

# John 20 Commentary

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

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**John 20:1** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene \*came early to the tomb, while it \*was still dark, and \*saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

- **Now on the first day:** John 20:19,26 Ac 20:7 1Co 16:2 Rev 1:10
- **Mary Magdalene \*came early:** [Mary Magdalene](#), as well as Peter, was evidently at the sepulchre twice on that morning of the resurrection. The first time of her going was some short time before her companions, the other Mary and Salome (Mt 28:1); and observing that the stone had been removed, she returned to inform Peter and John. In the meantime, the other Mary and Salome came to the sepulchre, and saw the angel, as recorded by Matthew and Mark. While these women returned to the city, Peter and John went to the sepulchre, passing them at some distance, or going another way, followed by Mary

Magdalene, who stayed after their return. This was her second journey; when she saw two angels, and then Jesus himself, as here related; and immediately after Jesus appeared to the other women, as they returned to the city. (Mt 28:9, 10) In the meantime Joanna and her company arrived at the sepulchre, when two angels appeared to them, and addressed them as the one angel had done the other women, (Lu 24:1-10.) They immediately returned to the city, and by some means found the apostles before the others arrived, and informed them of what they had seen; upon which Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, but saw only the linen clothes lying. (Lu 24:12.) Mt 28:1-10 Mk 16:1,2,9 Lu 24:1-10

- **the stone:** Mt 27:60,64-66 Mt 28:2 Mk 15:46 Mk 16:3,4
- Alfred Edersheim - [ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD](#)
- Alfred Edersheim - [‘ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.’](#)

#### Related Passages:

John 19:25+ Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and **Mary Magdalene**.

Luke 8:2+ and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: **Mary** who was called **Magdalene**, from whom seven demons had gone out,

### THE FIRST DAY IS ALSO THE "THIRD DAY"

**RIDDLE:** How could the first day be the third day?

**Now on the first day of the week** - Yes, it was the first day, but just as significant is the truth that it was the third day after the crucifixion, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy (cf Mt 16:21, Mt 17:23, Mt 20:19, Lk 9:22, Lk 13:32, Lk 18:33, Lk 24:7, Lk 24:46). Early on Sunday morning, Resurrection Day, First Fruits (much better title than "Easter"). The Sabbath lasted from 6 PM Friday to 6 PM Saturday and the first day is the third day Jesus had predicted, the day He would rise from the dead.

*As love brought her to the cross,  
now love draws her to the grave*

-- [Brian Bell](#)

**Mary Magdalene came** early (*proi*) to the tomb (*mnemeion*), while it **was** still dark (*skotia*), and **saw** (*blepo*) the stone (*lithos*) already taken away (*airo*) from the tomb (*mnemeion*) - See [comparison of the 4 Gospel accounts](#) **Mary Magdalene** was one of the women at the foot of Jesus' cross (Jn 19:25+ ) **Mary** actually discovered three unusual things on this monumental morning - (1) Seal broken, (2) Stone removed – “away from the entrance” (The stone was moved so people could see in, not to let Jesus out!) and (3) Soldiers went AWOL. To Mary these led her to believe Jesus' tomb had been violated, so she jumped to conclusions and ran.

**Bob Utley** - This was Sunday, the first work day following the high Sabbath of Passover week, when the first fruits were offered in the temple. Jesus was the first fruits of the dead (cf. 1 Cor.15:23). Jesus' appearances on three successive Sunday nights set the stage for believers worshiping on Sundays (i.e., "the Lord's day," cf. John 20:19, 26; Luke 24:36ff; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). At first, the believers met with the synagogue on the Sabbath and with fellow believers either before work or after work on Sundays. About A.D. 90, a Pharisaic reform instituted a series of oaths called "the Eighteen Benedictions" to synagogue liturgy. These oaths specifically rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Therefore, Sunday became the early church's Sabbath....Although John's Gospel does not state the purpose of Mary's visit, Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56 mention that several women (cf. John 20:2) came early to anoint Jesus' body with spices. Apparently they did not know of Joseph and Nicodemus' anointing or thought it needed to be supplemented.

**NET NOTE** - John does not mention that Mary Magdalene was accompanied by any of the other women who had been among Jesus' followers. The synoptic accounts all mention other women who accompanied her (although Mary Magdalene is always mentioned first). Why John does not mention the other women is not clear, but Mary probably becomes the focus of the author's attention because it was she who came and found Peter and the beloved disciple and informed them of the empty tomb (20:2). Mary's use of the plural in v. 2 indicates there were others present, in indirect agreement with the synoptic accounts.

**Larry Richards** - There is no more carefully documented event in ancient history than the death and resurrection of Jesus. The evidence is indisputable. People do not have to understand. But any careful examination of the testimony compels belief that Jesus is risen indeed. (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary PAGE 810](#))

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**Tomb** (3419) **mnemeion** from mneme = memory, remembrance) literally means a memorial and then a monument to commemorate

the dead (Mt 23:29), but most often referred to a tomb, grave or sepulcher. Most uses refer to the tomb in which Jesus' dead body was laid - Mt 27:60; Mt 28:8; Mk 15:46; 16:2, 3, 5, 8; Lk 23:55; 24:1, 2, 9, 12, 22, 24; John 19:42; 20:1-4, 6, 8, 11 Acts 13:29.

**Walter Kaiser** - [Hard Sayings of the Bible - see page 472 - What Happened at the Resurrection?](#) The story of the resurrection in John is quite exciting and seemingly straightforward. One woman shows up at the tomb, discovers it is open, informs the disciples, who investigate, and then meets first an angel and afterward Jesus. This straightforwardness is true enough so long as we look only at one Gospel. When we examine Matthew 28:1–8 or Mark 16:1–8 or Luke 24:1–10 we discover differing pictures. Can these pictures be put together? If they cannot, what does this mean for the truth of the accounts? In responding to this issue, it would be helpful to look at the events in the four accounts

COMPARISON OF RESURRECTION IN THE FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS				
EVENT	Mt 28:1-8	Mk 16:1-8	Lk 24:1-10	Jn 20:1-8
When?	Dawn	Just after sunrise	Very early in the morning	While it was still dark
Who comes first?	Mary Magdalene and the other Mary	Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome	Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others	Mary Magdalene
What do they find?	earthquake with angel who rolls back the stone	stone rolled away	stone rolled away	stone removed from the entrance
Whom do they see?	angel sitting on the stone	young man in white robe, sitting on the right	two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning	no one
What do they do?	ran to tell his disciples	fled from the tomb, afraid to say anything	told what had happened to the Eleven and others	ran to tell Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved
What happens next?	Jesus met them	--	Peter goes to the tomb to investigate	Peter and the other disciple investigate
What is the third scene?	guards report to chief priests and are bribed	--	story of two disciples on Emmaus road	Mary sees two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been

When we examine these four accounts, we notice some similarities.

**First**, all agree that the **events happened around dawn**, although they disagree about whether it was already light. Given that the events happened over a period of time, this difference is hardly significant.

**Second**, all agree that Mary Magdalene was at least one of the ones discovering that the body had disappeared. The purposes of the individual narratives seems to determine how many other women are mentioned (with Luke, who has a special interest in women, noting the most women).

**Third**, all agree that **the women find an open, corpseless tomb**. Matthew seems to imply that they also saw the opening of the tomb, although he may narrate the opening of the tomb as something that happened while the women were traveling and before they arrived at the tomb. None of the other Gospels mentions the **guards**, so how the tomb gets opened is less of a problem for them.

**Fourth**, all agree that the **women saw one or more angels** (only Luke has two). However, the angel in John's account appears to be functioning in a different narrative role than the ones in the other accounts. It is, perhaps, more accurate to say that John does not inform us if Mary saw anyone at the tomb before going to

tell the disciples. What the angels say also differs, although in all cases the women are informed that Jesus is not there. In the various accounts they are told not to fear (and that they were afraid anyway), to report to the disciples and to meet Jesus in Galilee.

**Finally, all agree that the women left the tomb**, and three of the four accounts note that they did inform the disciples. (Mark breaks off with verse 8, the longer ending probably not being part of the original text; it is debated whether an original ending of Mark has been lost or whether he intended to break off with the women in fear and the question of whether they would follow Jesus into Galilee hanging in the air.)

Furthermore, two of the accounts agree that the woman or women met Jesus, that they tried to hold on to him, and that he sent them on their way. However, John appears to put this meeting after Peter and the beloved disciple investigate, and Matthew puts it before the women report to the disciples.

#### **What can we conclude from this data?**

First, it is possible to make this data into a coherent story. If we assume that the pre- or post-dawn timing depends on whether one gives the time of the women starting their trip or their arrival at the tomb, if we assume that the earthquake and angelic descent happened before the women arrived at the tomb, if we merge what the angels say into one account, if we assume that the angels moved around, and if we assume that Mary Magdalene remained behind at the tomb while the others went and reported (and thus had a separate meeting with Jesus), one can make a single coherent account out of the various stories. Obviously, if there were two angels, one writer could report only one. Not every writer has to report all of the details another mentions. In other words, these are different stories but not necessarily conflicting stories. All could be true at the same time.

Second, while it is possible to make the data fit into a coherent story, we cannot be sure that we have the right coherent story. We have a jigsaw puzzle of information and cannot be sure that we have all of the pieces. Thus, since the Scripture has not given us a single unified story, we must be careful or else we will end up believing that our reconstruction is the truth. A reconstruction may be the truth or it may distort the truth. Perhaps if we had some other critical pieces of information we would make quite a different reconstruction.

Third, these stories are exactly what one would expect to discover after a significant event like the resurrection. The chancellor of this author's university died at the end of an address to the student body. Within an hour of the event a sociology professor had his thirty students each write down their own account of what had happened. Each was instructed to write as honest and detailed account as they could, given the limited time of the class period. When the accounts were later compared, there were numerous differences in detail, although all agreed that the chancellor had died at the end of his address. Presumably each Gospel writer had a series of stories about the resurrection to sort through. For example, we know that Matthew knows and values Mark's account, but in the resurrection story he obviously has some independent information as well. The Evangelists selected and combined data to get the accounts that they give us. But even the beloved disciple in John is not an eyewitness of most of the events, so we are not surprised to find a lot of differences in their reporting what happened.

Finally, when we try to put the stories together, we miss the point of the authors. The church accepted into its canon four separate Gospels, viewing each as inspired by God. It did not put into the canon a harmony of these Gospels (although such existed). The fact is that each writer is trying to bring out his unique perspective and theological insights by the details he includes or leaves out (although, unless Matthew and Luke are differing from Mark, which we know that they knew, we often cannot be sure that the author actually knows a detail and so purposely leaves it out). Matthew wants to underline the miraculous and also explain a rumor that the body of Jesus was stolen. Luke stresses the fulfillment of the words of Jesus and yet the disbelief of the apostles. John, by focusing on a single character and her intimate discussion with Jesus, points out that in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus the promises of John 13–16 are fulfilled. Jesus cannot be held, for it is better for him to go to the one who is not only his Father but is now also our Father. It is when we look at the resurrection through such eyes, informed by the perspective of each Gospel writer, that we see not simply a miracle, nor even the fact of the resurrection, but the message the church has believed that God wanted to communicate in and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## **SUMMARY OF THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**Edwin Blum** has an excellent chart giving the timeline of the appearances of Jesus during the 40 days from His resurrection to His ascension. Note the "+" **SIGN** after the Scripture links to comments on that specific verse.

#### **FORTY DAYS—From Resurrection to Ascension**

##### **SUNDAY MORNING**

1. An angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb before sunrise (Matt. 28:2-4+).
2. Women who followed Jesus visited Jesus' tomb and discovered Him missing (Matt. 28:1+; Mark 16:1-4+; Luke 24:1-3+; John 20:1+).
3. Mary Magdalene left to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2+).
4. The other women, remaining at the tomb, saw two angels who told them about the Resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7+; Mark 16:5-7+; Luke 24:4-8+).
5. Peter and John visited Jesus' tomb (Luke 24:12+; John 20:3-10+).
6. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and Jesus appeared to her alone in the garden (Mark 16:9-11+; John 20:11-18): His **FIRST** appearance.
7. Jesus appeared to the other women (Mary, mother of James, Salome, and Joanna) (Matt. 28:8-10+): His **SECOND** appearance.
8. Those who guarded Jesus' tomb reported to the religious rulers how the angel rolled away the stone. They were then bribed (Matt. 28:11-15+).
9. Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5+): His **THIRD** appearance.

##### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON**

10. Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13+; Luke 24:13-32+): His **FOURTH** appearance.

##### **SUNDAY EVENING**

11. The two disciples from Emmaus told others they saw Jesus (Luke 24:33-35+).
12. Jesus appeared to 10 apostles, with Thomas absent, in the Upper Room (Luke 24:36-43+; John 20:19-25+): His **FIFTH** appearance.

##### **THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY**

13. Jesus appeared to the 11 Apostles, including Thomas, and Thomas believed (John 20:26-28+): His **SIXTH** appearance.

##### **THE FOLLOWING 32 DAYS**

14. Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and performed a miracle of fish (John 21:1-14+): His **SEVENTH** appearance.
15. Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20+; Mark 16:15-18+; 1 Cor. 15:6+): His **EIGHTH** appearance.
16. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James (1 Cor. 15:7+): His **NINTH** appearance.
17. At Jerusalem Jesus appeared again to His disciples (Luke 24:44-49+; Acts 1:3-8+) : His **TENTH** appearance.
18. On the Mount of Olives Jesus ascended into heaven while the disciples watched (Mark 16:19-20+; Luke 24:50-53+; Acts 1:9-12+).

(SOURCE: [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Page 92](#))

**BACKGROUND NOTE (Wikipedia)** - **Albert Henry Ross** (1 January 1881 – 14 September 1950<sup>[1]</sup>), (pseudonym **Frank Morison**), was an English advertising agent and freelance writer known for writing the [Christian apologetics](#) book *Who Moved the Stone?* and *And Pilate Said.....* He is best known today for writing the book *Who Moved the Stone?*<sup>[19]</sup> It was first published in 1930 in England by [Faber & Faber](#) and has been repeatedly reprinted (in 1944, 1955, 1958, 1962, 1977, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1996 and 2006)<sup>[20]</sup> as well as translated into several languages.<sup>[21]</sup> The book analyses biblical texts about the events related to the [crucifixion](#) and [resurrection](#) of [Jesus of Nazareth](#). Ross was skeptical regarding the resurrection of [Jesus](#), and set out to analyse the sources and to write a short paper entitled *Jesus – the Last Phase*<sup>[19]</sup> **to demonstrate the apparent myth.**<sup>[22]</sup> However, in compiling his notes, he came to be convinced of the truth of the resurrection, and set out his reasoning in the book. [T. S. Eliot](#), a literary consultant and an editorial board member at Faber & Faber publishers, read the manuscript when it was submitted for publication. Eliot was enthusiastic about the text and recommended that Faber & Faber publish the book.<sup>[23]</sup> The book was released in time for [Lent](#) in 1930 and Eliot passed complimentary copies for review to authors such as [G. K. Chesterton](#).<sup>[24]</sup> In Chesterton's review, he remarked that he picked the book up "under the impression that it was a detective story" and found that the case for the resurrection was "treated in such a logical and even legal manner."<sup>[25]</sup>

Many people have become [Christian](#) after reading the book, and writers including [John Warwick Montgomery](#) and [Josh McDowell](#), (ED: SEE [CHAPTER 7 "WHO WOULD DIE FOR A LIE? IN JOSH MCDOWELL'S "MORE THAT A CARPENTER"](#)) have used his book in their own discussions on the resurrection.<sup>[26]</sup> [Dorothy L. Sayers](#) stated that she relied on Morison's discussion of the trial of Jesus while writing her play *The Man Born To Be King*.<sup>[27]</sup> (ED: [SEE ONLINE COPY OF THIS WORK](#)) (Sayers had been Ross's colleague while she worked as an advertising copywriter at S. H. Benson in London from 1922 to 1931.)<sup>[28]</sup>

After the release of *Who Moved the Stone*, the editor of the London newspaper *The Sphere* invited Ross to contribute articles to a religious column that were published from 1930 to 1934.<sup>[29]</sup>

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#### Related Resource:

- [Trial & Crucifixion of Jesus-Parallel Passages](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Mary Magdalene?](#)

**ANSWER** - **Mary Magdalene** was a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons (Luke 8:2). The name Magdalene likely indicates that she came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. After Jesus cast seven demons from her,

she became one of His followers.

**Mary Magdalene** has been associated with the “woman in the city who was a sinner” (Luke 7:37) who washed Jesus’ feet, but there is no scriptural basis for making that connection. **Mary Magdalene is nowhere in the Bible identified as a prostitute or as an immoral woman**, despite popular portrayals of her as such.

**Mary Magdalene** is also often associated with the woman whom Jesus saved from stoning after she had been taken in adultery (John 8:1–11). But, again, this is an association with no evidence. The movie *The Passion of the Christ* made this connection. This view is possible but unlikely, and it is certainly not taught in the Bible.

**Mary Magdalene** witnessed most of the events surrounding the crucifixion. She was present at the mock trial of Jesus; she heard Pontius Pilate pronounce the death sentence; and she saw Jesus beaten and humiliated by the crowd. She was one of the women who stood near Jesus during the crucifixion to try to comfort Him. The earliest witness to the resurrection of Jesus, she was sent by Jesus to tell the others (John 20:11-18). Although this is the last mention of her in the Bible, she was probably among the women who gathered with the apostles to await the promised coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14).

The fiction novel “**The DaVinci Code**” made the claim that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. Some of the non-biblical early Christian writings (considered heresy by the early Christians) hint at a special relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus. However, there is no evidence whatsoever to support the belief that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. The Bible does not even hint at such an idea.

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#### **QUESTION - [Can the various resurrection accounts from the four Gospels be harmonized?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The events surrounding Jesus’ resurrection can be difficult to piece together. We must remember two things: first, the news of Jesus’ resurrection produced much excitement in Jerusalem, and in the ensuing chaos many people were going many different directions. Groups were separated, and several different groups paid visits to the tomb, possibly more than once. Second, the writers of the Gospels did not attempt an exhaustive narrative; in other words, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John had no intention of telling us every detail of the resurrection or every event in the order that it happened.

In the battle with skeptics regarding Jesus’ resurrection, Christians are in a “no-win” situation. If the resurrection accounts harmonize perfectly, skeptics will claim that the writers of the Gospels conspired together. If the resurrection accounts have some differences, skeptics will claim that the Gospels contradict each other and therefore cannot be trusted. It is our contention that the resurrection accounts can be harmonized and do not contradict each other.

However, even if the resurrection accounts cannot be perfectly harmonized, that does not make them untrustworthy. By any reasonable evaluation, the resurrection accounts from the four Gospels are superbly consistent eyewitness testimonies. The central truths - that Jesus was resurrected from the dead and that the resurrected Jesus appeared to many people - are clearly taught in each of the four Gospels. The apparent inconsistencies are in “side issues.” How many angels did they see in the tomb, one or two? (Perhaps one person only saw one angel, while the other person saw two angels.) To how many women did Jesus appear, and to whom did He appear first? (While each Gospel has a slightly different sequence to the appearances, none of them claims to be giving the precise chronological order.) So, while the resurrection accounts may seem to be inconsistent, it cannot be proven that the accounts are contradictory.

**Here is a possible harmony of the narratives of the resurrection of Christ and His post-resurrection appearances, in chronological order:**

1. Jesus is buried, as several women watch (Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42).
2. The tomb is sealed and a guard is set (Matthew 27:62-66).
3. At least 3 women, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, prepare spices to go to the tomb (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1).
4. An angel descends from heaven, rolls the stone away, and sits on it. There is an earthquake, and the guards faint (Matthew 28:2-4).
5. The women arrive at the tomb and find it empty. Mary Magdalene leaves the other women there and runs to tell the disciples (John 20:1-2).
6. The women still at the tomb see two angels who tell them that Jesus is risen and who instruct them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee (Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:2-8; Luke 24:1-8).
7. The women leave to bring the news to the disciples (Matthew 28:8).
8. The guards, having roused themselves, report the empty tomb to the authorities, who bribe the guards to say the body was stolen (Matthew 28:11-15).
9. Mary the mother of James and the other women, on their way to find the disciples, see Jesus (Matthew 28:9-10).



10. The women relate what they have seen and heard to the disciples (Luke 24:9-11).
  11. Peter and John run to the tomb, see that it is empty, and find the grave clothes (Luke 24:12; John 20:2-10).
  12. Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb. She sees the angels, and then she sees Jesus (John 20:11-18).
  13. Later the same day, Jesus appears to Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).
  14. Still on the same day, Jesus appears to Cleopas and another disciple on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32).
  15. That evening, the two disciples report the event to the Eleven in Jerusalem (Luke 24:32-35).
  16. Jesus appears to ten disciples—Thomas is missing (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).
  17. Jesus appears to all eleven disciples—Thomas included (John 20:26-31).
  18. Jesus appears to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25).
  19. Jesus appears to about 500 disciples in Galilee (1 Corinthians 15:6).
  20. Jesus appears to His half-brother James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
  21. Jesus commissions His disciples (Matthew 28:16-20).
  22. Jesus teaches His disciples the Scriptures and promises to send the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-5).
  23. Jesus ascends into heaven (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-12).
- 

### Dead Or Alive

They went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. — Luke 24:3

Today's Scripture : John 20:1-8

Long lines of visitors from all over the world wait patiently day after day to visit Lenin's Tomb and view his embalmed body. Although he died in 1924, the corpse of that Communist leader has seemingly suffered no decomposition. It looks deceptively lifelike. And its appearance is indeed deceptive. Skillful artists monitor the preserved corpse, artificially coloring its face and using wax to fill in any lines or the smallest spot of decay.

People also regularly visit Jerusalem to see the place where Jesus died and was buried. But there's a striking contrast—there is no body of the crucified Christ anywhere. Oh, there is one rock-hewn tomb, where according to tradition the nail-scarred, spear-driven, thorn-crowned corpse of Christ was laid. But resurrected by the power of God His Father, the Savior left His graveclothes behind when He emerged from the tomb, like a butterfly abandoning its cocoon.

Jesus is alive and you can know His presence today. Because of His atoning death and the empty tomb, you can have eternal life (1 Cor. 15:20-22). You need only to admit that you are a sinner and want His salvation. He'll give you new life now, and one day you'll see Him and be with Him forever (1 Peter 1:3-5). By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Grave, where is thy victory now?  
See the light upon His brow!  
Empty—see, the stony bed;  
Christ is risen from the dead!  
—Chisholm

Christ's empty tomb guarantees our full salvation.

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### Rise Up!

You, being dead in your trespasses, . . . He has made alive together with Him. — Colossians 2:13

Today's Scripture : John 20:1-8,19-20

On February 6, 1958, a chartered plane carrying most of the members of the English football (soccer) club Manchester United crashed on takeoff from Munich, Germany. With so many of their star players lost, some despaired over prospects for the club's survival. Yet today it is one of the best-known teams in the world. Fittingly, the man who rebuilt the team, Matt Busby, survived the crash himself.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus' arrest and subsequent crucifixion caused many of His followers to despair. The disciples themselves had lost hope. But their despondency evaporated on that first Easter morning when they found that the stone sealing the tomb had been moved aside (John 20:1). Jesus had risen!

Jesus soon appeared to Mary Magdalene (vv.11-16) and then to His disciples, who had gathered behind locked doors (v.19). His visit brought a remarkable change in them. As one version renders it, they were "overjoyed" (v.20 NIV).



