

**SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON**

**Lord's Day Morning 11:00am**

**Easter Service**

**Date 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Preacher Rev Philip Knowles, Hymns 114, 120, 119.**

**Read: John 20:1-10 Text John 20:1-10**

**Title- Christ's Linen Clothes & Napkin**

On the third day after Christ died on the cross, it was the first day of the week and Mary Magdalene came to the tomb.

Now we know from the Matthew, Mark and Luke, other woman were present at the tomb of Jesus, but John focuses on Mary Magdalene.

It was early in the morning, and Mary seen that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre or tomb.

Luke records his account, **Luke 24**, the angelic messengers, said to Mary Magdalene **He is not here but is risen...**"

Mary then runs to the disciples, and tells Peter and John, they have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre and we not where they had laid Him.

Upon hearing Mary's words, Peter and John both ran together to the tomb, to see with their own eyes, what Mary had stated concerning the absence of Christ's body.

When they reached the tomb, John entered first and then Peter. straightway they see that Christ's body is not there, **but what they do see are his burial clothes.**

These clothes were the linen wrappings put around the body of Christ and the linen napkin that had been wrapped around the head of Christ.

Remember, Joseph of Arimathea out of courage, asked Pilate for the body of Christ to prepare it for burial, as this was the Jewish way to bury the dead.

**John 19:39-40** Joseph and Nicodemus, ***brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. <sup>40</sup> Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.***

The Jews normally wrapped the dead person's body in linen, while they mixed in dry spices.

The body was wrapped up to the shoulders.

Then they separately wrapped the head with a face cloth, sort of like a turban, napkin, to cover the entire head.

remember when Christ raised Lazarus from the dead calling him forth from the tomb, **John 11:44** states ***"he that was dead, came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin...."***

***the clothes and napkin wrapped or bound around the body and head was the Jewish form of burial.***

Once Christ was placed in the tomb, the stone was rolled over the entrance, and it was then sealed securely with extra guards placed to keep watch, so that no one would get in and Christ would rise out.

However, every human attempt to catch the resurrection take place, or to stop the resurrection taking place failed, because Christ arose as He said.

Mary, John and Peter came and seen the stone was rolled away and Christ's body was not in the tomb.

***The very fact the stone was rolled away from the door, was not to let Jesus out, He had already risen, rather it was to let others in and see He is not here, He is risen.***

***you see just as the empty tomb testified of Christ's resurrection,***

***So also the linen clothes and napkin testified of Christ's resurrection.***

***Today we will consider Christ's linen clothes and napkin***

### **I FIRST, THE PLACEMENT OF CHRIST'S LINEN CLOTHES AND NAPKIN**

When John and Peter entered Christ's tomb, they viewed the very spot or place where Christ's body would have been, and that was seen by the location of the linen clothes, and napkin.

The angel said in **Matthew 28:6** **come see the place where the Lord lay.**

The linen clothes that were wrapped around Christ were undisturbed. The napkin that was around His face **was wrapped together in a place by itself.**

When Joseph and Nicodemus prepared Christ's body for burial, they **wound** or as **Matthew 27:59** says "...**wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.**"

The word **wrapped** means **to roll up or entwine** the idea **tight, nothing loose, to bind together.**

Yet the linen clothes are positioned in such a way, and wrapped together, as if a body was still there, **yet there is no body.**

**The answer must be**, Jesus had passed through His linen clothes and napkin, just as in **John 20:19** He passed through the shut door to stand in midst of His disciples.

Christ had wrapped or folded the napkin and laid it in its own place.

This is vital, there is a lesson because these details are in God's word.

***The linen clothes and the napkin were an object lesson, a sign to teach a spiritual truth, Christ's body was not stolen, rather He arose.***

John & Peter needed to observe the linen clothes and napkin, and learn the truth of the resurrection.

***verse 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.***

The word **scripture** refers to the Old Testament, as the NT was not yet written. We have the complete canon of scripture.

The word **knew** means ***to understand***, but they ***knew not the scripture***, they didn't understand the OT scripture, they didn't connect the lessons showing that Christ ***must rise again from the dead***.

The same in Luke 24 with the **Two on the road to Emmaus**, Christ said they were slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken.

**Gen 22 of Isaac returning from the place of sacrifice,**

**Lev 14 the bird dipped in blood and free to soar the sky,**

**Jonah coming forth from the great fish's belly after three days**

Today, we do not need to search for Christ's burial clothes or napkin, rather we have the empty tomb, but above that, even if

the tomb was not found, or ruined in another earthquake, or as sceptics claim it's the wrong tomb, **we have a sure word of prophecy, the complete word of God to rest upon.**

Christ died, buried and rose again according to the scriptures, as He said.

**John 20:31** ***"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name***

You can trust the word of God:

for the **accomplishment** of Christ's death at the cross **for your Redemption,**

the **application** of Christ's death by the Spirit **for your Regeneration,**

and **acceptance** of Christ's death by the Father **for your Resurrection.**

## **II SECOND, THE PERCEPTION OF CHRIST'S LINEN CLOTHES AND NAPKIN**

when John and Peter entered Christ's empty tomb, they perceived with their own eyes the linen clothes that bound Christ.

