crowd, and your child is next to you, or they might be behind you. Then you look around and they're gone, and you don't see them. The natural instinct as a parent is panic. You're going to be terrified, thinking, where has my child gone? Where has my son or daughter gone?

00:28:31 Speaker 1
Obviously, Mary and Joseph did what any parent would do: they had to backtrack and retrace their steps in order to find where he could possibly be. The last location which they probably were not expecting to find the Lord was in the temple, teaching the scribes and those who taught the law. They were amazed by his insight and by his knowledge and his understanding of the scriptures. But notice that he was missing for three days. That's mentioned in chapter two, verse forty-three. So we have here a missing child, and obviously Mary and Joseph were concerned, as any parent would be.

00:29:29 Speaker 1
Backtrack and retrace their steps in order to find their child. That three days corresponds with the Lord's three days in the burial tomb. We'll get to that once we get into John chapter 20, verse 1 to 17. But notice how the Lord replies back. Remember, it's Mary who's now speaking. It's not Joseph. It's Mary. Son, why hast thou dealt with us? In other words, why have you dealt with us in this way? We've been looking and searching for you anxiously, and this is a fair question coming from Mary. The Lord's reply is, 'Why were you seeking for me?' That may sound a bit strange to us, but then He goes on to say, 'I'm here. I've remained behind.'

00:30:27 Speaker 1
In my father's house, which is the temple, the Lord always referred to the temple as my father's house. Going about my father's business, that is, regarding his work, which is to expand the knowledge of God, which he was doing, because the experts of the law were astonished by the Lord's knowledge and insight.

00:30:59 Speaker 1
Mary, obviously panicking and anxious, asked this question, and the Lord's reply was, 'Why were you seeking me?' So these are the first recorded words of the Lord. It comes in the form of a question, and we find also if we turn to the Gospel of John,

which is straight after Luke. Chapter one, verse thirty-eight. The Lord's first recorded words to his early disciples, which comes again in the form of a question. These are the first recorded words in the Gospel of John of our Lord and Saviour. So let's read it from verse thirty-six to thirty-eight.

00:31:59 Speaker 1
So verse 36. These are the words of John, John the Baptist. It's worth noting that in the Gospel of John, John, the Apostle John, always refers to John the Baptist as John. He never refers to him as John the Baptist, just John. And it could be because John the Apostle was also a disciple of John the Baptist. So he just refers to him as John. So John here is not John the Apostle, but John the Baptist. So in chapter one verse thirty-six, looking unto Jesus as he walked, he saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' This really takes us back to the Passover feast. The true Lamb of God will be Christ Himself. The true Passover Lamb is the Lord Himself, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. As mentioned in verse twenty-nine, chapter one, verse twenty-nine. And two disciples heard him speak.

00:32:58 Speaker 1
And they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and he saith unto them, 'What seek ye?' And the word there is zeteo. Once again, the same word that the Lord asks, with his first utterance to his mother Mary, 'What seek ye?' They said unto him, 'Rabbi,' which is to say, being interpreted, 'Master.' Where dwelleth thou? And he said unto them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. So we'll just stop there. The thing that I want you to remember and bear in mind is the first words of the Lord in the Gospel of John.

00:33:56 Speaker 1
Just like in Luke, has got that word seek, sieteo, and then the reply is rabbi, which means teacher, master. Now turn into John chapter twenty.

00:34:09 Speaker 3
Verse verses one to eighteen.

00:34:28 Speaker 1
What we have here is a pattern. We find this in Genesis, in chapter three. It is visiting, followed by seeking, followed by asking. That is a pattern that we find in Genesis. God visits Adam and Eve in the garden. Adam and Eve are hiding from God's presence after they had eaten from the forbidden fruit. Of knowledge of good and evil, due to their guilt and shame, they hide from God's presence, and God, the Lord, is there, in some physical form, because they hear Him walking through the garden, and they are nowhere in sight. Then they're nowhere. They are nowhere to be seen. So the Lord calls out for Adam: Where are you?

00:35:24 Speaker 1
And also, we find this the same with the wise men in Matthew two, verse one to twelve. The wise men arrive in Jerusalem after they had followed the star, and they asked the question, which is the first question within the New Testament: "Where is he who is born?" The King of the Jews. So they are visiting, they are seeking, and they are asking. The same pattern will follow now. So once we read this, I'm hoping that pattern will be self-evident to you. Chapter 20, verse 1 to 18. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre or grave or tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from.

00:36:19 Speaker 1
From the sepulchre, she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter. And came first to the sepulchre, and he stooping down, looking in, saw the linen clothes lying. Yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, was wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went he.

00:37:18 Speaker 1
Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. The other disciple is referring to the apostle John himself. This is Peter and John. Verse nine: For as yet they knew not the scriptures that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. So now, as we enter verse 11 to 18, this is now Mary Magdalene alone. There's no one there with her, except two angels, and another figure. So let's carry on reading from chapter 20, verse 11. Back to Mary Magdalene. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.