Perhaps your world has crashed around you. It may be a deeply personal loss, a tragedy in your family, or some other great trial. Jesus' resurrection proved that He is greater than the greatest obstacles. He can rebuild your life—as He did with His disciples—starting today. By: C. P. Hia (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

He rose! And with Him hope arose, and life and light.  
Men said, "Not Christ, but death, died yesternight."  
And joy and truth and all things virtuous  
Rose when He rose.  
—Anon.

God can turn any difficulty into an opportunity.

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### **The Stone Which Blocked the Way - Ian Paisley**

"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Mark 16:3

Christ was dead. Yes, really and truly dead. He was also buried. Really and truly buried.

#### **The Stone Set**

Note, the stone was set there by man to block the entrance. As long as it stood there the door way was blocked. There was no way out of the sepulchre.

That stone is a type of our sin. Sin blocks the way out of the sepulchre of spiritual death for us all.

#### **The Stone Sealed**

The priests were anxious to destroy even the memory of Jesus. His words had stung their memories.

A Christless religion allied to a Christless state joined in sealing the stone. That sealed stone speaks of our sin, sealed with Christless Christianity and Godless State-Authority endeavouring to stop the rising again of the Son of God.

#### **The Stone Seat**

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Matthew 28:2

The angel made the stone his seat and declared from there the resurrection message, "Christ is not here, He is risen!" So, from the ruin of our once prized fortress of sin, the Gospel goes forth offering full pardon to all who will come and see the place where the Lord lay. Remember, the stone was removed, not to let Christ out, but rather to let you in to see that He was already gone. (See Romans 10:9.)

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### **GOD WILL MOVE THE STONE**

The women who sought to anoint the dead body of Jesus are to be commended for their tender love and regard for the Savior. Yet as they came near the place of burial, the practical difficulty of moving the heavy stone which sealed His tomb brought them unnecessary anxiety of spirit. Actually it had already been moved, and so their fears were groundless. So, too, we are often needlessly concerned over prospective difficulties which He graciously removes or helps us overcome when we have to meet them. Let us therefore be encouraged to exercise greater faith in facing possible obstructions on the pathway of duty. We may be sure of the Lord's providential assistance in such matters when we advance in His name and for His glory!

An anonymous author has given additional practical admonitions concerning this text in Mark's gospel in the following poetic words: What poor weeping ones were saying nineteen hundred years ago, we, the same weak faith betraying, say in our sad hours of woe; looking at some trouble lying in the dark and dread unknown, we, too, often ask with sighing, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Many a storm-cloud hov'ring o'er us never pours on us its rain; many a grief we see before us never comes to cause us pain. Ofttimes, on the dread tomorrow sunshine comes, the cloud has flown! Why then ask in foolish sorrow, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Burden not thy soul with sadness, make a wiser, better choice; drink the wine of life with gladness, God doth bid thee, saint, rejoice! In today's bright sunlight basking, leave tomorrow's cares alone; spoil not present joys by asking: "Who shall roll away the stone?"

Christian, go forward today on the pathway of service undaunted by possible future obstacles! Let your heart be cheered by the thought that God will somehow "move the stone." - [Our Daily Bread](#)

Oft, before we've faced the trial,  
We have come with joy to own  
Angels have from Heav'n descended,

And have rolled away "the stone"!

—Anon.

Take courage: if God doesn't choose to remove an obstacle, He will help you plow around it!

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### [Dear or Alive](#)

They went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. — Luke 24:3

Today's Scripture : John 20:1-8

Long lines of visitors from all over the world wait patiently day after day to visit Lenin's Tomb and view his embalmed body. Although he died in 1924, the corpse of that Communist leader has seemingly suffered no decomposition. It looks deceptively lifelike. And its appearance is indeed deceptive. Skillful artists monitor the preserved corpse, artificially coloring its face and using wax to fill in any lines or the smallest spot of decay.

People also regularly visit Jerusalem to see the place where Jesus died and was buried. But there's a striking contrast—there is no body of the crucified Christ anywhere. Oh, there is one rock-hewn tomb, where according to tradition the nail-scarred, spear-driven, thorn-crowned corpse of Christ was laid. But resurrected by the power of God His Father, the Savior left His grave clothes behind when He emerged from the tomb, like a butterfly abandoning its cocoon.

Jesus is alive and you can know His presence today. Because of His atoning death and the empty tomb, you can have eternal life (1 Cor. 15:20-22). You need only to admit that you are a sinner and want His salvation. He'll give you new life now, and one day you'll see Him and be with Him forever (1 Peter 1:3-5). By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Grave, where is thy victory now?

See the light upon His brow!

Empty—see, the stony bed;

Christ is risen from the dead!

—Chisholm

Christ's empty tomb guarantees our full salvation.

---

### [O Glorious Day](#)

[\(play\)](#)

One day when Heaven was filled with His praises  
One day when sin was as black as could be  
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin  
Dwelt among men, my example is He  
Word became flesh and the light shined among us  
His glory revealed

Living, He loved me  
Dying, He saved me  
Buried, He carried my sins far away  
Rising, He justified freely forever  
One day He's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain  
One day they nailed Him to die on a tree  
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected  
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He  
Hands that healed nations, stretched out on a tree  
And took the nails for me

Living, He loved me  
Dying, He saved me  
Buried, He carried my sins far away

Rising, He justified freely forever  
One day He's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer  
One day the stone rolled away from the door  
Then He arose, over death He had conquered  
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore  
Death could not hold Him, the grave could not keep Him  
From rising again

Living, He loved me  
Dying, He saved me  
Buried, He carried my sins far away  
Rising, He justified freely forever  
One day He's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming  
One day the skies with His glories will shine  
Wonderful day, my Beloved One bringing  
My Savior Jesus is mine

Living, He loved me  
Dying, He saved me  
Buried, He carried my sins far away  
Rising, He justified freely forever  
One day He's coming  
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day

**John 20:2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."**

- **to the other disciple whom Jesus loved:** John 13:23 19:26 21:7,20,24
- They have laid Him: John 20:9,13,15 Mt 27:63,64

## MARY RUNS TO TELL PETER AND JOHN

So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple ([mathetes](#)) whom Jesus loved ([phileo](#)), and said to them, "They have taken away ([airo](#)) the Lord ([kurios](#)) out of the tomb ([mnemeion](#)), and we do not know ([eido](#)) where they have laid Him - Mary had a sense of urgency and so ran to Peter and John (Jn 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20). Mary's statement "where they have laid Him" indicates she had no understanding of His resurrection, thinking that His body was still limp, lifeless and laying in some unknown location.

**NET NOTE** - the disciple ([mathetes](#)) whom Jesus loved,' This individual also is mentioned in Jn 19:26, Jn 20:2, Jn 21:7, and Jn 21:20. Some have suggested that this disciple is to be identified with Lazarus, since the Fourth Gospel specifically states that Jesus loved him (Jn 11:3, 5, 36). From the terminology alone this is a possibility; the author is certainly capable of using language in this way to indicate connections. But there is nothing else to indicate that Lazarus was present at the last supper; Mark 14:17 seems to indicate it was only the twelve who were with Jesus at this time, and there is no indication in the Fourth Gospel to the contrary. Nor does it appear that Lazarus ever stood so close to Jesus as the later references in John 19, 20 and 21 seem to indicate. When this is coupled with the omission of all references to John son of Zebedee from the Fourth Gospel, it seems far more likely that the references to the beloved disciple should be understood as references to him.

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**Disciple** (3101) [mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*" - see [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Another sources says mathetes is from from **math**- which speaks of "mental effort that thinks something

through" and thus describes is a learner; a follower who learns the doctrines and the lifestyle of the one they follow. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers. The Lord calls everyone to grow as a disciple (a learner of Christ; cf. also Mt 11:29,30+), one who lives in faith, who lives in and by His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**MATHETES IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 1:35; Jn. 1:37; Jn. 2:2; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:12; Jn. 2:17; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 3:22; Jn. 3:25; Jn. 4:1; Jn. 4:2; Jn. 4:8; Jn. 4:27; Jn. 4:31; Jn. 4:33; Jn. 6:3; Jn. 6:8; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:16; Jn. 6:22; Jn. 6:24; Jn. 6:60; Jn. 6:61; Jn. 6:66; Jn. 7:3; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:27; Jn. 9:28; Jn. 11:7; Jn. 11:8; Jn. 11:12; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 12:4; Jn. 12:16; Jn. 13:5; Jn. 13:22; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 16:17; Jn. 16:29; Jn. 18:1; Jn. 18:2; Jn. 18:15; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 18:17; Jn. 18:19; Jn. 18:25; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 19:27; Jn. 19:38; Jn. 20:2; Jn. 20:3; Jn. 20:4; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:10; Jn. 20:18; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:20; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:26; Jn. 20:30; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:2; Jn. 21:4; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:8; Jn. 21:12; Jn. 21:14; Jn. 21:20; Jn. 21:23; Jn. 21:24

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**QUESTION - [Who was the disciple whom Jesus loved?](#) |**

**ANSWER** - The Gospel of John is the only Gospel which mentions "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John 13:23 tells us, "One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to Him." John 19:26 declares, "When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son.'" John 21:7 says, "Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!'" This disciple is never specifically identified, but the identity of the disciple whom Jesus loved is clear. The disciple whom Jesus loved self-identifies as the author of the gospel (John 21:24), whom most scholars believe to be the apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.

First, only the Gospel of John mentions the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Second, John 21:2 lets us know who was fishing with Peter: "Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together..." The apostle John was a son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21). Third, there were three disciples who were especially close to Jesus: Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37; 14:33; Luke 8:51). The "disciple whom Jesus loved" could not be Peter, as Peter asks Jesus a question in regards to this disciple (John 21:20-21). That leaves us with James or John. Jesus made a statement about the possible "longevity" of the life of the disciple whom He loved in John 21:22. James was the first of the apostles to die (Acts 12:2). While Jesus did not promise the disciple whom He loved long life, it would be highly unusual for Jesus to say, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" if the disciple whom He loved was going to be the first disciple to die.

Church history tells us that the apostle John lived into the A.D. 90s and was the last surviving apostle. Early church tradition was unanimous in identifying John as the disciple whom Jesus loved. It seems that John had a closer relationship with Jesus than any of the other disciples. Jesus and John were essentially "best friends." Jesus entrusted John with the care of His mother, gave John the vision of the transfiguration, allowed John to witness His most amazing miracles, and later gave John the Book of Revelation. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [What is the importance of the empty tomb?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - From the earliest apostolic period, the reality of the empty tomb—the biblical truth that the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth was found empty by His disciples—has been at the center of the Christian proclamation. All four Gospels describe, to varying degrees, the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the empty tomb (Matthew 28:1–6; Mark 16:1–7; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–12). But are there any good reasons to think that these claims are historically accurate? Could a fair-minded investigator conclude that, in all probability, Jesus' tomb was found empty on that first Easter morning? There are several arguments that have convinced a good many historians that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was indeed found empty on the Sunday following His crucifixion.

First, the location of Jesus' tomb would have been known to Christians and non-Christians alike. While it is true that most victims of crucifixion were either thrown in a graveyard reserved for common criminals or simply left on the cross for birds and other scavengers to feed upon, the case of Jesus was different. The historical record indicates that Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, the very group that had orchestrated Jesus' execution. Many skeptical New Testament scholars have been convinced that Jesus' burial by Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to have been a Christian fabrication. Given the understandable hostility of the earliest Christians toward the Sanhedrin, whom they felt were largely responsible for their Master's death, it is unlikely that Jesus' followers would have invented a tradition about a member of the Sanhedrin using his own tomb to provide Jesus with a respectable burial.

In addition, recent archaeological discoveries have demonstrated that the style of tomb described in the burial accounts in the Gospels (an acrosolia or bench tomb) was largely used by the wealthy and other people of prominence. Such a description fits

nicely with what we know of Joseph of Arimathea. Moreover, when we couple these considerations with the fact that Arimathea was a town of little importance that lacked any type of scriptural symbolism and that no competing burial tradition exists, any serious doubt that Jesus was buried in Joseph's tomb is eliminated.

The significance of these facts should not be overlooked as the Sanhedrin would then have certainly known the location of Joseph's tomb, and thus, where Jesus had been interred. And if the location of Jesus' tomb was known to the Jewish authorities, it would have been nearly impossible for the Christian movement to have gained any traction in Jerusalem, the very city where Jesus was known to have been buried, had the tomb not been empty. Would not any of the Jewish religious leaders have taken the short walk to Joseph's tomb to verify this claim? Did not the Sanhedrin have every motivation to produce Jesus' corpse (if it were available) and put an end to these rumors of a resurrected Jesus once and for all? The fact that Christianity began to gain converts in Jerusalem tells us that no corpse had been produced despite the Jewish religious leadership having every motivation to produce one. If Jesus' crucified body had been produced, the Christian movement, with its emphasis on a resurrected Jesus, would have been dealt a lethal blow.

Second, the empty tomb is implied in the early oral formula quoted by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. While all four Gospels attest to the vacancy of Jesus' tomb, our earliest hint at the empty tomb comes from the Apostle Paul. Writing to the church at Corinth in approximately AD 55, Paul quotes an oral formula (or creed) that most scholars believe he received from the apostles Peter and James just five years after Jesus' crucifixion (Galatians 1:18–19). Paul states, "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:3–5). When Paul writes "... that he was buried, that he was raised..." it is strongly implied (given Paul's Pharisaical background) that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was empty. As a former Pharisee, Paul would have naturally understood that what goes down in burial comes up in resurrection; he accepted the idea of physical resurrection even before his encounter with Christ. Given that Paul's source for this creed was most likely the Jerusalem apostles and their proximity to the events in question, Paul's citation of this oral formula provides strong evidence that Jesus' tomb had been found empty and that this fact was widely known in the early Christian community. The oft-repeated objection that Paul was unaware of an empty tomb is answered when we see that elsewhere Paul taught that Jesus' resurrection was bodily in nature (Romans 8:11; Philippians 3:21). For Paul, a resurrection that did not produce a vacant tomb would have been a contradiction in terms.

Third, there appears to be strong enemy attestation of the existence of an empty tomb. The first of these comes from within the pages of the Gospel of Matthew itself where Matthew reports that there was an acknowledgment of the empty tomb by the Jewish leaders themselves (Matthew 28:13–15). They were claiming that the disciples had come and stolen away Jesus' body. Given the proximity of the writing of Matthew's Gospel to the event in question, such a claim would have been easy to disprove if untrue. For if Matthew were lying, his report of the Jewish response to the empty tomb proclamation could have easily been discredited as many of the contemporaries of the events in question would still have been alive when Matthew's Gospel was initially circulating. But why would they accuse the disciples of stealing Jesus' body if the tomb still contained the dead body of Jesus? The counter-accusation made by the Jews presupposes that the tomb was empty.

That the Jews accused the disciples of stealing Jesus' body is corroborated by the Christian apologist Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century (Dialogue with Trypho, 108) and then again around AD 200 by the church father Tertullian (De Spectaculis, 30). Both Justin and Tertullian were interacting with the Jewish debaters of their day and were in a position to know what it was their Jewish opponents were saying. They were not simply relying on Matthew's Gospel for their information; both Justin and Tertullian mention specific details not found in the Gospel of Matthew. In fact, all three of these writers cite details not mentioned by the others. Based on these considerations, it appears that there was an early Jewish acknowledgement of an empty tomb.

Fourth, all four Gospels report that the tomb of Jesus was discovered empty by women. This point is especially significant given the patriarchal nature of first-century Israel. While it is true that, under very limited circumstances, women were allowed to testify in a court of law, it is also the case that, in first-century Jewish society, a woman's testimony was worth far less than that of a man. If you were making up a story in an attempt to persuade others that Jesus had been resurrected, you would never have used women as your primary witnesses. Any made-up story would have featured male disciples like Peter, John, or Andrew as the discoverers of the empty tomb, as the testimony of men would have provided much-needed credibility to the story.

Yet the Gospels report that, while Jesus' male disciples were cowering in fear, hiding from the authorities, it was women who were the earliest witnesses of the empty tomb. There would simply be no reason for the early church to concoct such a scenario unless it was true. Why would the early Christians portray their male leadership as cowards and place females in the role of primary witnesses? One of these named female witnesses (Mary Magdalene) was said to have been possessed of seven devils earlier in her life, thus making her an even less reliable witness in the eyes of many. And yet, despite these evidential handicaps, the earliest Christians insisted that the first witnesses to the empty tomb were, in fact, women. The most likely explanation of this insistence is that these women were the initial witnesses of the empty tomb and that the earliest Christians were unwilling to lie about it despite

its potentially embarrassing nature.

All four of these arguments help to provide cumulative proof that the tomb of Jesus Christ was empty on the first Easter. Particularly telling is the conclusion of historian Michael Grant, himself a skeptic of Jesus' resurrection, "...if we apply the same sort of criteria that we would apply to any other ancient literary sources, then the evidence is firm and plausible enough to necessitate the conclusion that the tomb was, indeed, found empty."

Of course, there is more to the story than merely an empty tomb. The reason the tomb was found empty was that the man who was buried there had risen from the dead. Jesus would not only vacate His grave but appear to numerous people individually (Luke 24:34) and in groups (Matthew 28:9; John 20:26–30; 21:1–14; Acts 1:3–6; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7). And His resurrection from the dead would be the sure proof that He was who He claimed to be (Matthew 12:38–40; 16:1–4)—the risen Son of God, our only hope of salvation.

**John 20:3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.**

- Lu 24:12

### **PETER AND JOHN RESPOND TO MARY**

So ([oun](#)) is a term of conclusion. Peter concluded from Mary's message it was time to check the tomb to see if it were truly empty.

**Peter and the other disciple ([mathetes](#)) went forth (out) ([exerchomai](#)), and they were going to the tomb ([mnemeion](#))** - Peter and John head out from where they were to investigate the tomb.

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#### **Living With Expectation**

Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together. —John 20:3-4

Today's Scripture : John 20:1-10

When the dark day of Jesus' crucifixion drew to a close, it seemed that the most wonderful of all lives had come to an end. For a few brief years, Christ had astounded the crowds and His followers with the wisdom of His teaching and the wonder of His miracles. But Jesus chose not to save Himself from the cross, and now His life was over. It seemed that nothing more could be expected of Him.

Hope returned, however, on that first resurrection morning. A painting by Eugene Burnand portrays Peter and John running to the tomb. Shortly after dawn, Mary Magdalene had told them that she and her friends had found the tomb empty. In Burnand's painting, the faces of Peter and John show contending emotions of anguish and relief, of sorrow and surprise, of despair and wonder as they race toward the tomb. Their gaze is eagerly fixed forward, turning the viewer's attention to the sepulcher. What did they find? An empty tomb—the Savior was alive!

Christ still lives. But many of us go from day to day as if He were still in the grave. How much better to look beyond the empty tomb to the One who can fill our lives with the power of His resurrection! By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Christ left the grave one glorious day  
And vanquished death and sin;  
He opened wide the gates of heaven  
That we might enter in.  
—Anon.

The victim of Good Friday became the victor of Easter.

**John 20:4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;**

- **ran ahead faster:** 2Sa 18:23 Lev 13:30 1Co 9:24 2Co 8:12

## THE OTHER DISCIPLE THE "BELOVED DISCIPLE"

The two were running together; and the other disciple ([mathetes](#)) ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb ([mnemeion](#)) first - John is faster than Peter, but that does not tell us much more. Was there an age difference? We simply do not know why John was the faster of the two. We can ask him in Heaven!

**NET NOTE** - The other disciple (the 'beloved disciple') ran on ahead more quickly than Peter, so he arrived at the tomb first. This verse has been a chief factor in depictions of John as a young man (especially combined with traditions that he wrote last of all the gospel authors and lived into the reign of Domitian). But the verse does not actually say anything about John's age, nor is age always directly correlated with running speed.

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### Running to Jesus

Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. John 20:4

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:1–10

On a trip to Paris, Ben and his friends found themselves at one of the renowned museums in the city. Though Ben wasn't a student of art, he was in awe as he looked upon the painting titled The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection by Eugène Burnand. Without words, the looks on the faces of Peter and John and the position of their hands speak volumes, inviting onlookers to step into their shoes and share their adrenaline-charged emotions.

Based on John 20:1–10, the painting portrays the two running in the direction of the empty tomb of Jesus (v. 4). The masterpiece captures the intensity of the two emotionally conflicted disciples. Though at that juncture theirs wasn't a fully formed faith, they were running in the right direction, and eventually the resurrected Jesus revealed Himself to them (vv. 19–29). Their search was not unlike that of Jesus seekers through the centuries. Although we may be removed from the experiences of an empty tomb or a brilliant piece of art, we can clearly see the good news. Scripture compels us to hope and seek and run in the direction of Jesus and His love—even with doubts, questions, and uncertainties. Tomorrow, as we celebrate Easter, may we remember Jesus' words: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). By: Arthur Jackson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

If you don't know Jesus, what will you do to begin running toward Him and His love? If you're a believer, how will you share His love with others?

Dear Jesus, lead me into Your loving arms today.

**John 20:5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.**

- **saw:** John 11:44 19:40

### **Related Passages:**

Luke 24:12+ But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he \*saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

## JOHN STOOPS TO SEE GRAVE CLOTHES

**And stooping** ([parakupto](#)) He had to stoop most likely because the entrance to tombs was generally less than 3ft high which meant an adult male would not only have to stoop but potentially even to crawl in order to enter such tombs.

*And looking in, he saw* ([blepo](#)) **the linen wrappings** ([othonion](#) - Jn 19:40) **lying there; but he did not go in**- It is interesting that there is no description of smells, either spices or early decay of flesh, which we would not expect because of the prophecy in Ps 16:10<sup>+</sup>. Apparently it is still early in the morning (cf Jn 20:1<sup>+</sup>) The position of the wrappings would strongly suggest that they had not been unwound from Jesus' body. Obviously this would have been confusing if they thought someone had stolen His body. Why would a grave robber have left the clothes and taken the body of Jesus?"

**Spurgeon Study Bible** - "Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in." John knew they had not taken



away the body of Jesus [as Mary had concluded in verse 2], for if they had, they certainly would not have taken off the linen clothes. It would have been difficult and would have taken considerable time to unwrap the cold grave clothes when they were bound to the body by the ointments that had been used.

**NET NOTE** - Presumably by the time the beloved disciple reached the tomb there was enough light to penetrate the low opening and illuminate the interior of the tomb sufficiently for him to see the strips of linen cloth lying there. The author does not state exactly where the linen wrappings were lying. Sometimes the phrase has been translated "lying on the ground," but the implication is that the wrappings were lying where the body had been. The most probable configuration for a tomb of this sort would be to have a niche carved in the wall where the body would be laid lengthwise, or a low shelf like a bench running along one side of the tomb, across the back or around all three sides in a U-shape facing the entrance. Thus the grave clothes would have been lying on this shelf or in the niche where the body had been.

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**Stoop and look** (3879) **parakupto** from **pará** = beside, aside + **kúpto** = bend forward, stoop) means to stoop or bend beside or sideways in order to look into. It means to look at with head bent forward, to look into with the body bent, to stoop and look into and figuratively to look carefully into, to inspect curiously or with a focus on satisfying one's curiosity. The idea was to down and look into in order to see something exactly.

