

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 20-21

For the followers of Jesus, His resurrection launched them on a new adventure. It was the beginning of faith, not its ending. After Jesus' resurrection, His disciples would need more faith not less. They now were tasked with the challenge of serving a risen and exalted Lord.

In a scene from the 1977 television miniseries, "Jesus of Nazareth," the political Jew who conspired with Judas enters the empty tomb and discovers that the Man he helped crucify has risen from the dead.

He gazes off into the distance thinking of the ramifications of the resurrection, and he whispers to himself, "Now it begins, now it all begins..." Today, we'll study the end of *a Gospel* and the start of *the Gospel!*

In John 19, Joseph, Nicodemus, and the women took the body of Jesus to a garden grave, a nearby tomb. And they were in a rush. At this point, the traditions of *their Passover Seder* were more pressing than providing *their Passover Savior* a descent burial.

Despite their time constraints, they did the best they could; then rolled a stone over the mouth of the tomb.

They decided to return on Sunday to finish the job.

Chapter 20 begins, "On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." The Greek word that gets translated, "*early*" is a technical term. It

refers to the fourth and last watch of the night - from 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM.

Mark 16:2 says the women came "when the sun had risen." John says "while it was still dark." Perhaps they left in the dark, but arrived after sun-up. Matthew tells us the women came as the day "began to dawn."

"Then she (Mary Magdalene) ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved (this was the special title John used for himself), and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." At this point, Mary suspected a robbery, not a resurrection.

"Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first." John was younger and perhaps in better shape.

Peter probably took off sprinting, but *petered out*. He'd been eating a lot of crow (or rooster) over the previous few days. It had gotten a little heavy for him.

Verse 5 "And he (that is, John), stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself." Here's every mother's favorite part of the Easter story... She points out to her kids that even after His resurrection, Jesus folded His clothes!

Verse 8 “Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also...” John had won the race and peered into the tomb, but he waited on Peter to catch up to actually enter. He follows Peter into the tomb.

“And he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.” Something caught John’s attention and sparked his faith... maybe John figured if the body had been moved the grave clothes would’ve gone with the corpse. Grave-robbers wouldn’t have taken the time to fold His clothes. *Folded clothes meant Jesus had risen!*

Seriously, I think we should add “neatness” to the virtues of Jesus. That John saw His folded clothes - *or the way they were folded* - He knew the tidying-up was by Jesus. *By the way, Jesus is still tidying-up people!*

“Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb.” Mary had returned for a second inspection.

“And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Or literally, “wailing.” Mary wasn’t just *whimpering, sniffing* - *she’s balling her eyes out.*

“She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

Understand this scene, Mary sees two angels in white - two heavenly, supernatural beings. Yet Mary could care less about the angels. All that’s on her mind is *she’s missing*

Jesus! When you're longing for Jesus, nothing else will substitute - not even an angel or two!

Ever so often, the church gets preoccupied with angels. A fascination arises, books get written, there's a TV show or two... Christians go on an "*angel craze.*"

They get "**Touched by an Angel.**" Yet when Mary sees and speaks to two angels, she isn't moved. Her heart and mind are preoccupied with her Lord Jesus.

Spiritual phenomena, supernatural manifestations, even *angelic visitations* are no substitute for Jesus.

You can mistakenly allow the things of God to distract you from God Himself. Throughout the Bible, angels testify of Jesus. They never ever take His place.

Verse 14, "**Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus...**" **Why did she not know?**

We're not told... It could've been a spiritual blindness. When the risen Lord joined the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, Luke tells us, "**Their eyes were restrained.**" This could've been the same phenomena.

Or it could be that since Mary had concluded Jesus was dead and had no expectation of seeing Him alive, she just failed to recognize the living Lord before her.

But there's a more likely explanation... **Isaiah 52:14 predicted Messiah's visage would be so marred and disfigured He would no longer even look like a man.**

The cruelty and brutality of the Romans ensured the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus' face was beaten. His brow punctured. His beard plucked out by the root.

If there'd been a funeral, it would've been closed-casket. Jesus could've passed for a boxer who had gone 15 rounds - or resemble the victim of a car crash who had been thrown face first through the windshield.

