

John 20:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Analysis

He stooping down, and looking in (παράκυσας, parakypsas)—the participle suggests careful, cautious examination, bending to peer through the low tomb entrance. John **saw the linen clothes lying** (βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, blepei keimena ta othonia)—'linen clothes' (ὀθόνια, othonia) refers to the strips used in burial, distinct from the face cloth (σουδάριον, soudarion) mentioned in v.7.

Yet went he not in (οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν, ou mentoi eisēlthen)—John's hesitation contrasts with Peter's boldness (v.6) but shows reverence, not cowardice. The beloved disciple looks (βλέπει, blepei—physical sight) but reserves judgment until fuller evidence. This restraint before entering a tomb may also reflect purity concerns, though John doesn't specify this.

Historical Context

Jewish tombs typically had a low entrance requiring stooping, opening into a larger chamber. The linen wrappings would have been expensive—Joseph of Arimathea's wealth provided proper burial. Ritual purity laws made entering tombs defiling (Numbers 19:14), though the resurrection morning's urgency may have overridden such concerns. John's hesitation could be reverence, caution, or awaiting Peter as the group's recognized leader.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between looking at evidence and entering into its implications?
2. Why does seeing the grave clothes 'lying' matter—what would disorderly wrappings have suggested?
3. When has reverent hesitation before mystery been wiser than rushing to conclusions?

Interlinear Text

καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια
And **he stooping down** **and looking in saw** **lying** ^{G3588} **the linen clothes**
G2532 G3879 G991 G2749 G3608

οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν
not **yet** **in**
G3756 G3305 G1525

Additional Cross-References

John 19:40 (Parallel theme): 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.