**Parakupto** - 5x/5v - **look, 1; looks intently, 1; stooped and looked, 1; stooping and looking, 2** Luke 24:12; John 20:5, 11; Jas 1:25; 1 Pet 1:12

**Saw** (991) **blepo** basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, and and imply special contemplation (e.g., often in the sense of "keep your eyes open," or "beware") **Blepo** indicates greater vividness than **horao**, a similar verb meaning "to see", for according to W E Vine **blepo** expresses "a more intentional, earnest contemplation. **TDNT** says that like **horao** "**blepo** also means "to see" with a stronger emphasis on the function of the eye, so that it serves as the opposite of "to be blind." It can also be used for intellectual or spiritual perception, and in the absolute for insight... (another word for seeing is) **theaomai** suggests spectators and denotes attentive seeing, i.e., "to behold."

**BLEPO IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 1:29; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:19; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:25; Jn. 9:39; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 11:9; Jn. 13:22; Jn. 20:1; Jn. 20:5; Jn. 21:9; Jn. 21:20

**John 20:6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there,**

- John 6:67-69 18:17,25-27 21:7,15-17 Mt 16:15,16 Lu 22:31,32

## PETER ENTERS THE TOMB

**And so Simon Peter also came, following (akolouthéo) him, and entered (eiserchomai) the tomb (mnemeion); and he saw (theoreo) the linen wrappings (othonion) lying there** - So now we have 3 witnesses who have seen the empty tomb. Note the verb **saw** (**theoreo**) speaks of one gazing like an interested spectator at a sporting event, paying attention to the details and doing so with focused attention.

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**Saw** (beheld, observed) (2334) **theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator) (Gives us English = theater, theorize) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. It means to gaze, to look with interest and purpose, to carefully examine with emphasis on or attention to details. To behold intensely or attentively. Our English word *scrutinize* conveys this sense, for it means to examine closely and minutely. To observe something with sustained attention, be a spectator and thus to understand or perceive. To contemplate (Heb 13:7). **Theoreo** in some contexts can include the idea of to behold with amazement. For example, in Mark 5:15 **theoreo** is not translated merely "**see**" but "**observe**" for as **Vincent** explains "(theoreo) was more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently. (**Ed Note:** And even with a sense of amazement.)"

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**James Butler - RESURRECTION PROOF John 20:6 - Sermon Starters**

"Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie" (John 20:6).

The resurrection of Christ makes Easter the triumphant occasion that it is. As the Apostle Paul said, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Satan attacks the resurrection doctrine unlike any other doctrine, for it is the key to our faith. One of the attacks which our text really refutes is that thieves stole the body and that is why folk found the tomb empty on that first Easter Sunday. Such a story has been believed by many folk since it was first perpetrated by religious leaders who paid off the guards of the tomb with big money to keep the truth quiet (Matthew 28:12–15). But our text clearly and forcefully refutes that story.

### FIRST—THE MINUTES FOR STEALING

Thieves do not do things leisurely. They do things quickly, lest they be caught. For Peter to find the grave clothes as they were in the tomb says no thieves stole the body because they would not take the time to remove the grave clothes nor would they leave them in such good order as they were. If they had removed the grave clothes, it would have taken too much time and they would have simply tossed them in a pile. But that is not how Peter found the grave clothes. They were lying in the tomb like a balloon with the air gone out of it.

### SECOND—THE MESS FOR STEALING

To steal the body from the grave without clothes is a ridiculous fable. The custom in those days was to wrap a dead body in many yards of linen material and mix the wrapping with spices to delay the terrible smell of a decaying body. This was done for Jesus by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38). They would not scrimp in this work because Joseph of Arimathea especially was a wealthy man (Matthew 27:57) and would not hold back in preparing Jesus body for burial. Thieves would not take the time or endure the mess of removing the sticky grave clothes. Furthermore, thieves would not want the body of Christ naked, it was a slimy mess and they would not want to carry a slimy mess which would be starting to smell. Thieves are not smart people, but they aren't that dumb.

### THIRD—THE MEN FOR STEALING

Who would steal the body. The tomb was sealed (Matthew 27:66). and there was a guard at the tomb of soldiers—no one would want to encounter them. The disciples were to scared to steal the body or to venture close to the tomb. The ladies did not come to steal the body either, for they came to add spices to the linen wrapping. They evidently did not trust Joseph and Nicodemus to do a good job of wrapping the body. The idea of stealing the body was perpetrated by the enemies of Christ (Matthew 27:64) in their attempt to prevent the resurrection news. Those who oppose the resurrection today are also the enemies of Christ and will embrace many stupid theories.

**John 20:7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.**

- John 11:44

### THE NEATLY ROLLED UP FACE CLOTH

**and the face-cloth ([soudarion](#)) which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings([othonion](#)), but rolled up in a place by itself** - Note the evidence mounting in support of a resurrection. Why do I say that? If the body had been stolen it is very unlikely the thieves would have unwound the linen wrappings. It is also unlikely the scene would have appeared orderly.

It is interesting that when Jesus revived Lazarus, he emerged from the tomb still bound hand and foot with wrapping so that Jesus had to command them to "Unbind him and let him go." (Jn 11:44+)

**Brian Bell** - John perceived that the missing body and the position of the grave clothes was not due to a robbery. His eyes adjusted & noticed the burial wrappings made rigid by the resin from the spices. The linen cocoon lays intact on the stone slab. Intact, but hollow. He realized that Jesus had risen from the dead and had gone through the grave clothes (ED: SOME MIGHT ARGUE WITH THIS CONCLUSION). The butterfly was free! 3. "The tomb was open, not to let Jesus' body out, but to let the disciples and the world see that He rose."

**NET NOTE** - The word translated **face cloth** is a Latin loanword (sudarium). It was a small towel used to wipe off perspiration (the way a handkerchief would be used today). This particular item was not mentioned in connection with Jesus' burial in John 19:40, probably because this was only a brief summary account. A **face cloth** was mentioned in connection with Lazarus' burial (John 11:44) and was probably customary. R. E. Brown speculates that it was wrapped under the chin and tied on top of the head to

prevent the mouth of the corpse from falling open (John [AB], 2:986), but this is not certain. Much dispute and difficulty surrounds the translation of the words **not lying with the strips of linen cloth but rolled up in a place by itself**. Basically the issue concerns the positioning of the grave clothes as seen by Peter and the other disciple when they entered the tomb. Some have sought to prove that when the disciples saw the grave clothes they were arranged just as they were when around the body, so that when the resurrection took place the resurrected body of Jesus passed through them without rearranging or disturbing them. In this case the reference to the face cloth being rolled up does not refer to its being folded, but collapsed in the shape it had when wrapped around the head. Sometimes in defense of this view the Greek preposition μετὰ (meta, which normally means “with”) is said to mean “like” so that the comparison with the other grave clothes does not involve the location of the face cloth but rather its condition (rolled up rather than flattened). In spite of the intriguing nature of such speculations, it seems more probable that the phrase describing the face cloth should be understood to mean it was separated from the other grave clothes in a different place inside the tomb. This seems consistent with the different conclusions reached by Peter and the beloved disciple (Jn 20:8–10). All that the condition of the grave clothes indicated was that the body of Jesus had not been stolen by thieves. Anyone who had come to remove the body (whether the authorities or anyone else) would not have bothered to unwrap it before carrying it off. And even if one could imagine that they had (perhaps in search of valuables such as rings or jewelry still worn by the corpse) they would certainly not have bothered to take time to roll up the face cloth and leave the other wrappings in an orderly fashion.

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**Face-cloth** (napkin)(4676) [soudarion](#) is from a Latin loan word sudarium from sudor (sweat) transliterated into Greek soudarion which is a sweatcloth handkerchief or napkin. (Luke 19:20; Acts 19:12). In Acts 19:12 the sweatcloths (“handkerchiefs,” KJV, NIV, NASB) Paul apparently tied around his head while making tents were taken to heal the sick (Bruce, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Acts, p.384). In John 11:44 and 20:7 the “cloths” were used, according to Jewish custom, to cover the faces of the corpses of Lazarus and Jesus (cf the ["Shroud of Turin"](#)). **Soudarion** is found in papyrus marriage contracts as part of the dowry. Soudarion is used only 4 times in the NT - Lk. 19:20; Jn. 11:44; 20:7; Acts 19:12 and there are no uses in the Septuagint.

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of the folded napkin in Christ's tomb after the resurrection?](#)

**ANSWER** - The detail of the folded napkin is found in the account of Jesus' resurrection in John 20:7, “And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself” (KJV). Different respected translations of the Bible handle this verse differently. Three of them translate the verse with the word *napkin* (KJV, AS, RSV). Others translate it with “burial cloth” (NIV), “handkerchief” (NKJV), or “face-cloth” (NASB). The Greek word is *soudarion*, which comes from a Latin word for “sweat.” It can refer to a towel for wiping sweat from one's face. It is used in the Greek to denote a towel or cloth, but not specifically a table napkin.

The other key word is *folded*. Was the burial cloth or napkin left folded in the tomb? Two of the translations use the word *folded* (NIV, NKJV). Others translate the word as “rolled up” (NASB, ASV, RSV) or “wrapped together” (KJV). The Greek word is *entulisso*, which is from words that may mean “to twist” or “to entwine.” The bottom line is that there is no agreement that it was a table napkin and no agreement that it was neatly folded in any meaningful way. The primary meaning of John 20:7 is that the cloth, which was placed over Jesus' head or face at burial, was separate from the rest of His grave clothes. The significance of that, if there is any, is unknown.

It has been rumored that folding the napkin at the table is a Jewish custom that means the person folding the napkin intends to return. Numerous Bible study sources have been checked, but there is nothing about this alleged Jewish custom of the folded napkins. The only references to this story seem to be from internet postings and emails that appear to have originated in 2007.

Many Bible commentators and authors have used this creative illustration to make specific application to the resurrection and return of Jesus Christ. The truth is that table napkins, such as we use today, were not used in Jesus' day. Jews would do an after-meal hand washing as part of the eating ritual. Washing of the hands before a meal was mandatory according to rabbinic injunction, but after washing their hands, did people dry them with a cloth? Apparently, there is no early rabbinic source that discusses how the hands were dried after washing them. The folding of the napkin as a sign that a dinner guest is not finished may be good European custom, but it appears this custom was unknown in the land of Israel in the time of Jesus.

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#### QUESTION - [Is the Shroud of Turin authentic?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

**"Shroud of Turin"**

**ANSWER** - The Shroud of Turin is a linen cloth that some believe to have been the cloth that Jesus Christ was buried in. Each of the three Synoptic Gospels mentions Jesus being wrapped in a cloth when He was taken down from the cross (Matthew 27:59; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53). The Shroud of Turin was “discovered,” or at least made public, in the 14th century AD. The Shroud of Turin is

named for the city where it is kept, Turin, Italy.

Here is a webpage that contains some pictures / images of the Shroud of Turin: <http://www.shroud.com/examine.htm>. Upon examination, the Shroud of Turin appears to be that of a man who was crucified. There are markings in the hands and feet that are consistent with the wounds inflicted by crucifixion. There also appear to be wounds indicative of torture similar to what is described in the Gospels, around the head, back, and legs.

Is the Shroud of Turin truly the cloth Jesus Christ was buried in? There is much debate on the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. Some are absolutely convinced that it is the burial cloth of Christ. Others believe it to be a fabrication or a work of art. There have been some dating tests that date the Shroud of Turin to the 10th century BC or later. Other tests have found pollen spores that are common to Israel and that could be dated to the 1st century AD. But there is no conclusive date either way.

Arguing against the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin is the Bible's complete lack of evidence for such a burial shroud. As mentioned earlier, the Bible mentions a whole piece of linen that was used to take Jesus' body from the cross. This linen was probably also used to transport the body to [Joseph of Arimathea's](#) nearby tomb. At the tomb hasty preparations for burial were made; these would have included washing the body and rewrapping it. Luke 24:12 mentions "the strips of linen." These same strips (plural) are mentioned twice in John 20:5–6. And John 20:7 says there was a "cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head." This description of the actual burial clothes—"strips" of linen, rather than one large piece; and a separate cloth to cover the head—seems to negate the claim that the Shroud of Turin is the burial shroud of Christ.

So, what are we to make of the Shroud of Turin? It might have been the burial shroud for some crucified man, but it is not likely to have any association with the death of Christ. Even if it were the authentic burial cloth of Christ, the Shroud of Turin is not to be worshiped or adored. Because of the doubtful nature of the Shroud of Turin, it cannot be used as proof for the resurrection of Christ. Our faith does not rely on the Shroud of Turin but on the written Word of God.

#### Related Resource:

- Wikipedia [Shroud of Turin](#)

**John 20:8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.**

- **and he:** John 20:25,29 1:50

### FOR JOHN SEEING IS BELIEVING

**So** ([oun](#) - term of conclusion) **the other disciple** ([mathetes](#)) **who had first come to the tomb** ([mnemeion](#)) **then also entered** - John goes into the empty tomb and beholds the orderly arrangement of the grave clothes which prompted his belief.

**And he saw and believed** ([pisteuo](#)) - John **saw** with understanding. He realized what had transpired. So while Peter had more sight, John more insight and was the first to believe that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. John's apprehension contrasted with that of doubting Thomas. In Jn 20:29 "Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed (AND THE FIRST OF THIS "TRIBE" WAS JOHN!)."

**NET NOTE** - What was it that the beloved disciple **believed** (since Jn 20:7 describes what he saw)? Sometimes it is suggested that what he believed was Mary Magdalene's report that the body had been stolen. But this could hardly be the case; the way the entire scene is narrated such a trivial conclusion would amount to an anticlimax. It is true that the use of the plural "**they**" in the following verse applied to both Peter and the beloved disciple, and this appears to be a difficulty if one understands that the beloved disciple **believed** at this point in Jesus' resurrection. But it is not an insuperable difficulty, since all it affirms is that at this time neither Peter nor the beloved disciple had understood the Scripture concerning the resurrection. Thus it appears the author intends his reader to understand that when the beloved disciple entered the tomb after Peter and saw the state of the grave clothes, he **believed** in the resurrection, i.e., that Jesus had risen from the dead.

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**Believed** ([4100](#)) [pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#); [pistos](#); related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. **Pisteuo** means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted. As discussed below Christ is the object of this type of faith that relies on His power and nearness to help, in addition to being convinced that His

revelations or disclosures are true. Depending on the context **Pisteuo** can refer to an "**heart belief**" (saving faith, genuine belief that leads to salvation, this believing involves not only the consent of the mind, but an act of the heart and will of the subject) or an **intellectual belief** (mental assent, "head" knowledge, not associated with bringing salvation if it is by itself).

**Vincent** notes that **pisteuo** "means to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading, and so runs into the meaning of to obey, properly as the result of persuasion

**PISTEUO IN JOHN** Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:41; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:50; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 5:47; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:5; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:30; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:36; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 12:36; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 12:38; Jn. 12:39; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 14:29; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 16:31; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:29; Jn. 20:31

**John 20:9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.**

- **they:** Mt 16:21,22 Mk 8:31-33 9:9,10,31,32 Lu 9:45 18:33,34 24:26 Lu 24:44-46
- **that:** Ps 16:10 Ps 22:15,22-31 Isa 25:8 26:19 53:10-12 Ho 13:14 Ac 2:25-32 13:29-37 1Co 15:4

## **BELIEF BUT WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING**

**For as yet they did not understand ([eido/oida](#)) the Scripture ([graphe](#)), that He must ([dei](#)) rise again ([anistemi](#)) from the dead ([nekros](#))** - John believed that Jesus had been resurrected but neither John or Peter grasp that the resurrection had been foretold in **the Scripture**, the Old Testament.

Almost 1000 years before David had penned these prophetic words...

Psalm 16:10+ For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

**Spurgeon** - Our Lord Jesus was not disappointed in his hope. He declared his Father's faithfulness in the words, "***thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,***" and that faithfulness was proven on the resurrection morning. Among the departed and disembodied Jesus was not left; he had believed in the resurrection, and he received it on the third day, when his body rose in glorious life, according as he had said in joyous confidence, "***neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.***" Into the outer prison of the grave his body might go, but into the inner prison of corruption he could not enter. He who in soul and body was pre-eminently God's "Holy One," was loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. This is noble encouragement to all the saints; die they must, but rise they shall, and though in their case they shall see corruption, yet they shall rise to everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all his people. Let them, therefore, go to their graves as to their beds, resting their flesh among the clods as they now do upon their couches.

*"Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing,  
But gladly put off these garments of clay;  
To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing,  
Since Jesus to glory through death led the way."*

Wretched will that man be who, when the Philistines of death invade his soul, shall find that, like Saul, he is forsaken of God; but blessed is he who has the Lord at his right hand, for he shall fear no ill, but shall look forward to an eternity of bliss.

**NET NOTE** - Verse 9 is a parenthetical note by the author. The author does not explicitly mention what OT scripture is involved (neither does Paul in 1 Cor 15:4, for that matter). The resurrection of the Messiah in general terms may have been seen in Isa 53:10–12 and Ps 16:10. Specific references may have been understood in Jonah 1:17 and Hos 6:2 because of the mention of "the third day." Beyond this it is not possible to be more specific.

**Rise again** (get/got up, stand/stood) (450) **anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, to cause to rise (thus "to raise"), to stand or be erect (Acts 9:41). To rise from a lying or reclined position. To stand straight up from a prostrate position (Acts 14:10). Most uses of **anistemi** denote the act of getting up from a seated or reclined position. **Anistemi** is especially common of the preparation of a journey Lk 1:39, Lk 15:18, 20; 17:19. **Anistemi** can also be used in the sense of "to appear" or "to come" (Mt 12:41) Figuratively **anistemi** can refer to a change of position, of "rising" to a position of preeminence or power; e.g., of Christ as a prophet, Acts 3:22; 7:37; as God's servant in the midst of the nation of Israel, Acts 3:26; as the Son of God in the midst of the nation, Acts 13:33; as a priest, Heb 7:11, 15; as king over the nations, Ro. 15:12;

**ANISTEMI IN JOHN** - Jn. 6:39; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:44; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 11:23; Jn. 11:24; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 20:9

**John 20:10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.**

- **went away again to their own homes:** John 7:53 16:32

## **JOHN AND PETER RETURN TO OWN HOMES**

So (**oun** - term of conclusion) the disciples (**mathetes**) **went away again** (**aperchomai**) **to their own homes** - John and Peter simply returned to **their own homes**. and not to a meeting in a room with the other disciples (Jn 19:19-29<sup>+</sup>). What they were in need of (just as is everyone today) was a meeting with the living Lord, which John would soon describe. One can imagine the conversation John had with Jesus' mother Mary, for presumably she was now being cared for by John (cf Jn 19:26-27+).

**John 20:11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;**

- See [COMPARISON OF RESURRECTION IN THE FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS](#)

## **MARY WEeping AT THE TOMB**

But **Mary** was standing outside the tomb (**mnemeion**) **weeping** (**klaio** - present tense) - Presumably returned to the tomb after she had communicated that it was empty to Peter and John. The fact that she was weeping indicates she still thinks Jesus is dead.

and so, as she wept (**klaio** - imperfect tense - sobbing repeatedly), **she stooped and looked** (**parakupto**) **into the tomb** (**mnemeion**) - **Stooped and looked** (**parakupto**) is the same description used of John in John 20:5.

**Weeping** (2799) **klaio** means to mourn, to weep, to lament or to wail with emphasis upon noise accompanying weeping. It expresses one's immediate and outward reaction to suffering. The picture is of one lamenting with sobs or wailing aloud and was used to describe the wailing that took place when someone died. Weeping thus was a sign of the pain and grief for the entity or person being wept over. **Klaio** implies not only the shedding of tears, but also external expression of grief. It was a term frequently used to describe the actions of professional mourners. Josephus reports people in his time hired flute-players to lead lamentations for public mourning. The haunting sound of the flute then became synonymous with death, tragedy and mourning. The custom of employing professional mourners (generally women) is still prevalent in the Middle East. The idea is weep aloud, expressing uncontainable, audible grief typically accompanied by wailing and sobbing, as when one suffers a traumatic personal loss or despair (like the death of a family member).

**NIDNTT** writes that in classical Greek **klaio** is "found from Homer onwards (and ) means intransitively to cry aloud, weep; transitively to bewail. In secular Greek. **klaio** does not express remorse or sorrow, but physical or mental pain which is outwardly visible. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology.](#))

**KLAIO - 33V - weep(18), weeping(17), wept(4).** Matt. 26:75; Mk. 5:38; Mk. 5:39; Mk. 14:72; Mk. 16:10; Lk. 6:21; Lk. 6:25; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 7:32; Lk. 7:38; Lk. 8:52; Lk. 19:41; Lk. 22:62; Lk. 23:28; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 20:11; Jn. 20:13; Jn. 20:15; Acts 9:39; Acts 21:13; Rom. 12:15; 1 Co. 7:30; Phil. 3:18; Jas. 4:9; Jas. 5:1; Rev. 5:4; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 18:9; Rev. 18:11; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:19



John 20:12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

- **saw:** Mt 28:3-5 Mk 16:5,6 Lu 24:3-7,22,23
- **in:** 2Ch 5:12 Da 7:9 Mt 17:2 Ac 1:10 Rev 3:4 7:14



Angels on Either Side of the Ark of the covenant

## MARY SEES TWO ANGELS IN TOMB

and she \*saw two angels ([aggelos](#)) in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying - Angels ([aggelos](#)) at the head and foot of the stone slab remind one of the mercy seat on [the Ark of the covenant](#) in [the Holy of Holies](#) with [cherubim](#) situated at either end (Ex 25:20+). Indeed, this was in a sense a most holy place, for from it our Lord rose!

### Mark 16:3-4 - Angels Ahead

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. Mark 16:3, 4.

Others, like Dr. Jowett, have caught the precious lesson of these verses. How often have we set out expecting trouble and dreading the difficulty ahead, to find upon arrival that God had "rolled away the stone"! Like the lepers in Samaria's gate, we venture forward, to find that God has scattered the enemy.

What "stone" lies ahead of you? You are wondering how you will get it rolled away, you lie awake all night making plans to remove tomorrow's obstacle. And how often have you reached the place appointed, to find that God had anticipated your dilemma.

Some stones we can roll away. "Take ye away the stone," commanded Jesus at Lazarus' grave. Some hindrances we can remove, and we must if the miracle is to follow. But the stone that is too big for us God's angel can handle.

Some saints in weakened condition wonder how it will be when they come to death. Fear not. The grave could not hold Jesus nor will it hold you. For Him the stone which enemies thought they had made sure would hold Him in the grave was turned into a throne of triumph with an angel sitting on it.

Do not walk in dread. God's angel will arrive at the dilemma first. Are you looking for stones ahead or angels ahead? (Vance Havner)

John 20:13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

- **Woman:** John 2:4 19:26
- **why:** John 20:15 14:27,28 16:6,7,20-22 1Sa 1:8 Ps 43:3-5 Ec 3:4 Jer 31:16 Lu 24:17 Ac 21:13
- **Because:** John 20:2

## ANGELS QUESTION MARY'S WEeping

And they said to her, "Woman (an address of dignity), **why are you weeping** ([klaio](#) - present tense)?" She \*said to them, "Because they have taken away ([airo](#)) my Lord ([kurios](#)), and I do not know where they have laid Him- This is the second time Mary refers to Jesus as **my Lord** ([kurios](#)) ("the Lord" in Jn 20:2). She is still convinced someone has taken His body.