Later in John 20, we'll see scars in Jesus' hands and side. *Why then wouldn't there also be scars on His back, brow, face?* I believe Mary failed to recognize Jesus because His face was scarred and disfigured. His appearance was unlike the Man she had known.

In Revelation 5:6, Jesus is in heaven, and this same John sees Him, "I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne... stood a lamb as though it had been slain..." It seems He still bears the scars of crucifixion.

It may be a shocker when we get to heaven and see Jesus face to face. We'll see His scars and weep when we realize what our sin cost Jesus. It's true, "The only man-made thing in heaven are the scars of Jesus."

Yet those same scars will remove all doubt that He loves us. Over time, we'll grow to love those scars. What's repulsive on earth will be admired in heaven.

But for the moment, outside the empty tomb, it was His scars that blinded Mary from identifying her Lord.

Verse 15, "Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away,

tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”
Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).” It was when Jesus spoke Mary’s name that her eyes were opened. *And I’m sure it was the way He spoke her name...* When Mary’s mom called her name, it was to scold. When the men in her life spoke her name, they were hitting on her. When her neighbors said “Mary”, they were judging. But the way Jesus called her name spoke of forgiveness and acceptance. When He said, “*Mary,*” she knew she was loved... **Listen... Hear Jesus speaking your name?**

Notice too, how Mary refers to Jesus... A Jew could show his or her teacher varying degrees of respect.

At the lowest level you could call him, “rab.” To add a measure of respect you used the term, “rabbi.” The highest honor was “*rabboni*” - *what Mary called Jesus.*

Verse 17 “Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”

We're not told of her posture, but somehow Mary clutched on to Jesus. Perhaps she fell before Him and grabbed His feet. Think of all Jesus meant to Mary...

Earlier in life, she played the prostitute and was a sleepover for demons. When she met Jesus, He turned her whole life right-side up. She was *freed and forgiven*. The carpenter from Nazareth had built for her a new life. **When Mary lost Jesus, she'd lost everything!**

Like the other disciples, she had no family, or friends, or businesses to which to return. Mary was homeless.

This is why Mary Magdalene clung to Jesus with all her might. She'd seen Him crucified - *now she'd never let Him go*. She wanted Him to stay with her forever.

But Jesus redirects her affections with what seems like cryptic words, "*Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended...*" Jesus is saying to Mary that their relationship isn't ending, but changing. He's saying, "*I'm here, just a short time. Don't get attached to Me in my present, physical form. When I ascend to the Father we'll still relate, but spiritually not tangibly.*"

Mary, like you and me, needs to learn to relate to Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus will indwell Mary. She'll continue to know her Lord - not as she's done in the past, but by His Spirit. Thus, *rather than tighten her grip, she should strengthen her faith.*

Verse 18, "*Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut...*" This word "*shut*" in the original language is very forceful. It means "*locked and bolted.*"

The frightened disciples were barricaded in.

This makes the suggestion that the disciples beat up the Roman guards and stole the body of Jesus to foster a hoax - *preposterous!* These timid disciples were too afraid to venture out onto the street corner.

But Jesus stuns them, "Where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

This is the first time the risen Lord had appeared to the disciples since they forsook Him in the garden.

And I'm sure they feared this encounter. They deserved Jesus' wrath and condemnation. Instead, His first words convey forgiveness, "*Peace be with you.*"

"Now when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." Realize Jesus' resurrected body was not a different body. It was the body born to Mary. It walked on water. It was the body nailed to the cross. You could see the scars that remained from the ordeal.

The same chemicals and organs that died - and had begun to deteriorate - were reassembled in a new way.

His body now passed through walls and traveled distances instantly - yet it was tangible. It could digest a plate at a fish fry. This was His body - ghosts don't eat fish. Jesus was no longer *flesh and blood* - His blood was spilt for us. But He was still *flesh and bone*.

His now glorified body was the same body Mary laid in a manger, yet soon it would ascend into the clouds. Through the process of resurrection, His body emerged no longer bound by the limits of time and space.