However, their perception of how they viewed the linen clothes differed at first and then they believed the resurrection of Christ.

That is because from **verse 5, 6 and 8**, the words ***saw, seeth*** and ***saw***, while the same emphasis in English **to see**, yet in the original Greek each word has its own particular meaning and emphasis.

Each Greek word is different.

In **verse 5** ***And he (John) stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying yet went he not in.*** The word **saw** or

Greek word **Blepo** means **to take a glance at something.** It refers to a brief or quick glimpse.

when **John** arrived, didn't enter, but he did take a quick look, in the tomb and saw that Jesus was gone, but that the linen clothes, and napkin were still there.

**Verses 6-7** *Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, <sup>7</sup> And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself*

In **verse 6** the word **seeth** or the Greek word **Theoreo**, means **to scrutinize, this is to look with examination, to see every detail, to miss nothing, but to pay attention to detail.**

**Peter** is investigating closely. The parallel passage in **Luke 24:12** says that after Peter saw the linen clothes "...**laid by themselves,**" he left the tomb "**wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.**" at this stage Peter cannot bring Christ's words and what he sees together, his mind is clouded.

Before Peter leaves the tomb, John finally enters.

He too sees what Peter saw. **Verse 8** *Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*

In **verse 8** the word **saw** or the Greek word **Ido**, means **to look with understanding, we might say the light has come on, he get's it, grasps what has taken place,**

**its to arrive at a conclusion, which in this case was Jesus is risen as He said, He is alive.**

**He has not been taken away, or buried somewhere else rather He is risen from the dead, the tomb is empty.**

Notice John and Peter while they came to the same conclusion at different speeds, or time, the fact is they did come to the same conclusion Jesus is risen.

That is the same for every believer, while we all have arrived at the same truth according to scripture, Christ is risen, yet some get their faster and some it takes time to process, take in all the details in.

It may be down to maturity, age, or other reasons.

Some get all the details first time and arrive at the right conclusion, others it takes a couple of times to go over the ground to arrive at the right conclusion.

The truth of the resurrection is not about how fast we process all the information **but that we believe Christ is risen.**

if you take other believers, **Thomas** at first doubted, then believed.

**Two on the road to Emmaus**, Christ says they were slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken, but after time alone with Christ they believed.

**Mary** was anxious, but later believed.

***for Peter it took some time, to connect everything together, but he believed it, read the following verses also ch 21.***

***for John, he got it the second time, and believed it.***

in **John 20:19**, Christ appeared to all His disciples, to stand in their midst and strengthen their faith.

***But are there some today, who with all the truth of the resurrection, you've got it, you know the scriptural record, and heard the evidence, and see pictures of the empty tomb, yet you reject it.***

***to reject the resurrection, is to perish in sin, because you refuse to accept Christ is risen but chose to believe He is dead.***

***However, there is hope for the hopeless, deliverance for deniers, the gospel of Christ's death, burial and resurrection sets sinners free.***

Paul said in **Romans 10:9**, ***That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.***

### **III THIRD, THE PROOF OF CHRIST'S LINEN CLOTHES AND NAPKIN.**

Christ's linen clothes, proved, and confirmed many theories and accusation as false about the resurrection account.

remember the reason the tomb was securely sealed with a great stone, and then heavily guarded by the soldiers, was due to the claim that Christ would rise the third day, and these were done as **Matthew 27:64** shows ***lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead...*** in Pilate's mind no one can enter or exit the tomb without it being known.

But the scriptural account bears witness that His disciples did not steal His body but up from the grave Christ arose.

remember the burial process for Christ's body, those wrappings were **rolled or bind together tight.**

For anyone to steal the body, either they would have to remove, unwrap the wrappings and then put them back in the same shape or form.



It would need to be quick, but no one would have time, to unwrap the linen clothes and put them back neatly.

Also, if the body was stolen then they would have taken body wrapped, leaving nothing behind.

Furthermore, **Mathew 27:64-66** confirms not only was the stone rolled over the tomb, but the tomb was also made secure, as **verse 66** states, “***...sealing the stone, and setting a watch.***”

The extra seal was authorised and put by the Romans, so if the disciples would have broken the seal they would become guilty of breaking Roman law.

since the disciples were in fear they certainly would not have attempted to break the Roman seal to steal Christ's body.

Yet scripture teaches the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty and all that remained were the linen clothes and napkin, no body.

**Therefore, Christ's linen clothes, and napkin proves or validates His resurrection.**

Christ's body was or is not lost, stolen, still in another tomb, rather risen in the power of an endless life.

God was satisfied with the sinless sacrifice Christ offered for the sins of His people, on that basis, God raised Him from the dead, confirming His work on the cross was finished.

and as Paul said **Romans 1:4** ***Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:***

Christ's resurrection did not make Him the Son of God, nor did He become the Son of God by His resurrection.

Because there never was a time when Christ was not the Son of God.

Rather the words mean by His resurrection His claim to be the Son of God was verified.

Christ's linen clothes made a clear statement, Christ died but Christ is risen.

sinner's trust in Christ for salvation, only a living Saviour can save. Believer rejoice, Christ the Lord is risen today, Hallelujah.