

# John: The Word Became Flesh - John 19:38-20:18

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] The Revolutionary War, the War of Independence in American History, marks this demarcation line in America's history that no long something after that period of time was going to be substantially different than it was prior to that time.

No longer were these 13 colonies going to be taxed without representation to England. No longer were these 13 colonies going to be an outpost for England.

No after the Revolutionary War, this War of Independence and the Declaration of Independence was signed shortly in that time frame. America declared no, we are going to be a sovereign nation unto ourselves, the fledgling United States of America then began.

It was an interesting time in history where what looked like life before that time looked radically different after that time as far as there was substantial change to the existing system.

Well, that substantial change to an existing system occurred also at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I would say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ marks a revolutionary change.

[ 1 : 3 1 ] There is a substantial change to how humanity can now relate to God compared to prior to the death and resurrection of Christ, compared to after the resurrection of Christ.

And today we have this wonderful opportunity to look at the biblical account in John's Gospel of the resurrection of Christ. And it is something that cannot be minimized, it cannot be diminished in any way, for it is the event that marked this revolutionary, extreme, substantial change in God's relationship with humanity prior to and after the resurrection.

And so if you have a copy of God's Word with you, we're going to be looking at John chapter 19. We're going to begin in verse 38 and conclude in chapter 20 verse 18.

Prior to the resurrection, we were enemies of God under Satan's dominion. We were sinners and rebellion and slaves to sin. Under the resurrection, for those who have placed their faith in Christ, they were friends of God.

They were transferred from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of light. We were forgiven, declared righteous, made alive unto God. All these things are stated for those who are in Christ, a revolutionary change.

[ 3 : 0 3 ] John in his Gospel last week, if you were here with us, Pastor Jay preached a message concerning Christ's crucifixion. And we're in a period of time in the latter part of John chapter 19 between the crucifixion and the resurrection when Jesus is in the grave for three days, where we have an account of some things that happened shortly after the crucifixion.

And so we pick up the account in John chapter 19 verse 18.

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for the fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate gave him permission so he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, 70 pounds worth in weight.

We're going to pause here. We're going to see that there were clues leading up to the American Revolution or the War of Independence.

[ 4 : 1 6 ] There were clues that things were not good and clues that things were about to become very different. Similar to that, there are some leading events up to the resurrection that give us indication things have already begun to change.

One of those things that we get clues that things are about to no longer be the same and change is already underway. We can see in these two gentlemen that we just read about, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

These two, if you will, have a division of labor. They may have convened and Joseph of Arimathea may have said, hey, I'm going to go to Pilate, ask for Jesus' body.

You go procure the necessary things that we may anoint his body worthy of a king. Then they divide up the task and then they commission themselves to go do this.

But what's interesting is to reflect upon who these gentlemen were. They were members of the Sanhedrin, the group of 70 who were the religious leaders of the nation of Israel under Caiaphas, the man who plotted to kill Jesus and have him put to death.

[ 5 : 34 ] These are the 70 men and whether they were overruled or whether they had to say, we don't know in the proceedings how vocal they were or were not. These two men now are identifying themselves with Jesus openly.

They move from secret disciples to courageous openly willing to identify themselves with Christ. If their lives were not physically in jeopardy, certainly their reputations were. Can you imagine being a member of the Sanhedrin under Caiaphas' authority and rule, just as he being the high priest, the ruler of the Sanhedrin or the leader anyway?

Can you imagine your reputation being a member of the Sanhedrin now you're wanting to publicly identify the guy we just put to death? We were in the crowd chanting, crucify him, crucify him and now you want to identify yourself with this man?

Certainly their reputations are in jeopardy. And what prompted them to act so courageously, to now publicly identify with Jesus?

[ 6 : 50 ] Look with me or you can just listen to John chapter 12, 23 through 24. We get an indication of why they may be acting this way so courageously.

John earlier in John chapter 12 verse 23 says this, and Jesus answered them, the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified, speaking of his death. Verse 24 then says, truly truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit, speaking again of his own death.

And like the first flowers that bloom in the spring, these are the two men who are the first fruits of a great harvest that will come as a result of Christ's death.

They serve as a signal to the readers of the gospel that changes are coming. And I pray that if we have been closet followers of Christ, we would take courage from the example of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and no longer be closet followers of Christ but open followers of Christ. Really willing to risk our reputations to be identified with Jesus. These are some clues that things were about to change. If you will, this is these Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus serve as a prequel to the resurrection.