00:38:14 Speaker 1
And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain or had been laid. Verse thirteen. This is the question that these two angels ask Mary Magdalene. And they, which are the two angels, say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? And she saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back. So this is very important regarding her position, her angle, where she is standing, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

00:39:11 Speaker 1
Verse fifteen. Jesus said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Same question as that of the two angels. Notice that there is a second question which the Lord asks.

The first one is, “Why are you crying? Why are you weeping? Whom seekest thou? Who are you looking for? Who are you seeking?” Soteo, again there. The first two words spoken by the risen Christ comes in the form of two questions, directed at Mary Magdalene. Why is she crying? And what is she seeking for? What is she looking for? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, for thou have.

00:40:09 Speaker 1
Borne him hence. Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said unto him, Rabani, which means master. Another word, again, Rabbi, teacher, just like what we read in chapter one, verse thirty-eight. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.

00:40:39 Speaker 1
That’s the word there, anabaino. To my father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend anabaino to my father and your father and to my God and your God. Verse eighteen. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. So let’s just quickly break it down, verse by verse, and let’s try and really understand what has taken place here. One thing we can say, without a doubt, Mary Magdalene is the first eyewitness to the risen Lord, to the resurrection of Christ. She is the first to report this back to the disciples.

00:41:37 Speaker 1
In Chapter 20, we have a timeline: the first day of the weeks. Literally in the Greek, it’s the first day of Sabbaths, because during the Passover feast and the feast of the unleavened bread, there was a high Sabbath in the middle of the week, which allowed them to rest. And we had already read this in Leviticus 23 that during this feast, they are not to do any work. Because they will be celebrating the feast and focusing purely on the feast, so it’s the first day of the week or the first day of the Sabbaths, and we are introduced to Mary Magdalene, and also we have another time frame: it was early morning, but yet it was dark, but not pitch black, because she was able to see that the burial tomb.

00:42:35 Speaker 1
The stone that was used to block the entrance of the grave, the stone, the door, was removed. It had shifted towards one side. And then, looking in, she sees that the Lord’s not there. His body is missing. In verse two, she runs and reports this to two significant and important disciples, Simon Peter and the other disciple, who is also known as the disciple whom Jesus loved, in verse two. So she reports, and when you read this, you can sense the panic, the alarm, the distress in Mary Magdalene’s voice to Simon Peter and to the Apostle John.

00:43:35 Speaker 1
They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they

have laid him. In other words, Simon, John, the Lord's body is missing. I went to the burial tomb. I looked inside the chamber. He's gone. He's nowhere to be seen. He's nowhere to be found. Reminiscent of what we just read in Luke chapter two, the missing child, and now we have a missing body.

00:44:06 Speaker 1
And so, Peter and John decide that they're going to investigate. In verse four, they did exactly what Mary Magdalene done. She runs to them, and they run to the garden where the burial chamber is, the burial tomb. In verse four, they run. They run together, but it's the Apostle John, the other disciple, who outruns Peter and reaches the entrance of the tomb first. That might indicate that John was younger and Peter was older. That's why he got there first. But none the less, John didn't step into the tomb once Peter arrived there.

00:45:02 Speaker 1
He shoves him out of the way and just goes in. He goes into the tomb and decides to see for himself, personally, what has happened and what has taken place. The fact that the linen clothing, what the Lord was wrapped in after his death, was discovered to be put together in a neat pile, which convinced the apostle John that the Lord had risen from the dead. In verse eight, when the other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre, saw, he believed. By seeing that the body was missing, the Lord's body was missing, and that everything was neatly tucked together, there was no disturbance within the grave. The apostle John.

00:46:01 Speaker 1
Believed that Christ was risen, but still we have the disciples' ignorance in verse nine. For as yet they knew not the scriptures that he must rise again from the dead. And then they departed; they returned back home. Then we have the case here: Mary Magdalene, by herself, she does the same as what John does. She looks into the burial tomb. Not literally going in herself, and is wondering what has happened to the Lord's body. His body is missing. The reason why Mary went to the tomb is not that she was expecting to find the risen Christ. She wasn't expecting that at all. She went there to bring ointments, bring oils and fragrances to put upon the Lord's body.

00:46:57 Speaker 1
Because after certain amount of days the body would decay it would start to smell so the women Mary and the other women the entire purpose of coming to the tomb was to anoint the body of Christ so that anyone visiting the Lord's body that the stench of decay would not be evident that that's the reason she was there not that she was expecting to see.

00:47:27 Speaker 1
Her risen Lord, last that was the last thing she was expecting, but we can see that she is distraught and she's distressed with the Lord's missing body. There are two

angels there mentioned in verse twelve, but she's not alone by them because she's so distraught over the missing body of Christ. That the two angels, she's not faced by it. Anyone else would have been in shock and awe had they seen these two angels, but not Mary Magdalene, because she's so distressed that she's not alarmed by this. She's only alarmed by the fact that the Lord's body is missing, and they ask her the question, "Why are you weeping?"