**NET NOTE** - Woman was a polite form of address (see BDAG 208–9 s.v. *gynē*[see here](#)), similar to “Madam” or “Ma’am” used in English in different regions. This occurs again in v. 15.

David Black says “The **historical present** describes a past event as though it were actually taking place: λέγουσιν αὐτὴν περὶ αὐτῆς, they spoke to him about her (Mark 1:30). Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences (“then he says to me”). (BORROW [It’s Still Greek to Me page 106](#))

**Historical presents** in John 18:21 - Jn 18:3 - came; Jn 18:4 - said; Jn 18:17 - said; Jn 18:26 - said; Jn 18:29 - said; Jn 18:38 - said; Jn 19:4 said; Jn 19:5 - said; Jn 19:6 - said; Jn 19:9 - said; Jn 19:10 - said; Jn 19:14 - said; Jn 19:15 - said; Jn 19:26 - said; Jn 19:27 - said; Jn 20:1 - came, was, saw; Jn 20:2 - ran, came, said; Jn 20:5 - saw; Jn 20:6 - came, beheld; Jn 20:12 - beheld; Jn 20:13 - said, said; Jn 20:14 - beheld; Jn 20:15 - said; Jn 20:16 - said, turned, said; Jn 20:17 - said; Jn 20:18 - came; Jn 20:19 - said; Jn 20:22 - said; Jn 20:26 - came; Jn 20:27 - said; Jn 20:29 - said; Jn 21:3 - said, said; Jn 21:5 - said; Jn 21:9 - saw; Jn 21:10 - said; Jn 21:12 - said; Jn 21:13 - came, took, gave; Jn 21:15 - said, said; Jn 21:16 - said, said, said; Jn 21:17 - said, said; Jn 21:19 - said; Jn 21:20 - saw; Jn 21:21 - said; Jn 21:22 - said; Jn 21:25 - were, would, were

**John 20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.**

- **and saw:** Song 3:3,4 Mt 28:9 Mk 16:9
- **and did not know:** John 8:59 21:4 Mk 16:12 Lu 4:30 24:16,31

## MARY TURNS AND ENCOUNTERS JESUS

When [she](#) had said this, [she](#) turned ([strepheō](#)) around ([opisō](#)) and saw ([theoreō](#)) Jesus standing there, and (absolutely) did not know ([eido](#)) that it was Jesus - Mary encounters another figure at the tomb but does not recognize that this was her Lord.

**John 20:15 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 take Him away.”**

- **whom:** John 1:38 18:4,7 Song 3:2 6:1 Mt 28:5 Mk 16:6 Lu 24:5
- **if:** 1Sa 1:16 Mt 12:34

## JESUS DIALOGUE WITH MARY MAGDALENE

Jesus said to her, “Woman (an address of dignity), why are you weeping ([klaio](#) - present tense)? - This is the same question the angels had just asked her.

Whom are you seeking ([zeteō](#))?” Supposing ([dokeō](#)) Him to be the gardener (*kepourōs* - *kepos* = garden + *ouros* = a watcher; only NT use), she said to Him - Of course she was seeking Jesus, but not a Jesus Who was alive. Mary assumed Jesus was the caretaker of the garden.

*He had come into the garden to lift up one drooping flower (Mary Magdalene)*  
-- [Brian Bell](#)

“Sir ([kurios](#)), if you have carried Him away ([bastazo](#)), tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away ([airo](#))” - This is quite a declaration on Mary’s part, implying she would take the body. This is a bold offer by Mary, for a woman could not likely transport Jesus’ body.

James Butler - GRACIOUS ENCOUNTER John 20:15 - [Sermon Starters](#)

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, If thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take

Him away" (John 20:15).

Our text speaks of the beginning of the encounter that Mary Magdalene had with the unrecognized Christ on that first Easter Sunday morning. Three words can be used to describe this encounter.

### **FIRST—SORROW**

"Why weepest thou?"

Mary Magdalene had been a very wicked woman (POSSESSED BY 7 DEMONS) until she met Christ. Here she was very pessimistic.

- An example of pessimism. Like many of us, Mary was a pessimist. She allowed a few negative circumstances to dictate her sorrow. She ignored the empty tomb and the angels at the tomb, she ignored the message of the resurrection. She hung black crape on everything regardless of the facts and refused to see hope even though hope was all around her. No wonder she did not recognize Christ.
- The evil of pessimism. Pessimism kills our hope and blinds us to the truth. In her pessimism she could not see hope standing right in front of her. Spiritually pessimism will kill our faith, it will make us unhappy as Mary was here. Furthermore it dishonors God. It makes God look weak and sickly. Nothing good comes from pessimism

### **SECOND—SEEKING**

"Whom seekest thou?"

This is an arresting question and one that Mary could answer without shame. She was seeking Jesus. Her problem was she was only seeking His corpse. But seeking Jesus is the key to a bad situation turning into a good situation. She was not seeking personal fame, or fortune, but Christ. Whom are you seeking? What are you seeking? Isaiah said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" (Isaiah 55:6). Many of our troubles are a result of us seeking the wrong thing or the wrong person.

### **THIRD—SUPPOSITION**

"She, supposing him to be the gardener"

Mary did not recognize the Lord in this encounter with Him. Many still do not recognize the true identity of Christ. A lot of theology does not recognize Christ either. Many folk, including many clergymen and denominations, want to make Him a mere man. But He is more than a mere man. He is the Son of God, the Creator of the universe (John 1:1–3), and the great "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16). He is also the only Savior of mankind from the condemnation of sin (Acts 4:12). To call Him a gardener is akin to blasphemy, for it degrades our Savior's Person. But if you do not believe in the resurrection of Christ, you will not have high views of Jesus. It is no accident that those people and groups that deny Christ's resurrection also deny His true identity. When Mary realized that the person before her was the risen Lord, her theology changed quickly. [Sermon Starters](#)

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### **Vance Havner - God As a Gardener**

Supposing him to be the gardener. John 20:15.

Men have sometimes mistaken the voice of "gardeners" for the voice of God, but then, again, it is easy to mistake God for the gardener. Remember that day in our Lord's ministry when the Father spoke from heaven and some said, "It thundered"?

Our Lord does not always manifest Himself with His first word. Sometimes He speaks to ask the simplest question. "Woman, why weepest thou?" Anyone could have asked that. But He is interested in our griefs and sorrows.

And then He may want to lead us out by His simple inquiry. Think of how He asked Philip concerning the hungry multitude: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

God does not always break on us with the glory of Isaiah's vision or Paul's blinding light on the Damascus road. Sometimes He appears in a manner so plain that we suppose Him to be the gardener.

Do not ignore His lowliest approach. Tell Him your trouble, and the next word, as here, may bring the needed revelation.

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### **QUESTION - [Why didn't the disciples always recognize Jesus after His resurrection?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Bible does not specifically tell us why the followers of Christ did not always recognize Jesus after His resurrection. As a result, some of the following is speculation. Keeping this in mind, there are a few things that might have contributed to the

disciples not recognizing Jesus immediately when He first appeared to them after His resurrection. First, even though Jesus had predicted that He would rise again on the third day, the disciples did not fully understand (Mark 9:32), because clearly they were not looking for Him to be resurrected. This can account for some of their surprise and shock at seeing Him.

One of the instances where Jesus was not recognized was Mary Magdalene's coming to the tomb early in the morning (John 20:15). Instead of recognizing Jesus, she first mistook Him for the gardener. One thing that is important to remember is that we do not know how far Mary was from Jesus when she misidentified Him. It could be that she was simply too far to clearly recognize who He was until He spoke to her. Second, we must remember that since it was very early in the morning, the light would not have been very bright which could also have made it more difficult for her to see Him clearly. When we couple that with the fact that she was not expecting to see Him alive, it is easy to see why she did not recognize Him from a distance until He spoke to her.

A second instance in which Jesus was not immediately recognized was when the disciples did not recognize Him when they were out fishing (John 21:4). This could also be related to the distance Jesus might have been from them. A third instance is when the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) did not recognize Jesus until He broke bread. How could these two disciples have walked, talked, and eaten with Jesus without recognizing Him? In this instance, it seems that they were supernaturally prevented from recognizing Jesus. Jesus perhaps had taken on a different appearance to keep Himself from being recognized. Why would Jesus have done this? The Bible does not say. Perhaps Jesus "veiled" His identity so the two disciples would truly think through the things Jesus was saying, rather than accepting the teaching blindly, as they likely would have if they had known it was Jesus.

What we can know for certain is that it was Jesus Himself who appeared to them because of all the testimony of those who saw the resurrected Christ. In addition, there was the witness of the remarkable change that took place in the lives of the disciples. Immediately before and after the crucifixion, the eleven apostles were in hiding in fear, yet after spending considerable time with the resurrected Christ, they became fearless evangelists proclaiming the gospel boldly no matter how strong the opposition. In addition, all eventually gave their lives for the sake of the gospel. Only witnessing the resurrected Jesus Christ can account for such a radical change.

#### Related Resource:

- [What happened on the road to Emmaus?](#)

**John 20:16 Jesus \*said to her, "Mary!" She turned and \*said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).**

- **Mary:** John 10:3 Ge 22:1,11 Ex 3:4 33:17 1Sa 3:6,10 Isa 43:1 Lu 10:41 Ac 9:4 10:3
- **She:** Ge 45:12 Song 2:8-17 3:4 5:2 Mt 14:27
- **Rabboni:** John 20:28 1:38,49 3:2 6:25 11:28 13:13 Mt 23:8-10

#### Related Passages:

John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

### MARY RECOGNIZES RABBONI

**Jesus said to her, "Mary!"** - In John 10:3 we recall that "the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name." Here Jesus the Shepherd calls Mary by name. She now recognizes His voice. Obviously there is some mystery here and surely involves the supernatural work of the Spirit Who makes Jesus known to Mary. This is the first person who was blessed with the privilege of recognizing the resurrected Lord!

**Brian Bell**- What a tender moment when Jesus said, Mary! and her recognition of Him & cry of Rabbi! Is one of the emotional highlights of the entire Gospel. What did Jesus convey when He said, "Mary"? And He calls His sheep by name...(Jn.10:3) Think about it: Jesus could have paraded through the streets of Jerusalem; He could have knocked on Pilate's door; He could have confronted the high priest ("I'm back!"), but the first person our resurrected Lord appears to is a woman without hope. And His first words, "why are you crying?" (Jn 20:15). He doesn't shout His resurrection from a housetop, but instead quietly to a woman who grieves, who desperately needs to hear His voice, see His face, feel His embrace. What a Savior we serve, or rather, Who serves us!

She turned ([strepho](#)) and said to Him in Hebrew, “[Rabboni](#)!” (which means, Teacher) - [Rabboni](#) was a title of respect. When she heard Jesus call her name, she recognized the Shepherd's voice.

**Spurgeon Study Bible** - “Jesus said to her, [Mary](#).’ Turning around, she said to him in Aramaic, [Rabboni](#)!”—which means ‘Teacher.’” In the simple utterance of her name, there were tones she could not mistake. It was the sweetest music she had heard since her Lord's last message from the cross. “Mary.” “Why, surely,” she must have thought, “it is the Master's voice calling me by name!” The word, “[Rabboni](#)” means something more than “Master.” Mary seems to say, ‘**Greatest and best of all Teachers, I know your voice! Now that you have called me by my name, I recognize you, and I wait to listen to the instruction you are ready to impart to me.**’

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**Rabboni** ([4462](#)) (**rhabbouni** related to Hebrew **rab** meaning chief and denotes one who holds a respected position, e.g., an official. **Rab** is used by an inferior to a superior) Master, chief, prince. The highest title of honors attributed, usually to the president of the Jewish Sanhedrin if he was a descendant of the school of Hillel. It means my great master and was addressed to Christ by blind Bartimaeus and Mary Magdalene (Mark 10:51; John 20:16).

SEE RELATED WORD [rhabbi](#)

**Gilbrant** - This noun (also spelled rhabbouni, rhabbounei, rhabbonei) is from the Aramaic term rhabbûnî (an equivalent term to Hebrew rabbi) and has no significant difference in meaning. The Aramaic term **rhabbei**, transliterated into Greek, is the most commonly used address to Jesus. However, **rhabboni** is used twice in the Gospels. In Mark 10:51 a blind man called Jesus **rhabboni**, “Lord,” when requesting restoration of his sight. After Christ's resurrection, He appeared to Mary Magdalene. In order to assure herself of who she was seeing, Mary called Him **rhabboni**, “Master,” and grabbed hold of Him (John 20:16). In John 20:17 the Greek phrase behind the KJV's translation “Touch me not” is referred to as a prohibitive subjunctive; i.e., it is a prohibition against continuing an action, “an interruption of an action already begun” (Turner, Grammar of New Testament Greek, 3:74f.). Thus, a more precise translation of the phrase is “Stop touching me.” ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

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QUESTION - [Was Jesus a rabbi? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - It is clear from the gospels that Jesus had a reputation as a Jewish **rabbi** (Mark 14:45; John 1:38). Peter (in Mark 9:5) and Mary Magdalene (in John 20:16) both referred to Jesus as “**Rabbi**.” (ED: MORE ACCURATELY MARY REFERRED TO JESUS AS [Rabboni](#)) Moreover, the Jewish ruler Nicodemus thought that this title was appropriate for Jesus: “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2). Elsewhere, we see Jesus referred to as “Teacher” (Mark 5:35). According to John 1:38, *Rabbi* and *Teacher* are synonymous titles.

A [rabbi](#) (literally, “my master”) is a member of the clergy in the religion of Judaism. Rabbis often function as leaders of synagogues where they provide instruction in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish traditions. Rabbis preach sermons, interpret the Old Testament, and perform other functions similar to those of Christian pastors. While Jesus was never part of the official temple leadership, He was still considered a rabbi because of His ministry of teaching. Even the [Babylonian Talmud](#) describes Jesus as a teacher who had students (*Sanhedrin* 43a).

During the first century AD, the word *rabbi* was used in a more informal sense than today. In Jesus' day, the title “Rabbi” merely signified that a person had a reputation as a wise teacher or sage. [Gamaliel the Elder](#), who taught Saul of Tarsus and who is mentioned in Acts 5:34–40, is referred to in the [Mishna](#) as a rabbi: “Since Rabban [Rabbi] Gamaliel the Elder died, there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and piety died out at the same time” (*Sotah* 15:18). We learn from John's gospel that John the Baptist was also addressed by this title: “They came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him’” (John 3:26).

So it seems undeniable that Jesus was considered a wise teacher and thus could be properly categorized as a rabbi, as the term was used in Jesus' time. It wasn't until after the destruction of the temple in AD 70 that the title of “Rabbi” took on a more formal meaning for those who were ordained in the rabbinic movement. As time went on, the definition of *rabbi* continued to evolve. So, yes, Jesus was a rabbi, as defined in the first century, but today He would not hold the same title, as defined in modern-day Judaism.

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[Known by God](#)

[Mary] turned toward him and cried out . . . “Rabboni!” John 20:16

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:11–18

After two brothers were separated by adoption, a DNA test helped to reunite them almost twenty years later. When Kieron texted Vincent, the man he believed was his brother, Vincent thought, Who is this stranger? When Kieron asked him what name he'd been given at birth, he immediately answered, "Tyler." Then he knew they were brothers. He was recognized by his name!

Consider how a name plays a key role in the Easter story. As it unfolds, Mary Magdalene comes to Christ's tomb, and she weeps when she finds His body missing. "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asks (John 20:15). She didn't recognize Him, however, until He spoke her name: "Mary" (v. 16).

Hearing Him say it, she "cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (Which means 'Teacher')" (v. 16). Her reaction expresses the joy believers in Jesus feel on Easter morning, recognizing that our risen Christ conquered death for all, knowing each of us as His children. As He told Mary, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (v. 17).

In Georgia, two reunited brothers bonded by name, vowed to take "this relationship to the next level." On Easter, we praise Jesus for already taking the utmost step to rise in sacrificial love for those He knows as His own. For you and me, indeed, He's alive!  
By: Patricia Raybon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How does it feel knowing that Jesus rose again and knows you by name? How can you know Him better?

Your knowledge of me is humbling, dear Jesus. Thank You for the sacrificial gift of Your knowing love.

---

### [He Knows My Name by Maranatha Singers](#)

I have a Maker  
He formed my heart  
Before even time began  
My life was in His hands

He knows my name  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

Lets all sing, I have a Father  
I have a Father  
He calls me His own  
He'll never leave me  
No matter where I go

He knows my name  
I'm so glad I can say  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

He knows me, He knows my name  
He knows my name  
He knows my every thought  
He sees each tear that falls  
And hears me when I call

He knows your name  
He knows your every thought  
He sees all those tears that fall  
And He'll hear you when you call

## Post-resurrection Appearances

During 40 days between His resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus is recorded to have appeared to His own 10x, the first 5 being on the day of resurrection. **The order may be as follows**

- (1) to Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11; Jn 20:11-18);
- (2) to the women returning from the tomb with the angelic message (Mt 28:8-10);
- (3) to Peter, probably in the afternoon (Luke 24:34; 1Co 15:5);
- (4) to the Emmaus disciples toward evening (Mk 16:12; Lk 24:13-32);
- (5) to the disciples, Thomas being absent (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25);
- (6) the next Sunday night, the appearance to the disciples, Thomas being present (Jn 20:26-31; 1Co 15:5);
- (7) to the seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:1-25);
- (8) to the apostles and "more than five hundred of the brothers" (Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15-18; 1Co 15:6);
- (9) to James, the Lord's half-brother (1Co 15:7);
- (10) His last recorded appearance and His ascension from Olivet (Mk 16:19-20; Lu 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

**After His ascension**, Christ appeared one or more times to three men:

- (1) Stephen, at his stoning (Acts 7:55-60);
- (2) Paul:
  - (a) at conversion (Acts 9:3-8,17; 22:6-11,14-15; 26:12-19; 1Co9:1; 15:8);
  - (b) at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10);
  - (c) in the Temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21);
  - (d) later at Jerusalem (Acts 23:11);
  - (e) in another vision (2Co 12:1-4);
- (3) John, the apostle, on Patmos (Rev 1:10-19, and other visions in Revelation

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### RABBONI--MY MASTER - F B Meyer

**"But Mary stood without at the tomb weeping Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master."-- Jn 20:11-16.**

WHEN THE disciples had returned to their home, Mary stood at the door of the sepulchre, weeping. Then she took one more look at the place where He had lain. Thus still we look down into the grave of ordinances, of past emotions, of old and sacred memories, seeking for the Redeemer. The angel-guards sought in vain to comfort her; but what could they do for her, who longed to hear His Voice only?

The sense of a Presence behind, or perhaps, as St. Chrysostom finely suggests, because of an expression of love and awe that passed over the angels' faces--led her to turn herself, and she saw One standing there whom she supposed to be the gardener. Then He called her by the old familiar name, with the same intonation of voice, and she knew that it was her Lord. The knowledge that He was there, to Whom she owed all, thrilled her and she answered in the country tongue they both knew so well, "Rabboni!"

Does not this suggest that in that new life, which lies beyond, we shall hear again the voices speak with which we have been familiar? "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and shall have fellowship again with those whom we have lost awhile."

"Rabboni" is "my Master." We must take the Risen Lord not only as our Saviour, but our Master. Too many look to Him only for what He shall do for them in the way of salvation and deliverance from sin, but we shall never realise the fullness of either until we fall at His feet and own Him Master and Lord.

It must be a personal act--"My Master." It is not enough that He should be Lord of others, or of His Church. He must be thine. Give your all for His all. Begin to live as if there were none but He and you in this world. He is ever appealing to us: "Son! Daughter! Give Me thine heart, thy love."

When He is Master, we obey His bidding. It is useless to call Him "Lord, Lord," and not do the things which He says. Ours must be the alert ear, the swift foot. "Go, tell!" So He speaks still.

### PRAYER

Open our eyes to see the Face of Christ looking down upon us amid household duty or daily business. Give us a quick ear for Thy

Voice, and may we go on doing good, as Thou shalt give us opportunity. AMEN.

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### **Stephen Olford - "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'" – John 20:16**

Earlier in this Gospel, the Lord Jesus had given expression to these words, "He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name" (John 10:2, 3).

The Lord Jesus had just opened the door or way to the Father by His death and resurrection. He now stood before one of His puzzled and confused sheep. "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'" He called His own sheep by name and the sheep knew His voice and followed Him.

It is grand to know that He has my name carved on the very palms of His hands.

May I ever be ready to hear my name called, and reply, "Master!"

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### **F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily**

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

Many had called her by that name. She had been wont to hear it many times a day from many lips; but only One had spoken it with that intonation. In his mouth its familiar syllables had a sweetness and tenderness which lingered in her heart; as the fragrance of the Roumanian rosevalley clings for many a day to the clothes of those who have entered it.

Her eyes had deceived her. Startled by the sudden glad expression which had passed over the features of the angels, who sat sentry in the sepulchre, she had turned herself back to see the source from which the radiance had gleamed; but even with that hint to help her, she had failed to recognize her Lord. But her ear could not mistake; the voice carried immediate recognition.

We sigh sometimes for "the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still"; but we shall hear those voices again. Our mortal body is to be fashioned according to the body of Christ's resurrection; and evidently in that body there were the old familiar tones. May we not, therefore, certainly infer that the voices which welcome us on the other side will be those that hushed us with their lullabies when we were babes; asked us for our love and assured us of theirs when we attained maturity; whispered their dying messages in our ears, and sent us their Godspeed as we went down into the river.

The Master knows our names, and calls his own followers by them. There is one response, which He waits to elicit — one which alone will satisfy Him; one in which the love and devotion of a life may be summed up. Like Mary, let us turn and say to Him: Rabboni! that is, Master!

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### **Called by Name**

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" John 20:16

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:11–18

Advertisers have concluded that the most attention-grabbing word that viewers react to is their own name. Thus a television channel in the UK has introduced personalized advertisements with their online streaming services.

We might enjoy hearing our name on television, but it doesn't mean much without the intimacy that comes when someone who loves us says our name.

Mary Magdalene's attention was arrested when, at the tomb where Jesus's body had been laid after He was crucified on the cross, He spoke her name (John 20:16). With that single word, she turned in recognition to the Teacher whom she loved and followed, I imagine with a rush of disbelief and joy. The familiarity with which He spoke her name confirmed for her beyond a doubt that the One who'd known her perfectly was alive and not dead.

Although Mary shared a unique and special moment with Jesus, we too are personally loved by God. Jesus told Mary that He would ascend to His Father (v. 17), but He had also told His disciples that He would not leave them alone (John 14:15–18). God would send the Holy Spirit to live and dwell in His children (see Acts 2:1–13).

God's story doesn't change. Whether then or now, He knows those whom He loves (see John 10:14–15). He calls us by name. By: Amy Boucher Pye (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Loving Father, living Jesus, comforting Holy Spirit, thank You that You know me completely, and that You love me unceasingly.



The God who created the cosmos also made you, and He calls you by name.

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### Known by God

[Mary] turned toward him and cried out . . . “Rabboni!” John 20:16

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After two brothers were separated by adoption, a DNA test helped to reunite them almost twenty years later. When Kieron texted Vincent, the man he believed was his brother, Vincent thought, Who is this stranger? When Kieron asked him what name he'd been given at birth, he immediately answered, “Tyler.” Then he knew they were brothers. He was recognized by his name!