[ 8 : 22 ] Verses 40 through 42 now we read a little more of their story. So they took the body of Jesus, beginning to read in verse 40, and bound it in linen cloths with spices as is the burial custom for the Jews.

Now it was a place where he was crucified. There was a garden and the garden, a new tomb in which no one had been laid.

So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

What's interesting is you have these closet followers who are now openly willing to be identified with Christ. There's another change that serves as a prequel that things are no longer about to be the same anymore and that is the treatment of Jesus' body.

However Jesus was spat upon, the Roman soldier's fists struck his face. His back had been flayed open, being scourged, his brow and the crown of his head had been pierced with the crown of thorns.

[ 9 : 37 ] His feet and hands were pierced with nails as he hung on the cross. His side pierced with something where blood and water flowed out to ensure death had occurred.

This is how Jesus was treated. And now these two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, now treat his body very differently.

Jesus had laid down his life and the persecution and the affliction was over. He had paid the debt for sin. He had fully received the righteous wrath of God on our behalf.

His suffering was complete. Now his body is treated very differently. And these two public, courageous followers of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, secures the body from Pilate to ensure to have a proper burial, not to be treated like a common criminal, but to be buried in a rich man's tomb.

And Nicodemus ensures the spices necessary and the aloes and to be necessary is secured to bury his body, to perfumes, to anoint his body and to prepare for burial.

[10:58] 75 pounds worth, 75 pounds worth, the amount of spices worthy of a king. Jesus is no longer abused as a sacrificial lamb.

Jesus is now treated with respect as the only begotten Son of God and the true King of Israel.

These were clues to indicate some things are about to be radically different.

They're like clues like the earthquake, little tremors that indicate with frequency that a mountain is about to erupt. Everything is going to be radically different soon.

And that's what these clues serve us as, to prepare us for the resurrection. So now we turn to chapter 20 and we're going to talk about two things that are revolutionary changes that happen as a result of the resurrection.

The first one is going to be seen in the power of death. And if you're taking notes, the second one that we'll see is in the position of the disciples. The power of death and the position of the disciples.

[12:09] Let's look first at the power of death. Look with me in verses 1 through 10 in chapter 20.

Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

So Peter went out and the other disciple and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running toward together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb and he saw that the linen cloths lying there and the face cloth which had been on Jesus' head not lying at the linen cloths but folded up in the place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in and saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must raise from the dead.

[13:24] Then the disciples came back to their homes. We see the first revolutionary change and it is evident in the power of death.

Birth and death are unavoidable human experiences. Human life has a short time span from womb to tomb.

In Psalm 39 we're told that a person's life is like a vapor. So if you showered this morning, thank you. But in addition to saying thank you, I wanted to say that the vapor that produced in your shower lasts just as long as your life does and compared to eternity.

It's that short. So every time we take a shower, let us be reminded of the brevity of life.

The steam is probably not there when you exit the bathroom and that's your life. It's that short. Here for a short time gone tomorrow.

[14:36] And this too is Mary Magdalene's mindset a little bit when Jesus dies. She goes looking for his body and look with me in verse 2. She essentially says, I can't find his body.

In verse 2 it says, so she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

I cannot find his body. But now listen to her report in verse 18. Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, I have seen the Lord and we're going to see that here in a moment.

And that he had said these things to her. So she goes from I can't find his body to I have seen the Lord. Mary moves from unable to find him to seeing the Lord.

And how is that possible? How is it that Jesus was laid in the tomb and now Mary cannot find him?

[15:44] And that is the resurrection. Jesus had conquered death. He rose from the grave. He stared into death's cold, cool eyes and with infinite power he defeated death, rendering death impotent.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 54 through 55, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death, where is your victory? Oh death, where is your sting?

Prior to the resurrection, every person who walked the earth, it is as if we all had executioners blade at our necks, never knowing when death would strike.

But Jesus disarmed death. He showed us what awaits those who are His once they pass from this life to the next.

And our culture is rife with the fear of death. We try to minimize the effects of aging. We say we need to look younger, eat healthier, color your hair, nip and tuck this or that and remove your wrinkles.

[16:52] But we don't want to face the truth. We are all aging and every day that we live brings us closer to death. We try to cosmetically push death further into the future and the fear of death chains our hopes and dreams and desires to this earthly life without Christ.

It is as if we are saying if this is all we got, we might as well spend all of our energy eating and drinking and being merry for tomorrow we die.

But Jesus conquered death. And notice how Paul, and when he writes to the church at Colossae, how understanding the resurrection of Christ and our hope of resurrection that we have in Christ changes our earthly.