Think of a historic building damaged by a fire. In the renovations, the older structure gets rebuilt, but included are much needed upgrades. It gets modified.

It's the same building, but it's new and improved.

This is what we can look forward to when Jesus raptures the Church. Jesus is called "the first fruits of the resurrection." In short, He's the prototype. We'll receive resurrected bodies with Jesus-like properties.

No more will I worry about locking my keys in the car! Rather than pick the lock, I'll just slide my atoms between the atoms of the car panel. *And presto, I'm in!*

Actually, I won't need a car, or airplane. *Want to go to Hawaii, I'll just snap my fingers!* In fact, Jesus' ascension to heaven proved that not even the earth's gravitational pull will be a concern for Christians.

As Paul said to the Corinthians, one day these mortal bodies will put on immortality and these corruptible bodies will put on incorruption. *I can't wait!*

Verse 21, "So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And to any onlooker this would seem like a stretch. These fearful disciples had *locked themselves in*, yet Jesus is *sending them out*. *They'll obviously need some help!...*

And here it comes! "And when He had said this, He *breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* The prerequisite for salvation is to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Romans 10:9 declares, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now that the disciples believe, God's Spirit enters their spirit and sparks

new life in them. I believe it's here the original disciples are born again.

In John 14:17, Jesus had said of the Holy Spirit, "He dwells with you and will be in you." Now Jesus makes good on that promise. The disciples receive the Spirit.

In the Garden of Eden, God breathed into Adam's nostrils, and he became a living soul. Now Jesus breathes on His men, and they come alive spiritually.

Then verse 23, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Remember, in Matthew 18 Jesus gave His original disciples the authority to "bind and loose," which was rabbinical language for "prohibiting and permitting." To bind is to *prohibit*. To loose is to *permit*.

This was the special authority given to the apostles enabling them to establish for Christians how their new way of relating to God applied to practical issues. It's how Jewish believers were weaned off the Law and taught what life now looks like when you live by faith.

Here, Jesus applies this to forgiveness. *How do we know we're forgiven? Does a hand-written pardon drop out of the sky? Of course not.* But in Acts, the apostles set terms. You **repent** and **believe**. And even today, it's by following that apostolic pattern that Christians know God has forgiven them and made them His child.

Acts 15 is the classic case of "binding and loosing." The apostles met to decide if Gentile believers needed to be circumcised to be saved. Their verdict was "No." **Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.** All

anyone needs to do to know Jesus is repent and believe. The original apostles in Acts set the terms that apply to the church til the end of the age.

“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.” Thomas wasn’t there. He’s going to have to learn faith the hard way...

And he learns another truth, taught in Hebrews 10:25 “Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.”

For when believers gather, the risen Christ often shows up. Miss a *meeting* and you might miss *meeting* Jesus. I’ll bet Thomas never *missed* church again!

“The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So (Thomas) said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Thomas was a hard core skeptic. He wanted tangible proof. He was a “*show me*” disciple. He wasn’t going to believe without evidence.

“And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”

“Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Take note, Thomas calls Jesus “*God*” - and Jesus never once rebukes or corrects Him.

It’s blasphemy for a human to receive worship, but Jesus was no mere mortal. Thomas says, He’s “*Lord and God.*”

Here's one of the boldest affirmations of His deity in all the Bible. And it falls from the lips of *its most famous doubter*. Blaise Pascal said, "Only he who doubts can truly believe." Thomas proves that working through honest doubt is what makes for a strong faith.

Verse 29, "Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The world today says, "seeing is believing." But Jesus teaches us the opposite, "believing is seeing."

Wait until you see with physical eyes and you'll wait too late. Today, It's when we believe that Jesus opens our eyes. He enables us to *sense His presence*, and *experience His power*, and *be confident of His mercy*.

Verse 30 "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book..." Here's "the most frustrating verse in the Bible." *Just imagine all the wonders that went untold?*

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." The Gospels haven't given us *all there is to know*, just *all we need to know*.

Rather than complete biographies, the Gospels are testimonies written to encourage our faith in Jesus.