Consider how a name plays a key role in the Easter story. As it unfolds, Mary Magdalene comes to Christ's tomb, and she weeps when she finds His body missing. “Woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asks (John 20:15). She didn't recognize Him, however, until He spoke her name: “Mary” (v. 16).

Hearing Him say it, she “cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (Which means ‘Teacher’)” (v. 16). Her reaction expresses the joy believers in Jesus feel on Easter morning, recognizing that our risen Christ conquered death for all, knowing each of us as His children. As He told Mary, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (v. 17).

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How does it feel knowing that Jesus rose again and knows you by name? How can you know Him better?

Your knowledge of me is humbling, dear Jesus. Thank You for the sacrificial gift of Your knowing love.

---

### Known In Heaven

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. — John 10:27

Today's Scripture: John 20:11-18

Mary stood by the entrance to the empty tomb and wept in misery that her Lord had died. She longed for “the touch of the vanished hand,” as Tennyson lyrically described death's cold finality, “the sound of the voice that was still.”

Then Jesus appeared. In her grief, Mary's eyes deceived her, for she thought He was the gardener. But when He called her name, she knew Him immediately. She cried, “Rabboni!” which means Teacher (John 20:16).

People ask me if we'll know one another in heaven. I believe that we will know and be known there. When Jesus received His glorified body, His followers recognized Him (John 20:19-20). And someday we too will have a glorified body (1 Cor. 15:42-49; 1 John 3:2).

“Rejoice,” said Jesus to His disciples, “because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). Someday we'll hear again the voices of loved ones whose names are written in heaven—voices now still. We will hear the father who spoke our name with rough affection, the mother who called us in from play.

There's one voice, however, that I long to hear above all others—my Lord Jesus, calling my name: “David.” And, like Mary, I will know Him at once. My Savior! By: David H. Roper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I will meet thee again in that deathless land,  
Whenever thy foot shall imprint the strand;  
And the loveliest things that have here been mine  
Shall there in eternal beauty shine.  
—MacDonald

Goodbyes are the law of earth—reunions are the law of heaven.

John 20:17 Jesus said to her, “**Stop clinging** to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

KJV John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

BGT John 20:17 λ γει α τ η σο ς μ μου π του, ο π ω γ ρ ν α β β η κ α π ρ ς τ ν πα τ ρ α πο ρ ε ου δ π ρ ς το ς δ ε λ φ ο ς μου κ α ε π α το ς ν α β α ν ω π ρ ς τ ν πα τ ρ α μου κ α πα τ ρ α μ ν κ α θε ν μου κ α θε ν μ ν.

NET John 20:17 Jesus replied, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

CSB John 20:17 "Don't cling to Me," Jesus told her, "for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to My brothers and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father-- to My God and your God."

ESV John 20:17 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, to my God and your God.'"

NIV John 20:17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

NLT John 20:17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

NRS John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because 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, to my God and your God.'"

NJB John 20:17 Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'

NAB John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

YLT John 20:17 Jesus saith to her, 'Be not touching me, for I have not yet ascended unto my Father; and be going on to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and to your God.'

MIT John 20:17 Jesus says to her, "Stop hugging me, for I have not yet ascended to the father. Go to my brothers, and tell them that I will ascend to my father, and your father—to my God, and your God."

- **Stop clinging to Me** - John 20:27 2Ki 4:29 7:9 Mt 28:7,9 Lu 10:4
- **My brethren**: Ps 22:22 Mt 12:50 25:40 28:10 Ro 8:29 Heb 2:11-13
- **I ascend**: John 13:1,3 14:2,6,28 16:28 17:5,11,25 Ps 68:18 89:26 Lu 24:49-51 Eph 1:17-23 4:8-10 1Pe 1:3
- **your Father**: John 1:12,13 Ro 8:14-17 2Co 6:18 Ga 3:26 4:6,7 1Jn 3:2 Rev 21:7
- **your God**: Ge 17:7,8 Ps 43:4 48:14 Isa 41:10 Jer 31:33 32:38 Eze 36:28 Eze 37:27 Zec 13:7-9 Heb 8:10 11:16 Rev 21:3

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 2:11-13+ For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason **He is not ashamed to call them brethren**, 12 saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO **MY BRETHREN**, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." 13 And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME."

Romans 8:29+ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many **brethren**;

Romans 8:15-17+ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

**STOP CLINGING  
ASCENSION MUST OCCUR**

Jesus said to her, "**Stop clinging** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) **to Me** - Stop touching Me, Stop holding on to Me. **MIT** has "Stop hugging Me." Apparently she had already touched or begun to cling to Jesus, so He commands her to stop. We should not to mistake Jesus' intent as unloving, for He did not object to being touched, as evidenced by His invitation to Thomas affirms (Jn 20:27). Mary's devotion is commendable for she thinks Jesus is back and she will never lose Him again.

**For** ([gar](#)) Term of explanation. Jesus is gently explaining to [Mary](#) why she cannot cling to Him.

**I have not yet ascended** ([anabaino](#)) **to the Father** - Jesus explains that He must ascend to the Father, and physical fellowship is only temporary at this time (the 40 days post-resurrection).

**But go** ([present imperative](#)) **to My brethren** ([adelphos](#)) - This is the first time Jesus refers to His disciples as **brethren**. The Cross has assured that they are now forever in the family of God. Jesus of course is referring to **spiritual brotherhood** for now His disciples are His brethren (see Ro 8:15-17 and Ro 8:29)

**And say to them, 'I ascend** ([anabaino](#)) **to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God** - Mary is to explain a little theology to the disciples, explaining that He must ascend back to Heaven. But now note the intimacy of the terms "**My...your**," for the Cross has forever changed their personal relationships! Note that since disciples possess the same Father as Jesus, that would serve to bind us to Him as **brethren**.

[Brian Bell](#) - **Do not cling to Me** - KJV is not good translation = "Touch Me not" Why not? He asked Thomas to touch Him (Jn 20:25) Is it possible for us to miss the best in the Lord while holding on to the good? What Jesus are you clinging to? Some cling to the cute lil baby Jesus in the manger; some cling to the passive well groomed surfer S.S. Jesus; some, fearful of him as Terminator Temple Destroyer; others, cling to the dead Savior on a cross; and some, cling to the living/ruling/reigning/victorious/King of Kings and Lord of Lords Jesus. Mary was not to continue clinging to Him, but was to bear His message to the apostles. This is suggestive to us...We are not simply to linger about the shrine of the resurrection, but are to go declaring the fact of it!

**J C Ryle** - A little decent outward profession will often go a long way. But it is impossible to deceive Christ. "His eyes are as a flame of fire" (Rev 1:14). He sees us through and through. Happy are those who can say, "Thou, Lord who knowest all things, knowest that we love thee" (John 21:17).

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**Brethren** (80) [adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense. **Adelphós** generally denotes a fellowship of life based on identity of origin, e.g., members of the same family (Mt. 1:2; Lk 3:1, 19; 6:14); members of the same tribe, countrymen, and so forth (Acts 3:22; 7:23; Ro 9:3)." (Zodhiates) Figuratively, adelphos describes members of the Christian community, spiritual brother, fellow Christian, fellow believer (Ro 8:29). Jews used adelphos to describe fellow countrymen (Acts 3:22). One of the same nature, a fellow man was regarded as a brother (Mt. 5:22-24, 47). Adelphós also came to designate a fellowship of love equivalent to or bringing with it a community of life (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; 10:29, 30; Acts 12:17). In this manner Jesus speaks of His brethren (Mt. 25:40; 28:10; John 20:17; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11, 17). The members of the same Christian community are called brothers (Jn 21:23; Acts 9:30; Rom. 16:14; 1 Cor. 7:12).

**Ascend** (305) [anabaino](#) from **ana** = upwards, up, as a pref. denotes up, again, back + **basis** = a foot) means to go up, to ascend, cause to ascend from a lower to a higher place. Anabaino means movement towards a destination: to go up, mount up, ascend, grow up. The spatial meaning predominates; one climbs a mountain, mounts a platform, goes upstairs. If the destination is a holy place, the going up involves performance of some cultic act. A man goes up to the temple (situated on a higher level) to pray; OT In the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) anabainō most frequently renders 'ālāh (go up, ascend, climb) and is used particularly of going up to the mountain of God, the sanctuary and Jerusalem (Ex. 34:4; 1 Sa 1:3; 2 Ki. 19:14). In Ge 28:12 Jacob's dream pictured a "ladder", or more precisely a ramp or stair-like pavement, which, in accordance with the ancient concept of the world, led up to the gate of heaven. This was the place where intercourse between the earth and heaven took place. God's messengers were going up and down, "fulfilling divine commands or supervising the earth"

**TDNT** on [anabaino](#) - (1) The primary sense is spatial, "to rise up," e.g., to mount a horse or ship, or to climb a hill, or move from the coast inland, or go to an upper story, or to mount a rostrum, or to rise to address the court....(2) More important in the NT is the cultic use (based on the OT and LXX). Jesus' going up from baptism acquires significance through the descent of the Spirit ([Mt. 3:16](#)). Going up to the sanctuary or Jerusalem is a stock phrase (Lk. 18:10; Jn. 2:13; 5:1; 7:8, 10, 14; 12:20). For Paul this means not only going to a place but to the mother community (cf. Acts 18:22). Actual ascent is indicated (since the holy city is on a hill) but going to worship is implied, as also in pagan usage due to the common situation of shrines on eminences. (3) The culminating religious use of the term is for ascent to heaven.

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JOHN 20:17—If Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father, how could He have committed His Spirit to the Father?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus said here “I have not yet ascended to My Father.” But earlier on the cross He said, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit” (Luke 23:46). If He was already with the Father, then why did He say that He had not yet ascended to Him?

**SOLUTION:** The day He died, Jesus’ spirit went to be with the Father (as Luke 23:43, 46 records). So His spirit had been with the Father, but His body had not yet ascended into heaven when He spoke to Mary. The bodily ascension took place some 40 days later (cf. Acts 1:3, 9–10).

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**QUESTION - [Why did Jesus tell Mary, “Do not cling to me”?](#)**

**ANSWER** - After Jesus rose from the dead, [Mary Magdalene](#) met Him at the tomb, and after recognizing Him, she clung to Him. “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, and My God and your God”’” ([John 20:17](#), ESV).

Early on that Sunday morning, the third day after Jesus had been crucified, Mary Magdalene went to Jesus’ tomb. She was surprised to see that the massive stone sealing the entrance had been rolled away (John 20:1). When she told Peter and John, they ran to the tomb (John 20:2–4). After investigating, they saw and believed and returned to their homes (John 20:5–10). Mary remained at the tomb, weeping because she didn’t yet understand that Jesus had risen from the dead. She saw two angels and explained that she was weeping because she didn’t know where Jesus’ body had been taken (John 20:11–13). She then saw Jesus but didn’t recognize Him. Thinking He was the gardener, she asked Him where the body had been taken (John 20:14–15). When Jesus called her by name, she recognized Jesus and clung to Him (John 20:16).

Jesus tells Mary, “Do not cling to me.” He explains to her that He had not yet [ascended to the Father](#). He was still there, and He wasn’t leaving yet. She didn’t need to hang on to Him as if to keep Him from leaving. He had come back from the dead, and He wasn’t yet going to ascend to the Father. He instructed Mary to go to His “brethren,” the other disciples, and tell them that He was going to ascend to the Father (John 20:17). Mary did exactly as instructed (John 20:18).

Jesus remained with His disciples for a while before ascending to the Father. He appeared to them on several occasions, strengthening their faith (e.g., John 20:19–29). They certainly rejoiced to see Him again. Mary was overjoyed that Jesus had risen from the dead. She had been grief-stricken at His death and wept at His tomb. This was the Man who had rid her of seven demons and whom she had followed since early in His ministry (Luke 8:2). It is no surprise that, when she recognized Him and realized that He had indeed risen from the dead, her reaction was to cling to Him.

In telling Mary, “Do not cling to me,” Jesus gently reminded her that He had things that needed to be done, and so did she. He gave her the joyous task of announcing to the disciples that He was no longer dead. He had conquered death and returned just as He said He would. It is likely that Mary was one of the women mentioned in Acts 1:14 who were devoting themselves to prayer and looking forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said He and the Father would send (John 14:26; 15:26). While the Bible doesn’t tell us much about Mary Magdalene, it is clear that she loved Jesus. She received a precious blessing in being the first person recorded to have seen Jesus after His resurrection. She loved Him so much that her first reaction was to grab hold of Him and not let go.

Jesus’ words to Mary, “Do not cling to me,” were not a rebuke; rather, they were a comfort that He would be around for a little while longer. Mary’s response to Jesus offers us an opportunity to consider whether we really love Jesus. Are His death and [resurrection](#) just historical facts to us? Or, like Mary, do we love Him enough to cling to Him and then fulfill the tasks He has given us?

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**QUESTION - [After His resurrection, why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him, but later tell Thomas to touch Him?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jesus tells Mary, “Touch Me not” (John 20:17, KJV); but then later, speaking to Thomas, He says, “Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side” (verse 27). The seeming incongruity of Jesus’ statements is resolved when we examine the language Jesus employed and consider the basic difference between the two situations.

In John 20:17, the word translated “touch” is a Greek word which means “to cling to, to lay hold of.” This wasn’t just a touch; it was a grip. Obviously, when Mary recognized Jesus, she immediately clung to Him. Matthew 28:9 records the other women doing the same thing when they saw the resurrected Christ.

Mary's reaction was motivated, possibly, by several things. One is simply her loving devotion to the Lord. Mary is overwhelmed by the events of the morning, and as her grief turns to joy, she naturally embraces Jesus. Another motivation is Mary's desire to restore the fellowship that death had broken. She had lost Him once, and she was going to make sure she didn't lose Him again—she wanted to keep Jesus with her always. Also, Mary may have been thinking that this was the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to return (John 14:3), in which case He would take her (and all believers) with Him to heaven.

However, it was not Jesus' plan to stay in this world always, and His resurrection was not to be seen as His promised return. That is why He tells Mary of the ascension. His plan was to ascend to the Father and then send the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 20:22; Acts 2:1-4). Fellowship with Jesus would continue, but it would be a spiritual communion, not a physical presence.

In loosening Mary's hold on Him, Jesus was, in effect, saying this: "I know you desire to keep Me here, always present with you. I know you want everything to be just the same as before I died. But our relationship is about to change. I'm going to heaven, and you will have the Comforter in My place. You need to start walking by faith, Mary, not by sight."

When Jesus spoke to Thomas, it was not to counter a misplaced desire but to rebuke a lack of faith. Thomas had said he would not believe until he had touched the living body of Jesus (John 20:25). Jesus, knowing all about Thomas's declaration, offered His body as living proof of His resurrection. This was something He did on another occasion as well (Luke 24:39-40).

So, both Mary and Thomas needed more faith. Mary needed faith enough to let Jesus go. Thomas needed faith enough to believe without empirical proof. Mary needed to loosen her grip; Thomas needed to strengthen his. The resurrected Christ gave both of them the faith they needed.

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**QUESTION - [What is the meaning and importance of the ascension of Jesus Christ? gotquestions.org\(WATCH VIDEO\)](https://www.gotquestions.org/What-is-the-meaning-and-importance-of-the-ascension-of-Jesus-Christ?)**

**ANSWER** - Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus and His disciples went to Mount Olivet, near Jerusalem. There, Jesus promised His followers that they would soon receive the Holy Spirit, and He instructed them to remain in Jerusalem until the Spirit had come. Then Jesus blessed them, and as He gave the blessing, He began to ascend into heaven. The account of Jesus' ascension is found in Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-11.

It is plain from Scripture that Jesus' ascension was a literal, bodily return to heaven. He rose from the ground gradually and visibly, observed by many intent onlookers. As the disciples strained to catch a last glimpse of Jesus, a cloud hid Him from their view, and two angels appeared and promised Christ's return "in just the same way that you have watched Him go" (Acts 1:11).

**The Ascension of Jesus Christ is meaningful for several reasons:**

- 1) It signaled the end of His earthly ministry. God the Father had lovingly sent His Son into the world at Bethlehem, and now the Son was returning to the Father. The period of human limitation was at an end.
- 2) It signified success in His earthly work. All that He had come to do, He had accomplished.
- 3) It marked the return of His heavenly glory. Jesus' glory had been veiled during His sojourn on earth, with one brief exception at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9).
- 4) It symbolized His exaltation by the Father (Ephesians 1:20-23). The One with whom the Father is well pleased (Matthew 17:5) was received up in honor and given a name above all names (Philippians 2:9).
- 5) It allowed Him to prepare a place for us (John 14:2).
- 6) It indicated the beginning of His new work as High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) and Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15).
- 7) It set the pattern for His return. When Jesus comes to set up the Kingdom, He will return just as He left—literally, bodily, and visibly in the clouds (Acts 1:11; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7).

Currently, the Lord Jesus is in heaven. The Scriptures frequently picture Him at the right hand of the Father—a position of honor and authority (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 8:1). Christ is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), the giver of spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:7-8), and the One who fills all in all (Ephesians 4:9-10).

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**QUESTION - [If Jesus was God, why did He call God "My God?"](#)**

**ANSWER** - This can definitely be a confusing issue. It all goes back to the "mystery" of the Trinity. When Jesus was on the cross, He quoted Psalm 22 (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). This was a psalm of David, but it was a Messianic prophecy as well. The entire psalm contains remarkable predictions by David concerning the coming Messiah. So, one of the reasons He called God "my God" was to fulfill the prophecy of the psalm.

At the moment of His death on the cross, Christ was experiencing the abandonment and despair that resulted from the outpouring of divine wrath upon the sin that He bore. This was the price He paid to redeem His church—all who would ever believe in Him—and He paid it in full. At the cross, Jesus in His humanity voluntarily surrendered His will to the Father in order to finish the task for which He came into the world. In the same way, He voluntarily emptied Himself of certain aspects of His deity when He came to earth as a man. In some way we can't fully understand, God the Father turned away from God the Son for that moment, and Jesus died a very lonely death.

There are other places He calls God His God. In John 20:17 and Revelation 3:2,12, Jesus calls God "My God." Why would God call Himself "My God"? It has to do with Christ's relationship to His Father. Even though Christ is the eternal God Himself incarnate, He is still a different person from the Father. As a man and as man's representative (Son of Man), Jesus' person was dependent on the Father and, like us, looked to the Father for strength, guidance, wisdom, etc. Therefore, God the Father was the God of Jesus. The Father is the God of the Son, but it doesn't imply inferiority, only a difference in roles. Please also read our article on the [Trinity](#).

**John 20:18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.**

■ **came:** Mt 28:10 Mk 16:10-13 Lu 24:10

### **MARY IS TRANSFORMED FROM A MOURNER TO A "MISSIONARY"**

**Mary Magdalene came, announcing** (aggello - report - only here in NT) **to the disciples** ([mathetes](#)), **"I have seen the Lord** ([kurios](#))," **and that He had said these things to her**

**Brian Bell** - Mary was changed from a mourner to a missionary when she met the living Lord. 1. Jesus interrupts this precious moment by giving her a pressing errand to run. And run she does with the 1st Easter Sermon, She had seen the Lord.

**THOUGHT** - Even as Mary was changed from a mourner to a missionary because she had met the Living Lord, so too should every believer who meets Him. We were mourning over our sin, but He transformed us to go and tell! Have you gone and told anyone about your Jesus? Emboldened and empowered by His Spirit you should go and tell (cf Acts 4:31b+).

**NET NOTE** - The first part of Mary's statement, introduced by τι (hoti), is direct discourse ( ὡρακα τ ν κύριον, heōraka ton kurion), while the second clause switches to indirect discourse (κα τα τα ε πεν α τ , kai tauta eipen autē). This has the effect of heightening the emphasis on the first part of the statement.

**Brian Bell** summarizes "The Proofs of the Resurrection" --

1. Empty grave - and the disappearance of the body.
2. Disciples radically transformed - the remarkable transformation in the disciples from gloom to gladness; despair to hope; sorrow to joy. a) And this change took place only 3 days from the event.
3. The Church was built on the Resurrection - the church of Christ came into existence as a result of accepting the resurrection of the Master. a) Usually a sect/cult dies after the death of its leader.
4. Our own personal Transformations - the influence of Christ upon men & communities from the time of Paul onwards.

**ILLUSTRATION** - In one of his lighter moments, Benjamin Franklin penned his own epitaph. He did not profess to be a born-again Christian ([he was a Deist](#)), but it seems he must have been influenced by Paul's teaching of the resurrection of the body. Here's what he wrote: "The Body of B. Franklin, Printer - Like the Cover of an old Book Its contents torn out, - And stript of its Lettering and Gilding, Lies here, Food for Worms, - But the Work shall not be wholly lost: For it will, as he believ'd, - Appear once more In a new and more perfect Edition, - Corrected and amended by the Author." But unless repented of his [Deist](#) belief, it would sadly not be a



**IN THE GARDEN** (Borrow [Amazing Grace - Kenneth Osbeck - page 116](#))

C. Austin Miles, 1868–1945

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that He had said these things to her. (John 20:18)

It was in 1912 that music publisher Dr. Adam Geibel asked author and composer C. Austin Miles to write a hymn text that would be "sympathetic in tone, breathing tenderness in every line; one that would bring hope to the hopeless, rest for the weary, and downy pillows to dying beds." Mr. Miles has left the following account of the writing of this hymn:

One day in April, 1912, I was seated in the dark room, where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John 20—whether by chance or inspiration let each reader decide. That meeting of Jesus and Mary had lost none of its power and charm.

As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary's life, when she knelt before her Lord, and cried, "Rabboni!"

My hands were resting on the Bible while I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in, and hurried away.

John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John.

As they departed, Mary reappeared; leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried, "Rabboni!" I awakened in sun light, gripping the Bible, with muscles tense and nerves vibrating. Under the inspiration of this vision I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the poem exactly as it has since appeared. That same evening I wrote the music.

[I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;](#)  
and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing;  
and the melody that He gave to me within my heart is ringing.

I'd stay in the garden with Him tho the night around me be falling;  
but He bids me go—thru the voice of woe, His voice to me is calling.

**Refrain:**

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own,  
and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

For Today: Matthew 20:28; Matthew 28:5–9; John 20; Romans 5:6, 10, 11. Let your mind join Mary and the disciples in the garden when Christ first appeared to them following His resurrection. Respond as did Mary—"Rabboni!" (my Master). Carry this musical truth throughout the day—

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**Grief Overturned**

I have seen the Lord! John 20:18

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:11–18

According to Jim and Jamie Dutcher, filmmakers known for their knowledge of wolves, when happy, wolves wag their tails and romp about. But after the death of a pack member, they grieve for weeks. They visit the place where the pack member died, showing grief by their drooping tails and mournful howls.

Grief is a powerful emotion we've all experienced, particularly at the death of a loved one or of a treasured hope. Mary Magdalene



experienced it. She'd traveled with and helped support Jesus and His disciples (Luke 8:1–3). But His cruel death on a cross separated them. The only thing left for Mary to do for Jesus was to finish anointing His body for burial—a task the Sabbath had interrupted. But imagine how Mary felt when she found not a lifeless, broken body but a living Savior! Though she hadn't at first recognized the man standing before her, when He spoke her name, she knew who He was—Jesus! Instantly, grief turned to joy. Mary now had joyful news to share: "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18).