We're not tethered to this earth anymore. Listen to how Paul writes it in the book of Colossians chapter three, verses one through two. If when you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, and then here it is, and set your mind on the things that above, not on the things of this earth.

For those apart from Christ, this earth is as good as it's going to get. This is as close to heaven as a person is going to experience.

[18:28] That awaits them after this life. Death separation from God is what they're going to experience for all eternity.

So it no wonder death then apart from Christ tethers a person to this earth. You might as well eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow you die.

But for those of us in Christ, it changes how we set our minds upon the things above. For eternal beings and eternity in heaven with Christ. So we're going to set our minds to the things above.

So that is why materialism and Christianity cannot peacefully coexist. Materialism is peddling happiness by accumulating stuff in this life.

Christianity is giving up stuff in this life to preserve the joy of Christ. Materialism is a binding mechanism that death uses to chain us to this world.

[19:26] We try to insulate ourselves from eternity by piling up treasures among us. We're like chill children building pillow forts of cars and cash hoping it will stop death's progress.

It's silly if it is not downright sad to think to live this way. Materialism and Christianity cannot peacefully coexist. But Jesus conquered death, evidenced by his raising from the dead, and Mary could not find his body because he had risen.

And he lives forevermore. So death no longer has a claim on us. We're free to live for what that which lasts.

Years ago I have a friend who knew somebody who lived in Chicago and he told me about his life. The gentleman was from Africa and he did not want America to necessarily influence the way he lived.

And he loved the simplicity of his life that he had in Africa. And so he came to America and he had a good job and he was very hospitable and so he would invite people over to his home.

[20:39] People would go often to his home and be surprised though. You would walk into his home and he had no furniture. He just had pillows to sit on. In his bed he had a mat and a simple mat and simple bedding.

In his kitchen you open his kitchen cupboard doors and he only had four settings of everything. Four bowls, four plates, four forks, four spoons, four knives. And he figured if I had more than that over I would just use paper products.

And so he kept his life very simple and he did not want to be tethered to this world. He wanted to set his mind so he was super hospitable. You think, well if that was my house I wouldn't have anyone over.

I'd be a little embarrassed. He had people over all the time. He was super hospitable and he used his person and his home and his belongings to extend the love of Christ to many people.

And so people were always shocked going over to his home how simple and little he had but it didn't hinder his hospitality and using his life. And I think about this verse in Colossians.

[21:44] If we have been raised with Christ or you could also say since we have been raised with Christ seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand and set your minds on things above not on the things of this earth.

May we not be tethered to the things of this world and live for that which is eternal. It changes what we prioritize because of the resurrection.

The resurrection also it changed, it's a revolutionary change. It changed the power of death.

Secondly, it changed the position of the disciples.

We see that in verses 11 through 18 if you want to read those with me. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb and she stooped to look into the tomb.

And she saw the two angels in the white sitting where the body of Jesus had laid and one in the head and one at the feet. And they said to her, woman why are you weeping?

[ 22 : 45 ] She said to them, they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him. And having said this, she turned around and Jesus was standing.

But she said, she saw Jesus standing but said, but I'm sorry, but she did not know where he was. It was Jesus. I'm sorry. Let me read verse 14 again. Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing but she did not know it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will go take him away.

Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to him in Arabic, she turned to him and said to him in Arabic, which means teacher.

[ 23 : 47 ] Jesus said to her, do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father but go to my brothers and say to them, I ascended to the Father and your Father to God, your God, to my God, to your God.

And Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, I have seen the Lord. And they had said these things and he had said these things to her.

In John's Gospel, God is referred to Father 108 times. In John's Gospel, my Father is said an additional 71 times.

But only one time does he refer to God as the disciples' Father. And he does so sending the message through Mary Magdalene. So read with me again in verse 17.

This is the only time this happens. Remember what revolutionary change occurred. We see the revolutionary change because the resurrection, the power of death changed.

[ 24 : 51 ] Secondly, the relationship with the disciples. Look here, this is the only time this is referenced in verse 17. How does the relationship with the Father change to the disciples?

Jesus said to her, do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father.

The only time. To my God, your God. Because of the resurrection, everything changes. It is also the only time in John's Gospel where he calls the disciples his brothers.

Look with me also in verse 17. For I have not yet ascended to the Father but go to my brothers and say to them. The relationship with the disciples have changed.

They are no longer his disciples. He is no longer their teacher, while that is still true, but not just or merely his teacher. They are now his brothers. No longer is the Father Jesus' God.

[ 25 : 55 ] He is their Father as well. Jesus raises from the dead in the position the disciples are radically altered.