John continues in Chapter 21, "After these things, Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (or Galilee), and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter,

Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also."

One commentary I read on this passage points out that Peter's words are in the present progressive tense, which means they speak of a continual activity.

Peter isn't suggesting a recreational fishing trip **he's returning to work!** Remember, Peter was a fisherman by trade. He'd left behind a business to follow Jesus.

The last 3½ years on the road with Jesus had been thrilling, but now it's time for Peter to get back to the real world. The heady days of faith in God for his next meal, or a place to sleep were now over. It's time once more to wet a few nets - start taking care of business.

If it's true, Peter was returning to his old vocation it's obvious why. He felt his days in ministry were over. He'd failed in a colossal way. *How could God ever use him after what he'd done?* It was fun while it lasted, but ole Pete figured he needed to find some secular work.

Verse 3, "They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing." It's interesting when we fail in one area of life it's common to bolster our sagging self-esteem by falling back on an old proficiency. If Peter couldn't make it as a disciple, he knew he could catch fish. Yet notice the words, "*they caught nothing.*" Let me suggest if you've been called to serve the Lord in a certain capacity, you'll be neither happy or successful doing anything else.

Paul wrote in Romans 11:29, "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." God sees to it the only fishing Peter will ever be good at is fishing for men.

"But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" In other words, "*You caught anything?*"

"They answered Him, "No." I'm sure Peter and his pals were depressed. Now add fishing to their list of failures. *Yet they're closer to success than they think.*

At times, we get discouraged. We assume we have a such a long way to go, but we may be closer to victory than we realize. Often the distance between success and failure is *just the width of a small fishing boat...*

For Jesus "said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish." Remember, this wasn't the first time they had experienced such a miracle. Luke 5 records a similar incident earlier in Jesus' ministry. And it was the similarity between the occasions that prompted John...

"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as John saw that the nets were bulging with fish, it clicked. "*It's the Lord!*"

I believe John included this story to teach disciples today how to relate to their risen Lord. For you never know when Jesus might pop in! Hey, He's alive and well and running

loose. And when we least expect it, Jesus might reveal Himself in the ordinary of your life.

Verse 7, “Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.” The outer garment was bulky and heavy. Peter had taken it off to work. *Why does he now put it back on to jump into the lake?* Well, Peter is just being Peter. He’s reacting not thinking. Peter was impulsive. *It was ready, fire, aim...*

But give him credit. Peter never lacked for passion. *When Peter saw Jesus, he was always first to jump in!*

Verse 8 “But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about 200 cubits (of 300 feet)), dragging the net with fish.

Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.”

Jesus already had breakfast on the fire. And welcome to His classroom. The catch and the campfire were props Jesus would use to teach them a lesson...

Remember where Peter denied the Lord? By a fire of coals. And bread and fish were the elements Jesus used to feed the 5000. Which was the miracle that led to Peter's stunning confession a few days afterwards at Caesarea Philippi, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Both *the campfire* and *the catch* were the visual aides Jesus will use to decommission Peter.

Verse 10, “Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.” Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, 153; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.”

A wet net and a large catch could weigh several hundred pounds. That Peter dragged it to the shore all by himself confirms that he was a strong man.

And there’ve been volumes written explaining the significance of this exact number of fish, 153... People have taught there’re 153 different types of fish and thus this represented the entire world... Others suggest there were 153 nations on earth at the time... For some reason, John counted and recorded 153 fish. Could it be “153” really means... there were 153 fish!

“Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” - knowing that it was the Lord.” Notice Jesus invites His men not to *lunch or dinner, but breakfast*. You eat breakfast in the morning at the outset of your day.

This is a new beginning. Jesus is about to reinstate His disciples to ministry. It’s a new day in their lives.