Jesus entered our dark world to bring freedom and life. His resurrection celebrates that He accomplished what He set out to do. Watch the devotional video, "Jesus, the Resurrection," to learn more about the joy of a new life in Christ. We too can celebrate His resurrection and share the good news: He's alive! By: Linda Washington (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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## [Grief Overturned Part 1](#)

Today's Bible Reading: John 20:1–18

"I have seen the Lord!" -John 20:18

According to Jim and Jamie Dutcher, filmmakers known for their knowledge of wolves, when happy, wolves wag their tails and romp about. But after the death of a pack member, they grieve for weeks. They visit the place where the pack member died, showing grief by their drooping tails and mournful howls.

Grief is a powerful emotion we've all experienced, particularly at the death of a loved one or of a treasured hope. Mary Magdalene experienced it. She'd traveled with and helped support Jesus and His disciples (Luke 8:1–3). But His cruel death on a cross separated them. The only thing left for Mary to do for Jesus was to finish anointing His body for burial—a task the Sabbath had interrupted. But imagine how Mary felt when she found not a lifeless, broken body but a living Savior! Though she hadn't at first recognized the man standing before her, when He spoke her name, she knew who He was—Jesus! Instantly, grief turned to joy. Mary now had joyful news to share: "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:18).

Jesus entered our dark world to bring freedom and life. His resurrection celebrates that He accomplished what He set out to do. We too can celebrate His resurrection and share the good news: He's alive! —Linda Washington (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When have you experienced a time when your sadness turned to joy? How will you share the news of Christ's resurrection this week?

Jesus, I celebrate Your resurrection and the new life I can experience in You.

**John 20:19 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."**

- **So when it was evening:** Mk 16:14 Lu 24:36-49 1Co 15:5
- **when:** John 20:26 Ne 6:10,11
- **came:** John 14:19-23 16:22 Mt 18:20
- **Peace:** John 20:21 14:27 16:33 Ps 85:8-10 Isa 57:18,19 Mt 10:13 Lu 24:36 Ro 15:33 Eph 2:14 6:23 Php 1:2 2Th 3:16 Heb 7:2 Rev 1:4

## THE EVENING OF THE THIRD DAY

So ([oun](#)) is a term of conclusion.

When it was evening ([opsios](#)) on that day, the first day of the week (our Sunday - [sabbaton](#)), and when the doors ([thura](#)) were shut ([kleio](#) tight or locked - perfect tense = shut and stayed shut) where the disciples ([mathetes](#)) were, for fear ([phobos](#)) of the Jews ([loudaios](#)) - Note the contrast. Here we see locked doors and fear (no peace), but Jesus show up and gives them Himself and His peace (cf "My peace" Jn 14:27+). The Jews ([loudaios](#)) refers to the religious leaders antagonistic to Jesus and His disciples.

Jesus ([lesous](#)) came and stood in their midst and **\*said** to them, "Peace ([eirene](#)) be with you." - When John records Jesus ([lesous](#)) came, he does not say Jesus knocked or had a key to open the door. The implication is that He passed through the locked door or He may simply have appeared in their midst without having to pass through. Once again they must have been surprised,

especially "doubting" Thomas.

How can Jesus say "**Peace be with you?**" Because of the Cross. We see this in Romans 4:25-5:1 where Paul writes "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions (THE CROSS), and was raised because of our justification (THE RESURRECTION). Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ."

**Spurgeon** - His presence among them when the doors were closed must have astonished and delighted them. While they were trembling he came to reassure them both by his words and his smiles. (The Interpreter)

**NET NOTE** - The fact that the disciples locked the doors is a perfectly understandable reaction to the events of the past few days. But what is the significance of the inclusion of this statement by the author? It is often taken to mean that Jesus, when he entered the room, passed through the closed doors. This may well be the case, but it may be assuming too much about our knowledge of the mode in which the resurrected body of Jesus exists. The text does not explicitly state how Jesus got through the closed doors. It is possible to assume that the doors opened of their own accord before him, or that he simply appeared in the middle of the room without passing through the doors at all. The point the author makes here is simply that the closed doors were no obstacle at all to the resurrected Jesus.

**Brian Bell** - In John 20 we have 4 reactions to the resurrection: 1. Hearing is Believing! (Mary Mag hearing Jesus say, "Mary") - Seeing is Believing! (10 apostles) - Proving is Believing!(Thomas) - Trusting is Believing!(us)

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**Evening** (late) ([3798](#)) **opsios** from **opsed** = long after, late, after the close of day) is a noun meaning late. **Louw-Nida** - pertaining to a point near the end of a day (normally after sunset but before night). It is also possible to understand ψῆ in Mk 11:19 as indicating a period of time, namely 'evening'." **Friberg** says **opsios** was used (1) adjectivally, as a time of day, either before or just after sundown and thus late (Mk 11.11) (2) substantively he opsia (hora) evening; predominantly in the phrase opsias genomenes when evening came, when it was late. **BDAG** - (1). as adjective pertaining. to a point in time that is relatively later than another point of time = late, - *since it was already late.* = Mk 11:11 (2). In our literature mostly substantively = the period between late afternoon and darkness or evening. **Gilbrant** on **opsios** - The term denotes both the time of "lengthening shadows" before sunset (Proverbs 7:9; Jeremiah 6:4) and the time between sunset and total darkness.

**OPSIOS - 14v** - Matt. 8:16; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 14:23; Matt. 16:2; Matt. 20:8; Matt. 26:20; Matt. 27:57; Mk. 1:32; Mk. 4:35; Mk. 6:47; Mk. 14:17; Mk. 15:42; Jn. 6:16; Jn. 20:19

**Shut** (Closed) ([2808](#)) **kleio** literally means to shut or close (like shutting the door of your prayer room so that you pray in secret - Mt 6:6, **the door has already been shut** = Lk 11:7, after the resurrection the disciples were together and **the doors were shut... for fear of the Jews** = Jn 20:19, 26). Figuratively to shut the windows of heaven means to have no rain (Lk 4:25, Rev 11:6). In Mt 23:13 **kleio** is used metaphorically of the Scribes and Pharisees **shutting off the kingdom of heaven from men**. In the parable of the 10 virgins (Mt 25:1-12) the foolish virgins were shut out of the wedding feast (Mt 25:10) because the Lord did not know them (Mt 25:11, cp Mt 7:21-23). **Kleio** is used figuratively in 1Jn 3:17 to describe the shutting of one's heart to the obvious needs of their brethren. **Kleio** is used of Jesus who "**shuts and no one opens.**" (Rev 3:7) In Rev 3:8 Jesus tells the church at Philadelphia "I have put before you an open door which no one can **shut.**" In Rev 20:3 Satan is **shut** in the abyss for one thousand years. In Rev 21:25 the gates of the city of the New Jerusalem **shall never be closed**. The first use of **kleio** in the Septuagint describes God closing the door of the ark = "And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed [it] behind him." (Ge 7:16).

**KLEIO - 15v** - **close(1), closed(1), closes(1), locked(1), shut(11), shuts(1).** Matt. 6:6; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 25:10; Lk. 4:25; Lk. 11:7; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:26; Acts 5:23; Acts 21:30; 1 Jn. 3:17; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 11:6; Rev. 20:3; Rev. 21:25

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## MARKS OF THE LIVING CHRIST John 20:19–23 Croft Pentz

We serve a living Savior. He overcame death. Now He lives forevermore. This living Savior gives us joy and peace which the world cannot take away. Look at the four marks left by the Savior.

1. MARK OF PEACE—v. 19
2. MARK OF PRINTS—v. 20a
3. MARK OF PLEASURE—v. 20b
4. MARK OF POWER—vv. 21–23

Do you know this living Savior? He wants to live in you. He wants to control your life. No one really lives a happy life until Christ controls the life.

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JOHN 20:19—How could Jesus walk through a closed door with a physical body?

**PROBLEM:** It is inferred by some critics that, since the resurrected Christ could appear in a room with closed doors (John 20:19), this proves that His body must have dematerialized to do so, showing that His resurrection body was not essentially or continuously material. However, many other Scriptures indicate that Jesus' resurrection body was literal "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) that could eat physical food and even had the crucifixion scars in it (Luke 24:40–43).

**SOLUTION:** Jesus' resurrection body was essentially and continuously material (see comments on Luke 24:34). The fact that Jesus could get into a room with a closed door in no way proves that He had to dematerialize in order to do it. This is clear for several reasons.

First, the text does not actually say Jesus passed through a closed door. It simply says that "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst" (John 20:19). The Bible does not say how He got into the room.

Second, if He chose to do so, Jesus could have performed this same miracle before His death in His pre-resurrection material body. As the Son of God, His miraculous powers were just as great before the Resurrection.

Third, even before His resurrection Jesus performed miracles with His physical body that transcended natural laws, such as walking on water (John 6:16–20). But walking on water did not prove that His pre-resurrection body was immaterial. Otherwise, Peter's pre-resurrection walk on water (Matt. 14:29) would mean his body dematerialized for a moment and then quickly rematerialized!

Fourth, although physical, the resurrection body is by its very nature a supernatural body (see comments on 1 Cor. 15:44). Hence, it should be expected that it can do supernatural things, such as appearing in a room with closed doors.

Fifth, according to modern physics, it is not an impossibility for a material object to pass through a door. It is only statistically improbable. Physical objects are mostly empty space. All that is necessary for one physical object to pass through another is for the right alignment of the particles in the two physical objects. This is no problem for the One who created the body in the first place.

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**G Campbell Morgan** - Peace be unto you...peace be unto you. John 20:19-21

Twice our Lord uttered the words of greeting to His disciples on the evening of that first resurrection day. The words were not new. They were almost common-place, constituting as they did, the ordinary form with which men greeted each other. Yet how new and wonderful they were as He spoke them! They had behind them the authority of His death and resurrection. He had faced and defeated all the forces which destroy the peace of man. As He said, "Peace be unto you," He was doing infinitely more than expressing a wish. He was making a declaration. He was bestowing a benediction. He was imparting a blessing. The repetition was significant. The first was a greeting addressed to men who were filled with fear on account of the hostility in the midst of which they were living, the self-same hostility which had encompassed His death. He said: "Peace be unto you." The things you fear are powerless to harm you. Death is not the end; beyond it, behold Me alive! Be at peace, for whether in life or death you are safe. The second prefaced a commission. They were to be sent out, as He had been sent out, to accomplish a Divine purpose. Let them be at peace, knowing by the fact of His resurrection they would be victorious, even though they went His way of suffering and death. It is a striking commentary on these words of Jesus, that Christian souls have never had more perfect experience of peace than when they have been called upon to suffer for His Name. (BORROW [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible PAGE 324](#))

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**Vance Havner** - "Then Jesus Came"

When the doors were shut... came Jesus... Came Jesus, the doors being shut. John 20:19, 26.

Are you living behind closed doors bolted against some nameless dread or fear? Is it fear of man, fear of tomorrow, or some other hobgoblin that peers in the window of your soul? The Lord is with you. Not visibly as in this blessed account, but remember that He told Thomas on this same day. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." You can count on Him, for He promised to be with us all the days—all kinds of days.

No prison bars, no dungeon gates, no walls of blindness, deafness, no Patmos isles of loneliness can keep Him out. The doors being shut... comes Jesus! "He saw them toiling in rowing... and... he cometh unto them." Our very distress is the reason for His approach! The very fact that the doors are shut challenges Him to enter!

There is only one door He will not enter—your unyielded heart. But open that door and He will come in. All other closed doors are to

Him an invitation, not a barrier.

"Came Jesus... the doors being shut."

**John 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.**

- **he showed:** John 20:27 Lu 24:39,40 1Jn 1:1
- **Then:** John 16:22 Isa 25:8,9 Mt 28:8 Lu 24:41

## JOY AT SEEING THE LORD ALIVE

**And when He had said this** ("Peace to you"), **He showed** ([deiknuo](#)) **them both His hands and His side** ([pleura](#)) - Apparently He did not show them His feet. The post-resurrection body of Jesus bears the marks or scars from His crucifixion, the same marks that are on His glorified body in Heaven today and forever. Stated another way, there is a Man in heaven today Who was not present in eternity past (in the same body). These are marks of His covenant with us, the covenant in His blood, the covenant which He will never break, assuring that once you are truly saved, you are safe forever and ever. Amen (See Covenant [Solemn and Binding](#) and [The Oneness of Covenant](#)). John describes our Lord Jesus in Heaven...

Revelation 5:9+ And they \*sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for **You were slain** ([sphazo](#)) and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

Revelation 5:12+ Saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ([sphazo](#) - perfect tense = slain in past, enduring forever) to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

[Brian Bell](#) - Look at the wounds of Jesus!" cried Staupitz to Martin Luther (Staupitz supervised Martin Luther during a critical period in his spiritual life). There is indeed no other sign which can give rest/peace to the penitent. a) Have you "Looked at the wounds of Jesus"?

**The disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **then rejoiced** ([chairo](#)) **when they saw the Lord** ([kurios](#)) - "They were glad when they saw the Lord.". Their fear turned to joy. Note what the presence of Jesus brought these fearful men - peace and joy, the fruit that the Holy Spirit brings to all Jesus' disciples (Gal 5:22-23+). As the psalmist writes in His "presence is fullness of joy." (Ps 16:11<sup>+</sup>)

**THOUGHT** - Their joy was founded on truth (Truth), on objective data, not on an emotional reaction. Happy depend on what happens and thus is fleeting. Our joy is founded on truth. We are like Jeremiah who said "**Your words** were found and I **ate them**, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; ." (Jer 15:16+) This begs the question - Are you in the Word of Truth daily, so that the Word could get into your innermost being and renew you mind and give you His joy?

**Spurgeon** - And well might they be, for his presence is ever a well-spring of joy. Mark the loving familiarity which thus unveiled his scars, and note the full proofs of his identity which those wounds afforded them. Even now the Lord reveals himself unto his chosen as he doth not unto the world. Oh, for a view of him by faith. (The Interpreter)

**NET NOTE** - When the disciples recognized Jesus (now referred to as the Lord, cf. Mary's words in v. 18) they were suddenly overcome with joy. This was a fulfillment of Jesus' words to the disciples in the Farewell Discourse (16:20–22) that they would have sorrow while the world rejoiced, but that their sorrow would be turned to lasting joy when they saw him again.

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**Showed** (1166) [deiknuo/deiknumi](#) means to show and has the sense of (1) to draw attention to, to point out, to show, to make known, to exhibit something (by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means) so that it can be apprehended by the senses, to cause to see (Mt 4:8, Lk 4:5, Mt 8:4) or (2) to show so as to prove something is true or to make clear by evidence or reasoning. Show in the sense of demonstrate or prove as in Jas 3:13). To exhibit or present to the view of others. To explain the meaning or significance of something by demonstration. Note the concentration of **deiknuo** in the most "graphic" NT book, the Revelation, or the revealing. How interesting that in the "revealing" we repeatedly encounter the verb to show, and specifically to show what God's plan is for the rest of the ages.

**DEIKNUO** - 31V - bring(1), show(21), showed(8), shown(2), shows(1). Matt. 4:8; Matt. 8:4; Matt. 16:21; Mk.

1:44; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 5:14; Lk. 20:24; Lk. 22:12; Lk. 24:40; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 10:32; Jn. 14:8; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 20:20; Acts 7:3; Acts 10:28; 1 Co. 12:31; 1 Tim. 6:15; Heb. 8:5; Jas. 2:18; Jas. 3:13; Rev. 1:1; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 17:1; Rev. 21:9; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 22:6; Rev. 22:8

**Rejoiced** (5463) **chairo** means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off. **Chairo** implies and imparts joy. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source is the Spirit!). **Chairo** means to enjoy a state of gladness, to be delighted.

Several Greek lexicons (Zodhiates, Liddell-Scott, et al) associate the origin of **chairo** with **charis** or grace as follows - **Chairo** is from the root **char-**, "favorably disposed, leaning towards" and cognate with **chárís**, "grace" and so properly means to delight in God's grace ("rejoice") and literally, to experience God's grace (favor) or be conscious (glad) for His grace. It follows that rejoicing ("glad by grace") is principally internal and eternal because it depends only on grace. In contrast, "happiness" is external and temporal (requiring pleasant "happenings"). Thus **Zodhiates** writes "The word **charis** is related to **chairo**, to rejoice, and **chara**, joy, delight, the result of the activity of the grace of God in man."

**CHAIRO - 68V - am glad(1), glad(7), gladly(1), greeted\*(1), greeting(2), greetings(4), hail(4), joyfully(1), make(1), rejoice(33), rejoiced(8), rejoices(2), rejoicing(10).** Matt. 2:10; Matt. 5:12; Matt. 18:13; Matt. 26:49; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 28:9; Mk. 14:11; Mk. 15:18; Lk. 1:14; Lk. 1:28; Lk. 6:23; Lk. 10:20; Lk. 13:17; Lk. 15:5; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 19:6; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 22:5; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 3:29; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 8:56; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:22; Jn. 19:3; Jn. 20:20; Acts 5:41; Acts 8:39; Acts 11:23; Acts 13:48; Acts 15:23; Acts 15:31; Acts 23:26; Rom. 12:12; Rom. 12:15; Rom. 16:19; 1 Co. 7:30; 1 Co. 13:6; 1 Co. 16:17; 2 Co. 2:3; 2 Co. 6:10; 2 Co. 7:7; 2 Co. 7:9; 2 Co. 7:13; 2 Co. 7:16; 2 Co. 13:9; 2 Co. 13:11; Phil. 1:18; Phil. 2:17; Phil. 2:18; Phil. 2:28; Phil. 3:1; Phil. 4:4; Phil. 4:10; Col. 1:24; Col. 2:5; 1 Thess. 3:9; 1 Thess. 5:16; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:10; 2 Jn. 1:11; 3 Jn. 1:3; Rev. 11:10; Rev. 19:7

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#### Vance Havner - Sad or Glad?

For they all saw him, and were troubled. Mark 6:50.

Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. John 20:20.

The disciples saw Him in a storm but supposed Him to be a spirit. They did not recognize Him. But in our second verse they saw the risen Lord and knew Him by the print of the nails in His hands and feet.

Surely the sight of the Lord should make us glad. But sometimes we wist not that it is He. He draws near, but, like the Emmaus disciples, we have holden eyes. What should thrill us only troubles us. Indeed, as the Emmaus disciples related their experience, Jesus appeared, but they "supposed that they had seen a spirit." He quelled their fears then as He did in John's account by showing the marks of the cross.

We walk by faith, not by sight, these days, and are not granted a view of Him with our eyes. But in His dealings with us He still walks our seas and comes into our rooms through doors we have shut. Alas, that fear so often sees a spirit when faith should see the Saviour! What should bring triumph then brings only trouble. See Him and be glad!

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#### Sad Or Glad? Mark 16:1-14

They mourned and wept. —Mark 16:10

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. —John 20:20

The first Resurrection Day began with gloom and despair for the disciples of our Lord. Three days earlier, their Master had been crucified and buried. We can imagine them huddled together behind closed doors as "they mourned and wept" (Mark 16:10). But John told us that before the day ended the disciples "were glad" (John 20:20). From mourning in the morning—to gladness in the evening! What made the difference? Seeing their resurrected Lord made all the difference. It changed mourning into gladness, weeping into joy. There is still a deeper and a greater lesson here. All their mourning and weeping had been unnecessary. Jesus did not sympathize with their heartbreaking sorrow, but instead He "rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart" (Mark 16:14). He had told them repeatedly that He would rise from the dead on the third day (Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33). His enemies remembered (Matthew 27:62-66), but His disciples forgot. They were filled with sorrow because they didn't believe His promise. We too can have great reason to be filled with joyous anticipation and hope as we await the coming of our resurrected Lord. — M.R. DeHaan, M.D. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Yes, Christ the Lord is risen,  
Has come forth from the grave;  
He breaks the chains of death for you  
And now has power to save.  
—Woodruff

Christ's empty tomb fills us with hope.

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## **James Butler - GLADNESS John 20:20 [Sermon Starters](#)**

“When he had so said, he showed unto them his hands, and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20).

Our text describes a scene on the first Easter Sunday night. The situation was not a good one for the disciples. They were gathered together behind closed doors. They had been accused of stealing the body of Christ from the grave (Matthew 28:13) and the disciples were “assembled for fear” (John 20:19), for the story of their stealing of the body was proclaimed and believed by many. Like Mary Magdalene who in her pessimism thought Jesus was the gardener (John 20:15), these disciples thought the end had come and their doom was near. Then Jesus showed up and changed every thing. No longer were they a morgue of unhappiness and fear but felicity replaced fear and gladness replaced grief. We note three things about this gladness.

### **FIRST—THE MOMENT OF GLADNESS**

“Then.”

Someone has said it is darkest before dawn. Whether that is true or not, it does describe many a sour situation turned sweet. The relief seems to come at the darkest hour. So it was with the disciples, they figured the end had come. All the news of the resurrection had lost its effect upon them and unbelief prevailed. But God is in the habit of changing things when they get to their worse. This shows the great power of God. So it was “then” when everything seemed against them that Christ showed up to change their dread to delight.

### **SECOND—THE MEN OF GLADNESS**

“The disciples.”

Not everyone had this wonderful experience. It was only for the disciples. Many blessings and promises in the Scripture are not for everyone, though everyone has a tendency to claim the promises. God gives His blessings to those who are devoted to Him. That eliminates most people from the promises as few are devoted to the Lord. The disciples, whatever faults they had—and they had plenty, were devoted to Jesus Christ. Therefore they were receivers of some of the great blessings from the resurrected Christ. If you are short of Divine blessing, do not complain, look at your devotion. Those who are devoted to Him, as these disciples were, will experience the great blessings of life.

### **THIRD—THE MEANS OF GLADNESS**

“When they saw the Lord.”

The means of gladness was the Lord.

- The proof in the means. “He showed unto them His hands and His side.” The Lord does not expect us to jump up and down with joy without a good reason. He gives us good reason. Here it was the proof that He was indeed the One they loved, Who was crucified.
- The Person in the means. “Glad ... Lord” It was the Lord who was the source of joy. Where is your joy? Joy will be found in the Lord (Philippians 4:6). Where your joy is determines the character of the joy you will have. Joy in the Lord is lasting and satisfying but the joy of the world is neither.

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## **[Nail-Scarred Hands](#)**

TODAY’S READING: John 20:19-29

Put your finger here, and look at my hands. . . . Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe! -John 20:27

Like me, you may know exactly when you received certain wounds that left scars.

A small scar on my wrist is the result of a fellow middle-school band member plowing me over in his haste.



Another on my elbow is from the time a driver mistook the gas pedal for the brakes and slammed into our van.

And a third comes from a surgery.

Perhaps you also have mental and emotional scars from the pain of sickness, loss, or death.

The wonderful, healing news is that, as the song "The Only Scars in Heaven" by Casting Crowns affirms, the only scars in heaven will belong to Jesus. In that place, we won't be broken or wounded. We have the hope of a life without doubts, fears, mental anguish, or physical pain. We'll be with Jesus, made new (Revelation 21:4).

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and showed them the scars in His hands and side (John 20:20). Thomas wasn't there, so he doubted the news (v. 25). Jesus returned and told him to touch His scars and not "be faithless any longer" (v. 27). His doubts gone, Thomas responded, "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28).

Jesus died to take our sins away. His scars identify Him as the Lamb who was slain for us! (Revelation 5:6). We can believe and rejoice and be filled with hope, for one day He'll hold us in His nail-scarred hands. Alyson Kieda (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What emotional or mental wounds do you still bear? How have you experienced healing through Jesus?

