

# John 20:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

## Analysis

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**Jesus saith unto her, Mary.** One word shatters Mary's darkness: her own name, spoken in the familiar voice of her Teacher. The power lies not in the word itself but in the Speaker—the Good Shepherd who " calleth his own sheep by name" (John 10:3). Recognition comes through personal address; Jesus doesn't explain the resurrection or offer evidence, but simply speaks her name with resurrection authority.

**She turned herself**—the Greek *strapheisa* (στραφεῖσα) indicates decisive turning, perhaps suggesting she had turned away in her grief, or that she now turns fully to face Him with new understanding. Her response—**Rabboni** (Ραββοῦνι, rabbouni)—represents the Aramaic intensive form of "rabbi," meaning "my great master" or "my dear teacher." This deeply personal address (note the possessive) expresses both reverence and intimate relationship. John translates for Greek readers: "**which is to say, Master**" (didaskalos, διδάσκαλος)—the same title used throughout Jesus's earthly ministry. Mary's Christology will grow, but this moment captures pure recognition: death hasn't ended their relationship; her Teacher lives.

## Historical Context

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The preservation of the Aramaic word "Rabboni" in John's Greek Gospel demonstrates the eyewitness nature of his account—he remembers Mary's exact words in her native language. Aramaic was the common language of first-century Judea, while Greek served as the lingua franca of the Roman Empire. Jesus and His

disciples typically spoke Aramaic in daily conversation, though Jesus likely knew Hebrew (for synagogue Scripture reading) and possibly Greek.

The rabbi-disciple relationship in Second Temple Judaism involved deep personal attachment. Disciples didn't merely learn content but imitated their rabbi's entire way of life. Mary's use of "Rabboni" reflects this relationship and her recognition that Jesus's death hasn't severed their bond. Her immediate recognition upon hearing her name spoken in familiar tones parallels ancient near Eastern shepherding practices where sheep recognized their shepherd's voice among many.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean that Jesus knows and calls you by name, and how should this shape your relationship with Him?
2. How does Mary's immediate recognition of Jesus's voice challenge or encourage your ability to discern Christ's leading?
3. Why does personal encounter with the risen Christ matter more than mere intellectual assent to resurrection doctrine?

## Interlinear Text

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λέγεται	αὐτῷ	ῷ	Ἰησοῦς	Μαρία	στραφεῖσα	ἐκείνη
herself and saith	unto her	G3588	Jesus	Mary	turned	She
G3004	G846		G2424	G3137	G4762	G1565
λέγεται	αὐτῷ	Ῥαββοῦνί	ῷ	λέγεται	Διδάσκαλε	
herself and saith	unto her	Rabboni	which	herself and saith	Master	
G3004	G846	G4462	G3739	G3004	G1320	

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 10:3** (Parallel theme): To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

**John 1:38** (References Jesus): Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

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