00:48:23 Speaker 1
And just like what she said to the disciples, to Peter and John, my Lord's body is gone; his body is missing. So she tells first Peter and John. Then she tells the two angels that the body of her Lord is missing. And then we have another figure in verse 15, which is the Lord Himself, who Mary Magdalene mistakes for the gardener, because she's facing at a certain angle from the tomb, and the clue is that it's only when the Lord calls her by name that she turns around and recognizes it's the Lord. But notice that she's still weeping. So all these factors may explain to us why she didn't recognize the Lord immediately.

00:49:21 Speaker 1
It's dark. It's early morning, probably around 5 a.m. Between five and six. It's just turning dawn. Not quite the light of day. So it's dark. She's upset. She's traumatized. She's crying, and this tears in her eyes. All this would have affected her blurry vision regarding who this figure was, which was behind her, and the Lord. Approaches her, asks, "Why are you weeping? Why are you crying? Why are you upset?" And they stop word again, seeking, "Whom are you seeking?" It's worth noting when we think of the event here in the garden, there are some parallels with what took place in the garden of Eden, which I don't want to go into today. But it's worth noting with Adam.

00:50:18 Speaker 1
Adam not only was he the first king over the earth, having rulership over the animal kingdom. He was also the first gardener, and one of the reasons that God made man was so that he could till the ground. In a sense, Adam was not only the first king over the earth, but also the first gardener. But here we have Mary Magdalene.

00:50:47 Speaker 1
Misidentifying the Lord, thinking He was the gardener. And again, she is inquiring, asking regarding the Lord's missing body. So we've got visitation, we've got seeking, and then we've got asking here in chapter 20. Notice that the Lord calls her woman in verse 15, but only when the Lord refers to her personally by her name, Mary. She turned herself around and recognised that was the Lord. It was the Lord who was speaking to her, and she calls him Rabboni, which is similar to Rabbi, which we read in chapter one, verse thirty-eight. And then here we have the Lord instructing her.

00:51:45 Speaker 1
Not to be touched. But actually, when you look into the Greek, it actually says in the

Greek, ‘Stop clinging onto me.’ So obviously, she’s from being sorrowful. She’s now joyful over the fact that the Lord is alive, that he is risen from the dead. From weeping to worshiping, from sorrowful to joyful. Within just one word, Mary, everything has changed now. Her mood has changed, and she is happy to see him. The natural reaction was, ‘You’re alive,’ and she was clinging onto him. But she said, 'The Lord said, ‘You need to let me go. Stop clinging onto me because I need to go somewhere. I need to return to my Father and to present myself to my Father, your Father, to my God, your God.’

00:52:44 Speaker 1
And I give you this commission to report this to my brethren. It’s interesting that the Lord refers to his disciples as brethren. Notice how close the Lord came to his disciples. First, there were disciples. Then the Lord calls them friends, and then now he calls them brethren. Notice how the relationship with his disciples became very close.

00:53:14 Speaker 1
So if we go to 1 Corinthians 15, verse 20 to 24. 1 Corinthians 15 is the resurrection chapter. Here Paul outlines in this long chapter, verses 1 to 58, regarding the importance of the resurrection. He goes into the fact of the Lord’s physical resurrection, and then how it is important to us and how it is relevant to us. In chapter 15, verses 20 to 23, but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead.

00:54:12 Speaker 1
As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ at His coming. Notice how Paul refers to the Lord as the firstfruits of those who have died, or those who have fallen asleep. And just like the priest offered the sheaf from the ground during the spring harvest, that from death comes life. The Lord had to present Himself before the Father as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. He presented Himself as the first to be fully resurrected, not just with eternal life, but with immortality.

00:55:09 Speaker 1
Because the whole chapter of First Corinthians 15 is leading to that. It’s leading, for the believers who are in Christ, that from mortal they will eventually put on immortality. Just going back to John’s Gospel. If we can turn to John chapter 12.

00:55:44 Speaker 3
Verse twenty three.

00:55:45 Speaker 1
To twenty six, and the Lord gives this analogy himself. He gives an agricultural

analogy himself. In chapter twelve, this is just prior to the Passover feast. We'll read it from verse twenty three. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Verily, or truly, truly, I say unto you: Except a corn of wheat fall unto the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. In other words, this really takes us back to the type of the first fruits to the Lord.

00:56:43 Speaker 1
In Leviticus twenty-three, a corn of wheat, although it may die in the ground, in the soil of the ground, it will eventually spring back to life. And this is the analogy that the Lord gives regarding Himself, His death and His resurrection, using the agricultural analogy that something needs to die, and then it will be brought back to life, reborn, revitalized. So this is why the Lord had to ascend before the Father. Look back at Leviticus 23.

00:57:39 Speaker 1
When the chiefs were offered with thanksgiving and gratitude, and that would be acceptable before God's sight, and the Lord presented Himself fully resurrected with eternal life and immortality, and that His sacrifice and His resurrection was acceptable before the Lord.