Dear Jesus, thank You for being scarred for me. Help me to rejoice in You.

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### Sad Or Glad?

They mourned and wept. —Mark 16:10 Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. —John 20:20

Today's Scripture : Mark 16:1-14

The first Resurrection Day began with gloom and despair for the disciples of our Lord. Three days earlier, their Master had been crucified and buried. We can imagine them huddled together behind closed doors as "they mourned and wept" (Mark 16:10).

But John told us that before the day ended the disciples "were glad" (John 20:20). From mourning in the morning—to gladness in the evening! What made the difference? Seeing their resurrected Lord made all the difference. It changed mourning into gladness, weeping into joy.

There is still a deeper and a greater lesson here. All their mourning and weeping had been unnecessary. Jesus did not sympathize with their heartbreaking sorrow, but instead He "rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart" (Mark 16:14). He had told them repeatedly that He would rise from the dead on the third day (Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33). His enemies remembered (Matthew 27:62-66), but His disciples forgot. They were filled with sorrow because they didn't believe His promise.

We too can have great reason to be filled with joyous anticipation and hope as we await the coming of our resurrected Lord. —M. R. De Haan, M.D. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Yes, Christ the Lord is risen,  
Has come forth from the grave;  
He breaks the chains of death for you  
And now has power to save.  
—Woodruff

Christ's empty tomb fills us with hope.

**John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."**

- **Peace:** John 14:27
- **as:** John 13:20 17:18,19 21:15-17 Isa 63:1-3 Mt 10:16,40 Mt 28:18-20 Mk 16:15-18 Lu 24:47-49 Ac 1:8 2Ti 2:2 Heb 3:1

### Related Passages:

John 14:27+ "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. **Do not let your heart be troubled**, nor let it be fearful.



John 16:33+ "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage**; I have overcome the world."

Luke 24:47-49+ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things (HERE IS THEIR COMMISSION TO BE HIS WITNESSES). 49 "And **behold**, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you (THE HOLY SPIRIT); but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Matthew 28:18-20+ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

## JESUS' COMMISSIONS THE ELEVEN

So ([oun](#)) is a term of conclusion.

Jesus ([lesous](#)) said to them again, "Peace ([eirene](#)) be with you; as the Father ([pater](#)) has sent ([apostello](#)) Me, I also send ([pempo](#)) **you** - Jesus doubles down on His gift of peace to His men. Note the authority Jesus claims is that His Father had sent him. How did the Father send Jesus? When He began His 3+ year ministry, the Spirit came upon Him and He was filled with the Holy Spirit Who empowered His ministry. That is what is to happen with the eleven disciples, for just before He ascended Jesus informed them "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+)

[Brian Bell](#) - Peace to you! - The 1st message of peace was accompanied by Him showing his wounds. Now the 2nd time the message of peace was accompanied by an injunction to go forth into the world. (On the great errand of world evangelism) 1. See My hands...It's Me! - See My hands...and Go! 2. The 1st "peace" is peace with God, based on His sacrifice on the cross. That is why He showed them His hands and side. 3. The 2nd "peace" is the peace of God that comes from His presence with us. a) He commissioned them to take His place as the Father's ambassadors in the world.

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**Peace** ([1515](#)) [eirene](#) from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. Peace was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word shalom - "peace to you". **Eirene** can convey the sense of an inner rest, well being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God, effected by placing one's faith in the gospel. In eschatology, peace is prophesied to be an essential characteristic of the Messianic kingdom (Acts 10:36).

**Lenski** adds that **eirene** "is both the condition of peace, when our sins are gone, salvation is ours, and God is our friend, and the feeling of peace that results from this condition. The feeling may fluctuate and even be absent at times, but the condition abides unchanged as long as faith and salvation abide. The feeling will blossom again and again out of the condition and grow in intensity." (Borrow [Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel](#))

**EIRENE IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 14:27; Jn. 16:33; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:21; Jn. 20:26

**Sent** ([649](#)) [apostello](#) from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. The idea is to send forth from one place to another. But the meaning of [apostello](#) is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2). To send away in the sense of to dismiss (Mk 12:3, 4). To send or thrust forth as a sickle among corn (Mk 4:29).

[See New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#) for - 8 page discussion including discussion of apostle

**Three things are true of the person sent from God.**

- (1) He belongs to God, who has sent him out.
- (2) He is commissioned to be sent out.
- (3) He possesses all the authority and power of God, who has sent him out. (Practical

**APOSTELLO IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 1:6; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 1:24; Jn. 3:17; Jn. 3:28; Jn. 3:34; Jn. 4:38; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:57; Jn. 7:29; Jn. 7:32; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 11:3; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:18; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:25; Jn. 18:24; Jn. 20:21

**Send** (3992)(**pempo**) means to cause to go, to send (a) of persons: Christ, by the Father, Luke 20:13; John 4:34; John 5:23, 24, 30, 37; John 6:38-40, 44; John 7:16, 18, 28, 33; John 8:16, 18, 26, 29; John 9:4; John 12:44, 45, 49; John 13:20 (2nd part); John 14:24; John 15:21; John 16:5; Rom. 8:3; the Holy Spirit, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; Elijah, Luke 4:26; John the Baptist, John 1:33; disciples and apostles, e.g., Matt. 11:2; John 20:21; servants, e.g., Luke 20:11, 12; officials, Matt. 14:10; messengers, e.g., Acts 10:5, 32, 33; Acts 15:22, 25; 2 Cor. 9:3; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 2:19, 23, 25; 1 Thess. 3:2, 5; Titus 3:12; a prisoner, Acts 25:25, 27; potentates, by God, 1 Pet. 2:14; an angel, Rev. 22:16; demons, Mark 5:12; (b) of things, Acts 11:29; Phil. 4:16; 2 Thess. 2:11; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 11:10; Rev. 14:15, 18, RV, "send forth" (AV, "thrust in"). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Vines adds these notes:**

(1) **Pempō** is a more general term than [apostello](#); apostellō usually "suggests official or authoritative sending" (Thayer). A comparison of the usages mentioned above shows how nearly (in some cases practically quite) interchangeably they are used, and yet on close consideration the distinction just mentioned is discernible; in the Gospel of John, cp. **pempō** in John 5:23, 24, 30, 37, [apostello](#) in John 5:33, 36, 38; **pempō** in John 6:38, 39, 44, [apostello](#) in John 6:29, 57; the two are not used simply for the sake of variety of expression. **Pempō** is not used in the Lord's prayer in John 17, whereas [apostello](#) is used six times.

(2) The "sending" of the Son by the Father was from the glory which He had with the Father into the world, by way of the Incarnation, not a "sending" out into the world after His birth, as if denoting His mission among and His manifestation to the people. "Hofmann, in support of his view that Jesus is called the Son of God only in virtue of His being born of man, vainly urges that the simple accusative after apostellō also denotes what the Person is or becomes by being sent. What he states is true but only when the name of the object spoken of is chosen to correspond with the purposed mission, as e.g., in Mark 1:2; Luke 14:32; Luke 19:14. We can no more say, 'God sent Jesus that He should be His Son' than we can render 'he sent his servants,' Matt. 21:34, in this manner. That the Sonship of Christ is anterior to His mission to the world ... is clear from John 16:28; cp. especially also the double accusative in 1 John 4:14, 'the Father sent the Son the Savior of the world.' The expression that Jesus is sent by God denotes the mission which He has to fulfill and the authority which backs Him" (Cremer, *Lexicon of NT Greek*). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Strong's** = to dispatch (from the subject view or point of *departure*, whereas **hiemi** [as a stronger form of **eimi**] refers rather to the object point or *terminus ad quem*, and 4724 (stello) denotes properly the *orderly* motion involved), especially on a temporary errand; also to *transmit*, *bestow*, or *wield* :- send, thrust in.

**Friberg** on **pempo** - from a basic meaning send, of causing movement from one place to another;

(1) of persons send, dispatch (Mt 2.8); especially of those sent as God's representatives (Lk 4.26); in a more abstract sense instruct, appoint (Jn 1.33); in distinction from [apostello](#) (send forth, send out), where the primary focus is on the authoritative commission behind the sending, **pempo** focuses rather on the sender who is being represented and on the act of sending (Jn 5.37; cf. Jn 3.17);

(2) of things send something to someone (Rev 11.10); idiomatically, of harvesting *pempein to drepanon* literally thrust in the sickle, i.e. begin to harvest; figuratively in Rev 14:15, 18 of the time of judgment at the end of this age (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant - Classical Greek** - Frequently **pempo** is used of "sending" persons, such as messengers, spies, troops. It even refers to "nominating" ("send forward") a person for office (cf. Liddell-Scott). **Pempō** does not carry the same emphasis that the one who is sent has the same authority as the sender. Rengstorff ("apostellō," Kittel, 1:398) notes that when rulers of provinces are referred to as *hoi pempomenoi*, "those being sent," the stress is upon their being sent, not upon their duty or authority. According to Thayer **pempō** is a more general term than **apostellō** which often implies an authorized messenger (Greek-English Lexicon).

**Septuagint Usage** - The Septuagint's usage further confirms this distinction between the two words. Here **apostellō** and **exapostellō** (1805) occur over 700 times, almost invariably as a translation of the Hebrew *shālach*, "to send." The Hebrew does not stress as much the sending as it does the authorization or commissioning to perform a certain duty. Consequently, *shālach* is only rarely (five times) translated as

pempō. **Pempō** occurs in the Septuagint only 26 times.

**New Testament Usage** - In the New Testament pempō appears some 80 times, compared to around 135 times for apostellō. With regard to the distribution of pempō, it is interesting to note that 22 of the occurrences are attributed to Luke (in his Gospel and Acts); 15 are Paul's; and it occurs not less than 33 times in John's Gospel. Equally surprising as this distribution is the unique use of the word in John's Gospel when compared with the rest of the New Testament. Whereas the rest of the New Testament only rarely uses pempō in reference to God's sending of His Son, for John it is used almost exclusively in this way.

In addition to the 33 instances of pempō, [apostello](#) occurs in John's Gospel 28 times; it too refers to the sending of Jesus into the world. The various attempts to explain or demonstrate a distinct difference between [apostello](#) and pempō in this regard have hardly been convincing. Both the arguments and the conclusions rest on seemingly shaky foundations. Obviously the solution is to acknowledge John's stylistic train, in good Middle Eastern fashion, of using a variety of related words to say the same thing.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that the fourth Gospel was probably written a few decades later than the Synoptic Gospels. When John wrote, the term apostolos, "apostle," would, to a greater extent than when the Synoptics appeared, have acquired a more technical status. This in turn would have unquestionably affected the verb's meaning to some degree. John's use of the two words defines more precisely their actual practical use.

For example, one might make a comparison between **pempō** in John 5:23,24,30, 37 with [apostello](#) in Jn 5:33,36,38. Or, one might compare pempō in John 6:38,39, 44 with apostellō in John 6:29, 57. Remarkably, in Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, **pempō** does not occur at all, while [apostello](#) occurs seven times. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**PEMPO - 79X/78V - dispatch(1), put(2), send(24), sending(2), sent(50).** Matt. 2:8; Matt. 11:2; Matt. 14:10; Matt. 22:7; Mk. 5:12; Lk. 4:26; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 7:10; Lk. 7:19; Lk. 15:15; Lk. 16:24; Lk. 16:27; Lk. 20:11; Lk. 20:12; Lk. 20:13; Jn. 1:22; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:23; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:30; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 6:38; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 6:44; Jn. 7:16; Jn. 7:18; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 7:33; Jn. 8:16; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 8:26; Jn. 8:29; Jn. 9:4; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:45; Jn. 12:49; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:21; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:5; Jn. 16:7; Jn. 20:21; Acts 10:5; Acts 10:32; Acts 10:33; Acts 11:29; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:25; Acts 19:31; Acts 20:17; Acts 23:30; Acts 25:25; Acts 25:27; Rom. 8:3; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 16:3; 2 Co. 9:3; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 2:19; Phil. 2:23; Phil. 2:25; Phil. 2:28; Phil. 4:16; Col. 4:8; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Thess. 3:5; 2 Thess. 2:11; Tit. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:14; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 11:10; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 14:18; Rev. 22:16

**PEMPO in the Septuagint** - Gen. 27:42; Ezr. 4:14; Ezr. 5:17; Neh. 2:5; Est. 8:5

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## THOMAS IS CONVINCED John 20:21–31; 1 John 1:1–4 Croft Pentz

Thomas doubted the resurrection of Christ. Though Christ promised He would arise, yet Thomas refused to believe until he saw. Faith believes before it sees.

1. THE PEACE OF CHRIST—John 20:21–25
2. THE PROOF OF CHRIST—John 20:26–31
3. THE PERSON OF CHRIST—1 John 1:1–4

Doubt is sin! Doubt will destroy faith. All doubt, fears, and worries disappear when Christ comes. When we pray, He draws near to us. When He is near, all doubt and fear will be replaced by faith and trust.

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## [No Utopia](#)

Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." —John 20:21

Today's Scripture : John 20:19-31

An exhibit at the New York Public Library was titled "Utopia: The Search For The Ideal Society In The Western World." Time magazine called it "a show about failure," noting that Utopia, which has never existed, "is one of the enduring phantoms of the human mind."

Sometimes the church tries to be a utopian society by welcoming agreeable saints and barely tolerating offensive sinners. Concern for our own well-being overshadows compassion for people without Christ, and we become the exact opposite of what Jesus wants us to be.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus associated with dishonest businessmen, prostitutes, and people from despised minority groups. He came as a servant to seek and to save the lost, and to do His Father's will in dying for the sins of the world.

Immediately after Jesus' resurrection, His disciples were assembled behind locked doors (John 20:19). But Jesus appeared in their midst and gave them this charge: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (v.21).

The disciples got the message, unlocked the doors, and went out boldly with the love and salvation of Christ. We are called to do the same. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, help us see, through transformed eyes,  
A world of people in despair,  
And help us reach them with Your love,  
To show them that we really care.  
—Sper

Keep the faith, but not to yourself.

**John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and \*said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.**

- **He breathed:** Ge 2:7 Job 33:4 Ps 33:6 Eze 37:9
- **Receive:** John 14:16 Jn 15:26 Jn 16:7 Ac 2:4,38 Acts 4:8 8:15 10:47 19:2 Ga 3:2

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 2:7+ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and **breathed into** (Lxx = [emphusao](#)) his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Ezekiel 37:9+ Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and **breathe** (Lxx = [emphusao](#))(Lxx = [emphusao](#)) these slain, that they come to life."

### JESUS PROPHECIES THE POWER FOR THE COMMISSION

**And when He had said this, He breathed on** ([emphusao](#)) **them and \*said to them, "Receive** ([aorist imperative](#)) **the Holy Spirit - He breathed on them** was a symbolic way of preparing them for the promised Holy Spirit Who they would receive at Pentecost. It was a foretaste or foreshadowing of Pentecost. In the context, they would need the Spirit's power as they were sent into the hostile world to proclaim the Gospel. Note that unlike the Day of Pentecost nothing is recorded as having happened with Jesus breathed on them.

**THOUGHT-** Have you received the Holy Spirit? Your answer to this question is vitally important. Simply put, if you have not, you are not born again. If you are born again, you have received the Holy Spirit and no additional "reception" is necessary. Filling on the other hand is something that can dissipate (GRIEVE, QUENCH) when we sin and fail to confess and repent. Paul makes it clear "However, you are not **in the flesh** (UNREGENERATE, DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, DESTINED FOR HELL) but **in the Spirit**, if (FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL = SINCE) indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." (Ro 8:9+).

[Brian Bell](#) comments on **He breathed on them** - For their new commission they needed spiritual power. The image and wording of breathing on them recalls God's creative work in making Adam. (both gave life: 1 physical, 1 spiritual) This reception of the Spirit was in anticipation of the day of Pentecost and should be understood as a partial limited gift of knowledge, understanding, and empowerment until Pentecost, 50 days later. (Knowledge Bible Commentary) Like an instrument is blown into, to make music. They were to sing and sound the note of the new kingdom.

**NET NOTE** - **He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."** The use of the Greek verb breathed on ( [μφοσάω](#), [emphusao](#)) to describe the action of Jesus here recalls Gen 2:7 in the LXX, where "the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** (lxx = [emphusao](#)) into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." This time, however, it is

Jesus who is breathing the breath-Spirit of eternal life, life from above, into his disciples (cf. Jn 3:3–10). Furthermore there is the imagery of Ezek 37:1–14, the prophecy concerning the resurrection of the dry bones: In Ezek 37:9 the Son of Man is told to prophesy to the “wind-breath-Spirit” to come and breathe on the corpses, so that they will live again. In Ezek 37:14 the Lord promised, “I will put my Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you in your own land.” In terms of ultimate fulfillment the passage in Ezek 37 looks at the regeneration of Israel immediately prior to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. **The author saw in what Jesus did for the disciples at this point a partial and symbolic fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy**, much as Peter made use of the prophecy of Joel 2:28–32 in his sermon on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:17–21. What then did Jesus do for the disciples in John 20:22? It appears that in light of the symbolism of the new creation present here, as well as the regeneration symbolism from the Ezek 37 passage, that Jesus at this point breathed into the disciples the breath of eternal life. This was in the form of the Holy Spirit, who was to indwell them. It is instructive to look again at Jn 7:38–39, which states, “Just as the scripture says, ‘Out from within him will flow rivers of living water.’ (Now he said this about the Spirit whom those who believed in him were going to receive; for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet **glorified**.”) But now in Jn 20:22 Jesus was **glorified**, so the Spirit could be given. Had the disciples not believed in Jesus before? It seems clear that they had, since their belief is repeatedly affirmed, beginning with Jn 2:11. But it also seems clear that even on the eve of the crucifixion, they did not understand the necessity of the cross (Jn 16:31–33). And even after the crucifixion, the disciples had not realized that there was going to be a resurrection (Jn 20:9). Ultimate recognition of who Jesus was appears to have come to them only after the post resurrection appearances (note the response of Thomas, who was not present at this incident, in Jn 20:28). Finally, what is the relation of this incident in Jn 20:22 to the account of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2? It appears best to view these as two separate events which have two somewhat different purposes. This was the giving of life itself, which flowed out from within (cf. Jn 7:38–39). The giving of power would occur later, on the day of Pentecost—power to witness and carry out the mission the disciples had been given. (It is important to remember that in the historical unfolding of God’s program for the church, these events occurred in a chronological sequence which, after the church has been established, is not repeatable today.)

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**Breathed on** (1720) (emphusao from **en** = in, upon + **phusao** = to breathe or blow) means to breathe or blow on. Only once in NT - Jn 20:22. Six uses in the Septuagint - Ge. 2:7; 1Ki. 17:21; Job 4:21; Ezek. 21:31; Ezek. 37:9; Nah. 2:1.

Genesis 2:7+ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and **breathed into** his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Ezekiel 37:9+ Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and **breathe** on these slain, that they come to life.”’”

**Gilbrant** - The verb **emphusaō** consists of two elements: **en** (1706), “in,” and **phusaō**, “blow.” In classical Greek it signified “blowing in” as was done in playing a flute (see Liddell-Scott). **Emphusaō** had a similar meaning in the Greek papyri. An example is where the word was used in reference to a medical treatment for sneezing. To stop sneezing a compound extracted from some white hellebore plants was to be blown into the nostrils (cf. Moulton-Milligan).

Septuagint Usage - **Emphusaō** occurs 11 times in the Septuagint and has the significance of breathing upon or into. God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, and he became a living being (Genesis 2:7; cf. Wisdom 15:11). In the vision of the dry bones God breathed upon the slain, and they came alive (Ezekiel 37:9). Eliphaz reminded Job that men are weak and transient: “For he (God) blows upon them and they are withered” (Job 4:21). See also Sirach 43:4; Nahum 2:1; Ezekiel 21:31; 22:20.

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament **emphusaō** is found only in John 20:22 where Jesus breathed (**enephusēsen**) on the disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Most likely the use of **emphusaō** by John refers to the bestowal of life as in the Septuagint in Genesis 2:7; Ezekiel 37:9; and Wisdom of Solomon 15:11. As at the first creation when God breathed life into Adam, so Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples, bringing a new creation and spiritual life. By the Spirit the disciples were united to the risen Lord so they shared in His life.

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**Norman Geisler** - [When Critics Ask Page 360](#)

JOHN 20:22—Was the Holy Spirit given to the disciples before Pentecost?

**PROBLEM:** In Acts, the apostles are told to wait until Pentecost before they receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4–8; cf. 2:1–2). Yet even before His crucifixion Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). Didn’t they receive the Holy Spirit at this point and not later at Pentecost?



**SOLUTION:** First of all, the John passage is a difficult one, with no direct parallels, and it is hard to know exactly what it means. And like all obscure passages, one should not base any major teaching on it.

Second, some scholars believe that the imperative “receive” is intended to denote the future “you will receive.” If so, then there is no conflict.

Third, even if Jesus meant them to receive the Holy Spirit at that moment (in John 20:22), it was apparently in a different sense. Here the Spirit is given “to forgive the sins” (v. 23). But in Acts 1:8 the Spirit was to be given to provide “power ... [to] be witnesses” for Him to the “end of the earth.”

Fourth, the promise of the Spirit in John was for His indwelling the believer (cf. John 14:16), not for His being baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:13), which is a different act of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, then, there is no conflict between the two passages, since they speak of different activities of the Spirit which came at different times.

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#### **Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask Page 360](#)**

JOHN 20:22–23—Does this passage support the Roman Catholic view that priests have the power to forgive sins?

**PROBLEM:** Roman Catholics claim that Jesus gave His disciples the power to forgive sins and that this power has been passed on to Roman Catholic priests down through the centuries. Does this text support their position?

**SOLUTION:** Jesus did give His disciples the power to forgive sins, and this power still exists today. However, it is not unique to Roman Catholic priests. Any believer in Christ possesses the same power to pronounce someone’s sins forgiven, based on their trust in the finished work of Christ. Notice the context of the passage.

First of all, many see this as an extension of the power promised in Matthew 18:18 to bind and loose sins with the “keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16:19). It is given to all the apostles, not just Peter (see comments on Matt. 16:18). And inasmuch as the mission of the church extends “to the ends of the age” (Matt. 28:20), Christ is “present” to forgive sins with all who preach the Gospel at any time or place.

Further, this is John’s parallel to the Great Commission. Jesus introduces it by the words, “as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). But the clergy (priesthood) is not the only group commissioned to serve Christ; every believer is to be a witness (cf. Matt. 28:18–20; 2 Cor. 4:1ff).

Finally, this power is present only through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). This is parallel to what Jesus said later, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). But all believers have this same power to pronounce forgiveness of sins as the witness to the good news of Christ throughout the world. There is absolutely no mention here about any unique priestly power resident in a select clergy. It is simply John’s equivalent of the Great Commission to all believers to proclaim the message of Christ’s forgiveness to all the world (cf. Luke 24:47)

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#### **[BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD](#) (Borrow [Amazing Grace - Kenneth Osbeck - page 156](#))**

Edwin Hatch, 1835–1889

As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you. And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:21, 22)

The good news of the gospel relates not only to what Christ once did—His death, resurrection, ascension—but to what He presently offers: Forgiveness of sin, the reuniting of our eternal fellowship with the Creator, an advocate with the heavenly Father, and the energizing indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit.