They are no longer cut off from God, enemies of God, dead in their trespasses and sin. They are now family members. The sacrifice of Jesus for sin and the divine acceptance of the sacrifice demonstrated in the resurrection ushers the disciples into this new family with God as their Father and Jesus as their brother.

If you are here today and you may not know the Lord, perhaps you've grown up in church. You've heard these stories before but you do not know the Lord.

Remember the resurrection is a demarcation line. Things are no longer different, no longer the same as they were prior to the resurrection. After the resurrection, one of the things that radically changes is one's relationship and family with God.

No longer is God just Jesus' Father. He is our Father. No longer is Jesus some historic figure.

[ 27 : 29 ] He's our brother. He's now in the family of God. But if you have never accepted Christ for the forgiveness of sin, you are still yet dead in your trespasses and sin.

I just plead with you today, if that is your place, you say, I don't know if I know the Lord. You are biblically, you are still dead in your sin.

And death then would lead you to be eternally separated from God. And I would ask that you plead, I plead with you to accept Christ's perfect life that He lived, perfect sacrifice for sin in His death, and resurrection overcoming sin and death on your behalf.

I pray that you would accept Christ for the forgiveness of sin so that you may be included in the family of God. And now that is possible only because of the resurrection of Christ.

There are three things because of the resurrection that we can look at briefly and then we will close. There's wonderful promises because now that we are included in the family of God.

[ 28 : 44 ] First, the promise of an inheritance. The immeasurable riches of God are eternally ours. This promise helps us move from flat screen TVs and new cars that occupy so many of our homes and lives that we should be willing to die penniless if the Lord were to ask that of us knowing our eternal treasure is in with Christ.

What's in the eternal treasures? The absence of pain, absence of sorrow, absence of tears, fullness of rejoicing, fullness of joy, incomprehensible worship of Jesus.

The remembrance of sin will even be no more and the dwelling place prepared for you. That's what awaits you into the entrance into the Father's house.

There's a promise of an inheritance. Secondly, there's a promise of love. We are now God's children, no matter what kind of earthly father you had, you are now have a perfect father.

His love for you will not ebb and flow based on his emotions. His treatment of you will not be affected by your performance. He will love you enough to chase in you when you sin, not because he's vindictive, but because you are his child and he wants what is best for you.

[ 30 : 04 ] Promise of inheritance, promise of his love, thirdly, the promise of acceptance. Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father brings assurance that we will be accepted into the Father's house.

We did not become God's children because of what we did, but because only what Christ has done for us. So our confidence in our standing before God does not rest in what we do, but in what Christ has done on our behalf.

As long as Jesus stands at the right hand of the Father or sits at the right hand of the Father, all who follow him will be welcomed into God's presence. If God accepted Jesus, then he will accept you should you have placed your faith in Christ.

I have a niece. My brother and his wife adopted a young lady from China, her name is Stephanie. When she was adopted, everything changed for her. Her family changed. Her culture changed. Her citizen changed. Her inheritance changed. Her promise of being loved changed.

[ 31 : 19 ] Her promise of being accepted changed. Everything changed for Stephanie when she was adopted into this family. And just like that, everything changed because of the resurrection.

It broke the power of death and it opened to us a family of God, being included into the family of God for all those who place their faith in Christ and accept his provision for the forgiveness of sin in his person and work.

So I love that in our songs, prior to the sermon, we sang about Christ and what he has done.

The resurrection changed everything. In a moment, we're going to have the opportunity to receive communion. And I think what a great day to receive the Lord's Supper together, to take the bread, a symbol, a representation of his body and the juice, remembering what Christ has done on our behalf.

Everything is different because of his sacrifice for sin and his resurrection after that. And I look forward to enjoying the Lord's Supper with you. Well, let me close in prayer and then I'll invite Kamash to come forward and facilitate that.

[ 32 : 51 ] Lord, I thank you that everything changed because of the resurrection.

Our citizenship has changed. Our inheritance has changed. The promise of being loved has changed. Being included or accepted in your family has changed.

Everything has changed, Lord. And we thank you for your work on the cross, to forgive sin. And we thank you that you have the power to overcome sin and death, your sacrifice being perfectly accepted by the Father for our behalf.

And I pray that we would live into what Paul said to the church at Colossians, that we would set our minds on things above and not on the things of this earth, that our priorities would change because of the resurrection.

Our minds are set on eternal things, not the things of this world. We are so grateful for you, Lord.  
And thank you for what you've done.  
[ 34 : 09 ] Thank you.