And notice the precedent... Jesus is about to send His disciples to feed others, but first He feeds them. Here’s a bedrock principle in God’s Kingdom, **before you feed others, you first need to be fed by Jesus!**

Verse 13, “Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.” *The risen Christ still served...* “This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His

disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" But here's a question, "*these what?*"

English teachers call this a *dangling participle*? Does it mean *these fish*? It's possible Jesus is asking Peter, *do you love me more than fishing, your former career? Will you leave all a second time in order to follow Me?*

Or He could be asking, *do you love me more than these men?* This would be a flashback to the Upper Room and Peter's arrogant boast. In Matthew 26:33, he claimed to have a greater love for Jesus than the other disciples, "*Even if all are made to stumble because of you, I will never be made to stumble.*" *But after denying Jesus, does Peter really love Him more than these?*

John continues, "(Peter) said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." (Jesus) said to him, "Feed My lambs." When Jesus asks Peter, "*Do you love Me?*" The Greek word He uses for love is the word "*agape.*"

It was one of several Greek terms used to describe various kinds of love. Agape was the strongest. It spoke of a sacrificial, unselfish, undying kind of love.

But when Peter responds he uses a different term for love. "*Yes Lord; you know that I love You,*" but the word he uses for love is "*phileo*" or "*brotherly love.*" "*Phileo* is a notch below "*agape.*" Obviously, Peter no longer boasts. He did love Jesus, but from here on he'd never trust in his own strength to demonstrate that love.

Verse 16, "(Jesus) said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Again, Jesus uses the Greek word, "agape." But Peter responds with "phileo." (Peter) said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." (Jesus) said to him, "Tend My sheep."

Then "He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

This time Jesus alters His question and uses Peter's term, "*Simon, do you phileo Me?*" It's as if Jesus lets Peter know He understands. He's saying, "Better to be honest and admit your weaknesses, than it is to make a rash and prideful boast. If phileo is all you've got, I'll take it, and help it grow..." Jesus took Peter's phileo or *brotherly love* and grew it into agape or *sacrificial love*.

And any idea why Jesus repeats His question three times? Jesus is reversing the effects of Peter's failure. Peter denied the Lord *three times*, so Jesus recalls him *three times*. The mercy of Jesus sees to it that no one permanently strikes out. He offers hope for redemption.

And notice what Peter is supposed to do if He loves Jesus... "*Feed My sheep.*" The way you love Jesus is by loving His people. You can say you love Jesus, but it rings hollow if you're not willing to feed a few sheep.

When we feed someone's spiritual hunger - or lead a lost soul back into the fold - we're loving the Savior.

Verse 18 “Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

This prediction by Jesus is taken prophetically of Peter’s martyrdom. That he was girded (or bound) by another, and stretched out, and carried against his wishes describes his crucifixion at the hands of Nero in 65 AD. And Peter requested to be crucified upside down for he was not worthy to suffer as His Lord.

Earlier in John 13:37, in the upper room, Peter had boasted, “Lord... I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

Peter failed that night, and denied His Lord, but he got another opportunity. Through the power of the Spirit in the end, he loved Jesus with *agape* or *sacrificial love*.

Verse 20, “Then Peter, turning around, saw (John) the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?”

This is so much like us. Jesus is challenging Peter. He’s speaking hard words. So what does Peter do? He shifts the conversation. He points to John and says, “What about him? Lord, let’s talk about someone else.”

As long as I can talk about my wife’s problems or a friend’s problem, I don’t have to work on any of mine.

Verse 22, “Jesus said to (Peter), “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.”

One of the most subtle traps in the Christian life is comparison - *when I judge my orders or my calling with those of someone else*. The details of God's plan differ for each of us. What's deemed necessary for you is not always what God has planned for me, and vice versa.

This involves our **eyes** and **nose**. Keep your eyes on Jesus and your nose out of other people's business. As Jesus said, *“What is that to you? You follow me.”*

“Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?” At the time, Jesus' words were taken out of context and a falsehood developed about John. A rumor started that he would live forever.

Obviously he didn't. But remember the point here.

Jesus has a plan for you, that may not look like His plan for me. The Master gives the orders, not the servants. If Jesus schedules a martyr's death for Peter, and a rapture for John... so be it. It's His prerogative.

“This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.” John spoke often of himself in the third person. It was he who wrote this Gospel. Its truth is unassailable.

And he closes by stirring our imagination, “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could

not contain the books that would be written. Amen.” We’ll have to wait for heaven to know it all...