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she receives the Holy Spirit within. Often, however, the Holy Spirit does not have control of that life even though He resides there. The Scriptures teach that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit if we are to live overcoming lives. This is not some emotional, mystical event. To be “filled with the Spirit of God” means in a very practical way that a believer has surrendered completely to the Lordship of Christ and sincerely desires to be directed by the Holy Spirit in order to worthily exalt Christ and be an effective representative for God. One of the most compelling evidences of a Spirit-filled life is our consistent, Christ-like daily living.

The author of this choice text, Edwin Hatch, was an Anglican minister. He also served for a time as a professor of the classics at Trinity College in Canada. Dr. Hatch was widely known for his scholarship and lectures in early church history. Despite his scholarly attainments, Hatch was said to have possessed a faith as “simple and unaffected as a child’s.”

This prayer to the Holy Spirit desiring a unity between our earthly will and God’s divine will first appeared in 1878 in a pamphlet titled

“Between Doubt and Prayer.” The hymn in its present form appeared later in the Psalmist Hymnal, published in 1886.

**Breathe on me, Breath of God;**

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what Thou dost love and do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,  
until with Thee I will one will—to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly Thine,  
till all this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,  
but live with Thee the perfect life of Thine eternity.

For Today: John 3:5–7; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:5; 1 John 4:13

Invite the Holy Spirit to have a greater control of your life—to empower you to be an even more effective representative for God. Sing this prayer as you go—

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**Walter Kaiser- John 20:22 Receive the Holy Spirit? ([Hard Sayings of the Bible page 474](#))**

Did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit before the ascension or at Pentecost? In John 20:22 Jesus breathes on the disciples and indicates that he is granting them the Holy Spirit, which fulfills a promise repeatedly made in John 14–16. However, in Acts 2:4 we learn that later, after the ascension of Jesus, the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room had an experience, and “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” When was the Holy Spirit actually received by the disciples?

In John 20:21 we have the commissioning of the disciples: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” The sending of the Son in John is a sending into the world to save the world. The sending of the disciples is thus a continuation of this sending of Jesus as they go out into the world to preach the gospel. At this point Jesus grants them the power for mission with the words “receive the Holy Spirit.” Along with this empowering comes the authority to forgive sins (which, of course, is part of preaching the gospel, for in it one indicates whose sins are forgiven and whose are not). In other words, the three verses, John 20:21–23, fit together.

**There have been three approaches to these verses.**

The first notes that this linking of empowering with the Spirit and the preaching of the gospel also appears in Acts, where the disciples wait until the Spirit comes at Pentecost and then begin to preach the gospel. Therefore, it is argued, this must be John’s version of the Acts event. John, of course, never mentions the ascension. Jesus comes and disappears repeatedly right to the end of the book. This is appropriate, for in John Jesus is said to come in the Holy Spirit to the disciples (Jn 14:18). Here, according to this argument, we have a symbolic presentation of what Acts speaks of as a later event. Symbolism is the way of John. This is certainly a possible approach. In its best form it takes both John and its style seriously and Luke-Acts and its style just as seriously. It notes real parallels in the two accounts. Yet the approach also has its problems.

First, the disciples do not go out and witness after receiving the Spirit. In fact, they cannot even convince Thomas (Jn 20:24–25). What is more, Thomas would then appear never to receive the Spirit.

Second, this solution really says that the two accounts are not reconcilable. One is historical and the other symbolic. While it is clear that we do not always know how accounts fit together, and thus there is some truth to such solutions, it is also clear that when John reports events he thinks of them as events, not symbols of events. The events may symbolize something (as the raising of Lazarus symbolizes the final resurrection), but they are viewed in themselves as historical. Thus this solution does not fit John’s normal methodology.

**A second approach views John as one type of giving of the Spirit and Acts as another.**

John is the impersonal breath of God and Acts is the personal Holy Spirit. John is a sprinkling with the grace of the Spirit and Acts is full empowerment, saturation with the Spirit. John is the Spirit as new life and Acts is the Spirit as empowerment for ministry. The list of how these two givings are to be distinguished could be extended much further. Now this solution takes both of the events as quite historical and tries to distinguish why there should be two events. The problem with it is that neither John nor Acts seems to know about two receptions of the Spirit. Reading through John 13–16 one does not notice two receptions but rather one Holy Spirit or “paraclete” (a transliteration of the word sometimes translated as “comforter” or “advocate”). In Acts the reception of the Spirit they are awaiting is not distinguished from any previous reception, despite Luke’s interest in the topic of the Spirit. Thus this approach seems to be an explanation imposed on the texts by people who read both Acts and John rather than something that either Luke or John thought of.



**A third approach looks at John 20:22 as Jesus' symbolic giving or promising the Spirit, which was experientially received on Pentecost.**

The breathing (not necessarily on the disciples, for there is no “on” in the text) symbolizes what the words say, namely the Holy Spirit. Yet nothing seems to happen. It is a promise. For John it is all that is needed, for those who experienced the power of the Spirit in the church knew that the disciples really did receive the Spirit. There is no need to mention that it did not occur until later, for John is not going to carry on the story that long. For Luke there is no need to mention any previous symbolic giving, for Jesus refers to the promise of the Spirit before his ascension (Acts 1:4–5). Luke is concerned with the reality of the power and how it directs the mission of the church. Thus both writers have their reasons for not needing to mention what the other includes (assuming that they knew of both stories). Naturally, it would not be surprising to think of Jesus as wanting to act out the giving of the Spirit personally, especially if he is aware that his physical presence with the disciples is coming to an end and he will not be physically present at Pentecost. In other words, John 20:22 may be John's version of Acts 1:4–5 rather than John's version of Pentecost.

*both John and Acts do indeed insist that  
the Holy Spirit is needed for the mission of the church*

It will remain for the reader to decide which of these approaches is the most satisfying in that it best fits the data of the texts in question. What is more important than harmonizing the texts is recognizing that both John and Acts do indeed insist that the Holy Spirit is needed for the mission of the church. Mere human power and authority cannot carry out the mission Jesus received from the Father. It takes the Spirit in the believer to produce the results the Father intends, the forgiveness of sins.

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**QUESTION - [What does it mean in John 20:22 that Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit?”](#)**

**ANSWER** - During one of His post-resurrection appearances to the disciples, Jesus declared to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). Then, in the next verse, “He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). This is similar to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19–20 in which Jesus promises, “Surely I am with you always,” and Acts 1:8 in which He proclaims, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” In John 20:21–22, Jesus is sending the disciples out on mission, and He is providing them with the power they will need. That power is found in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The question arises, however, as to why Jesus breathed on the disciples to give them the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 when the disciples would later receive the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4: “All of them [the disciples] were filled with the Holy Spirit.” Did the disciples need to receive the Holy Spirit twice? If so, why? The Bible does not directly answer this, but there is enough information provided to derive a plausible explanation.

Acts 1:3 records, “After his [Jesus'] suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” The events recorded in John 20:21–22 occurred during this forty-day period. According to John 20:19, this appearance of Jesus occurred “on the evening of that first day of the week.” This places Jesus' breathing the Holy Spirit onto the disciples at the very beginning of the forty-day period in between His resurrection and ascension.

**There are two views of Jesus' breathing on the disciples in relation to their receiving the Holy Spirit.**

One view is that Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto the disciples in John 20:22 to empower them until the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:4 when they would receive the Holy Spirit permanently. The reception of the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 was a temporary [filling of the Holy Spirit](#), preparatory to the permanent indwelling to come later. In John 20, the disciples were filled in a manner similar to how [Bezalel](#) was filled in Exodus 31:2–3. The reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4, then, was the [baptism of the Holy Spirit](#), which resulted in the disciples being [indwelt by the Holy Spirit](#) permanently (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The other view is that Jesus' breathing on the disciples in John 20:22 did not impart the Holy Spirit at that time; rather, the breathing was a promise—an anticipation of the coming Pentecost. The Spirit did not come upon them at that moment, but Jesus gave them a pledge that they would soon be endowed with the Holy Spirit and with power from on high.

**John 20:23 “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”**

## Related Passages:

Mark 2:5-10 And Jesus seeing their faith \*said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." (JESUS AS GOD HAD THE FULL AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS) 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" (THEY WERE VERY CLOSE TO THE TRUTH!) 8 Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, \*said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? 10 "But so that you may know that **the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**"— He \*said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." 12 (THIS SIGN VALIDATED JESUS' AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS BECAUSE HE IS GOD) And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

## THE GOAL OF THEIR MISSION FORGIVENESS OF SINS

If you forgive ([aphiemi](#)) the sins ([hamartia](#)) of any, *their sins have been forgiven* ([aphiemi](#) in present tense) **them; if you retain** ([krateo](#)) *the sins of any, they have been retained* ([krateo](#) perfect tense - lasting effect) - This verse is horribly misinterpreted to believe that mortal men who are sinners themselves, even when forgiven by God, can themselves literally forgive the sins of other sinners. This leads to the perverted practice of confessing sins to another sinner to ostensibly receive forgiveness by that other person's decree! The only way the disciples could forgive the sins of sinners was to proclaim the Gospel and have that proclamation received and believed. In that state the recipient has in fact had their sins forgiven by God. The disciples were only the instrument of God whereby that divine forgiveness became a reality upon that person's salvation. Conversely, the only way a disciple could "retain" the sins of another person is by that person's willfully rejecting the proclamation of forgiveness in the Gospel.

**Spurgeon** - He gave them a commission and added the power to carry it out by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover he promised to put force into the sentences which they pronounced in his name, so that when they preached remission to penitents, the Lord granted that remission, and when in the name of Jesus they declared that the sins of unbelievers remained upon them, it was so. The gospel is not our word, but the word of Jesus who has sent us. (The Interpreter)

**Brian Bell** Forgiving or Retaining sin? 1. In light of being called to be sent to the world, the church (not just the apostles) is now given authority to declare that certain sins are forgiven & certain sins retained. (Morris; LKGNT; pg.261) 2. Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins was the prominent feature of the apostolic preaching in the Book of Acts. a) Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) the privilege of announcing heaven's terms, on how a person can receive forgiveness. (1) If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. (2) If a person rejects Jesus' sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is not forgiven. Note: **There is no instance in the New Testament of any apostle forgiving sins** Jesus put into the hands of Peter and of all believers the keys of the Kingdom which we should use to open the door for those who wish to enter. 1. This glorious promise applies to all believers who will tell the story of Christ's love for men.

**NET NOTE** - The statement by Jesus about forgive or retaining anyone's sins finds its closest parallel in Matt 16:19 and 18:18. This is probably not referring to apostolic power to forgive or retain the sins of individuals (as it is sometimes understood), but to the "power" of proclaiming this forgiveness which was entrusted to the disciples. This is consistent with the idea that the disciples are to carry on the ministry of Jesus after he has departed from the world and returned to the Father, a theme which occurred in the Farewell Discourse (cf. 15:27, 16:1-4, and 17:18).

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**Forgive** (863) [aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. Literally aphiemi means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. It means to send forth or away from one's self. It refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside. In secular Greek aphiemi initially conveyed the sense of to throw and in one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi). From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go. It is worth noting that the most common way aphiemi is translated in the NAS is [left](#) (to go away from a place, to depart from, to remove oneself from an association with, to leave behind - [ponder how these might relate to "forgiveness!"]) (38x) followed by **forgive** (23x) and **forgiven** (23x).

**Aphiemi** refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside and as used in the present context means that God lets go of the obligation we "owe" Him because of sin against His holiness. It means

to **remit** (to release from the guilt or penalty of) as one would a financial debt (e.g., on the Rosetta stone it refers to the "total remission" of certain taxes). Unfortunately the English word "**forgive**" does not adequately picture the meaning of the Greek.

In secular Greek literature, **aphiemi** was a fundamental word used to indicate the sending away of an object or a person. **Aphiemi** was used to describe the voluntary release of a person or thing over which one has legal or actual control. The related noun **aphesis** meant described a setting free. .Later it came to include the release of someone from the obligation of marriage, or debt, or even a religious vow. In its final form it came to embrace the principle of release from punishment for some wrongdoing. .

**Trench** says that the image underlying **aphiemi** is that of releasing a prisoner (Isaiah 61:1), or letting go, as of a debt (Deut 15:3). One is reminded of the one goat who was offered as a sin-offering on the Day of Atonement, and of the other goat upon which was placed the sins of the people (symbolically) and which was let go in the wilderness, never to be seen again by Israel, the latter goat typifying that aspect of redemption in which the sins of the human race were put away, never to be charged against the individual again (see Leviticus 16)..

**Wuest** explains **aphiemi** from God's perspective noting that "It refers to the act of putting something away. God did that at the Cross when He **put sin away** by incarnating Himself in humanity in the Person of His Son, stepping down from His judgment throne, assuming the guilt of man's sin, and paying the penalty, thus, satisfying His justice, and making possible an offer of mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. When a sinner avails himself of the merits of that atoning sacrifice, **he thus puts himself within the provision God made. His sins were put away** at the Cross, and he comes into the benefit of that when he believes. ([Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#):) (Bolding added)

**APHIEMI IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 4:3; Jn. 4:28; Jn. 4:52; Jn. 8:29; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 11:44; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:7; Jn. 14:18; Jn. 14:27; Jn. 16:28; Jn. 16:32; Jn. 18:8; Jn. 20:23

**Sins** ([266](#)) **hamartia** literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*" **Ryrie** adds that sin "*is not only a negative idea but includes the positive idea of hitting some wrong mark.*"

**HAMARTIA IN GOSPEL OF JOHN** - Jn. 1:29; Jn. 8:21; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 15:22; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 19:11; Jn. 20:23

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#### QUESTION - [What is the correct interpretation of John 20:23?](#)

**ANSWER** - In John 20:23, Jesus tells His disciples, "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." The very core of the gospel message is the truth that the way someone has their sins forgiven is by having faith in Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. In Acts 10:43-44, when Peter was sharing the gospel, he said, "Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." First John 5:1-5 tells us only he who believes in Jesus will overcome the world. Luke 5:20 says, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'" Colossians 2:13-14 says Jesus forgave all our sins. All these passages confirm that Jesus is the one who forgives sin, and He forgives all of our sins. If we have had genuine faith in Him, someone else cannot later decide we are not forgiven one sin or another. So, what exactly did Jesus mean in John 20:23?

Only God can forgive sins, and Christ, being God, has the power to do so as well, but He never communicated any such power to His disciples, nor did they ever assume any such power to themselves. The key to understanding the meaning of John 20:23 lies in the previous two verses: "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" He sent them, as He is sending us, to bring the good news of the way to salvation and heaven to the whole world. Jesus was leaving the earth physically but promised God would be with them in the person of the Holy Spirit living in them. As they proclaimed the gospel, they could honestly tell people who believed in that message that their sins were forgiven, and they could honestly tell people that did not believe in the message that their sins were not forgiven and that they stand condemned in God's eyes. "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36).

Believers today have the very same mission given to us! We are obligated to share the gospel message, the way to heaven, to

others in the world, and we go about that mission with the Holy Spirit living inside us, guiding us as we share His truth. We are obligated to tell people the only way to be forgiven is through faith. Jesus said in John 8:24, "If you do not believe that I am (God), you will indeed die in your sins." This is the very core of the gospel message and the very heart of what we are to explain to the world. It was Jesus' last command to His followers before He physically left the earth—carry forward the message of hope and save as many as will believe in Him.

Jesus preached a crucial message about forgiving our brothers, as God forgave us. We stand in grace, and He expects us to keep our hearts pure toward others, not holding grudges or harboring a spirit of unforgiveness, especially after He gave us such undeserved love and forgiveness at such a high personal cost to Himself! Jesus said those who have been forgiven much, love much (Luke 7:47). He expects us to forgive others 70 times 7 times (Matthew 18:22). We are also told that if we are praying but hold something against anyone, we are to forgive that person so our relationship with God is right and righteous! Colossians 3:13 says, "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." We know we are His if we love our brothers and don't hate them or have unforgiveness in our hearts (1 John 2:3-6; 3:14-19; 4:16-21). Forgiveness is a key to showing we indeed have eternal life inside us, according to these passages. If we say we love God but hate our brother, we are liars and no truth is in us. So, our forgiveness of others is a major indicator of true fellowship with God. God looks at the heart and actions, not mere words. Jesus stated while on earth, "These people come near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." So, it's important we have a living, genuine faith: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers" (1 John 3:14).

**John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.**

- **Thomas:** John 11:16 14:5 21:2 Mt 10:3
- **was:** John 6:66,67 Mt 18:20 Heb 10:25

### THOMAS THE STRAGGLER THE CLASSIC EMPIRICIST

**But** (term of contrast) - Always pause and ask what is the author contrasting?

**Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus** (twin), **was not with them when Jesus came** (the first Sunday evening) - It is interesting that John does not say one of the eleven but **one of the twelve** which would (theoretically) include Judas Iscariot! Surprising! Why **Thomas** was not with the other 10 is not stated in the Scripture. The point was that Thomas was absent when Jesus revealed His post-resurrection body to the ten. He missed the blessing of being among the first to witness Jesus alive. While there is human responsibility with Thomas, God is sovereign and in the following section Jesus would use Thomas' doubt to teach an important principle about faith and sight.

*He neglected the week-night service and lost a blessing,  
as many have done since.*

-- C H Spurgeon

**Brian Bell** Thomas the bold skeptic, the classic **empiricist** (the theory that all knowledge is derived from sense-experience; a person who relies solely on observation and experiment) He had the I will not believe unless...head-wag going! Maybe you're at the place where you will not believe unless Christianity passes your battery of scientific tests. But...you believe in things you can't see all the time! Have you ever seen a germ with your naked eye? Yet you don't walk around licking hand rails. Have you ever seen electricity? Yet you won't touch a bare copper wire! How great the anguish of Thomas during that week. Tossing between hope & fear. And seeing in the other 10 faces the light which he cannot share! Yet, how tenderly Jesus deals with our doubts & unbelief. Jesus came & complied with the conditions that Thomas' poor faith laid down. Jesus was set on winning this one poor-starving-soul to Himself & blessedness.

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#### Vance Havner - Don't Miss Jesus!

But Thomas... was not with them when Jesus came. John 20:24.

Thomas missed one meeting of believers and was an unbeliever for a whole week. It pays to be present when Jesus appears. He guarantees His presence where two or three gather in His Name. Therefore it pays to be at church. There are other places where Jesus reveals Himself—the Book and prayer. And He has promised to reveal Himself to those who have His commandments and keep them. The place of obedience—the temple of the willing heart—there you may be sure He appears.

Don't miss Jesus. It makes a doubting Thomas. If we were on hand at these meeting places we would not be demanding extra evidences before we believe. Sometimes our Lord does grant a special manifestation, but "blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Be there when Jesus comes. I don't know what other business Thomas had that evening, but if your other business makes you miss Jesus you have too much business

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## **Fresh Faith**

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:24–29

When our son was struggling with heroin addiction, if you had told me God would one day use our experience to encourage other families who face these kinds of battles, I would have had trouble believing it. God has a way of bringing good out of difficult circumstances that isn't always easy to see when you are going through them.

The apostle Thomas also didn't expect God to bring good out of the greatest challenge of his faith—Jesus's crucifixion. Thomas wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus came to them after the resurrection, and in his deep grief he insisted, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were . . . I will not believe" (John 20:25). But later, when Jesus appeared to all the disciples together, out of the dust of Thomas's doubts God's Spirit would inspire a striking statement of faith. When Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28), he was grasping the truth that Jesus was actually God in the flesh, standing right in front of him. It was a bold confession of faith that would encourage and inspire believers in every century that followed.

Our God is able to inspire fresh faith in our hearts, even in moments when we least expect it. We can always look forward to His faithfulness. Nothing is too hard for Him! By: James Banks (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Thank You, Lord, that Your love is stronger than our greatest difficulties—even our worst doubts or fears!

God can change our doubts into bold statements of faith.

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## **A Journey of Belief**

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:24–31

Since its first publication in 1880, Lew Wallace's novel Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ has never been out of print. It has been called the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century, and it continues to draw readers today as it weaves the true story of Jesus with that of a fictional young Jewish nobleman named Judah Ben-Hur.

Amy Lifson, writing in Humanities magazine, said that the writing of the book transformed the life of the author. "As Ben-Hur guided readers through the scenes of the Passion, so did he lead the way for Lew Wallace to believe in Jesus Christ." Wallace said, "I have seen the Nazarene . . . I saw him perform works which no mere man could perform."

The Gospels' record of the life of Jesus allows us to walk alongside Him, witness His miracles, hear His words, and see His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday. At the conclusion of John's gospel, he wrote, "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30–31).

Just as Lew Wallace's research, reading of the Bible, and writing led him to believe in Jesus, so God's Word draws us to a transformation of mind and heart by which we have eternal life in and through Him. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, may the record of Your life be written on our minds and hearts so that we may have ever-increasing faith in You.

Many books can inform, but only the Bible can transform.

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## **His Scars**



He was pierced for our transgressions, . . . and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:24–29

After my conversation with Grady, it occurred to me why his preferred greeting was a “fist bump” not a handshake. A handshake would’ve exposed the scars on his wrist—the result of his attempts to do himself harm. It’s not uncommon for us to hide our wounds—external or internal—caused by others or self-inflicted.

In the wake of my interaction with Grady, I thought about Jesus’ physical scars, the wounds caused by nails pounded into His hands and feet and a spear thrust into His side. Rather than hiding His scars, Christ called attention to them.

After Thomas initially doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead, He said to him, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe” (John 20:27). When Thomas saw those scars for himself and heard Christ’s amazing words, he was convinced that it was Jesus. He exclaimed in belief, “My Lord and my God!” (v. 28). Jesus then pronounced a special blessing for those who haven’t seen Him or His physical wounds but still believe in Him: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v. 29).

The best news ever is that His scars were for our sins—our sins against others or ourselves. The death of Jesus is for the forgiveness of the sins of all who believe in Him and confess with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” By: Arthur Jackson

What circumstances led you to believe that Jesus’ scars were for you? If you haven’t believed in Him for the forgiveness of your sins, what keeps you from trusting Him today?

Father, I believe that Christ’s scars were for my sin. I’m grateful!

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Thomas in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Thomas was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. In the Bible, Thomas was also called Didymus (John 11:16; 20:24), which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Thomas, both meaning “twin.” Scripture does not give us the name of Thomas’s twin.

In the [Synoptic Gospels](#)—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—Thomas is mentioned only in the listings of the apostles (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). In the Gospel of John, Thomas plays a leading role in two significant accounts.

Near the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, some people in Judea were plotting the Lord’s demise. It was during this time that Jesus and the disciples received the news that their friend Lazarus was at the point of death (John 11:1–3). Fearing for their lives, the disciples tried to talk Jesus out of returning to Lazarus’ hometown of Bethany, which was near Jerusalem where death threats certainly awaited them. Jesus was set on going, however, and Thomas spoke to his fellow disciples: “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). Thomas’s readiness to stay with Jesus despite the consequences is noteworthy. Although his outlook may have been pessimistic and his words rather gloomy, Thomas demonstrated extreme loyalty to Jesus.

We learn from the life of Thomas that he was deeply committed to His master, and yet he struggled with doubts and questions. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to a group of His disciples in a closed room. For some reason, Thomas was not with them for this supremely significant event (John 20:19–24). When the disciples later told Thomas they had seen the resurrected Lord, he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

With those famous words, Thomas earned a nickname that he would be remembered by throughout history—Doubting Thomas. For Thomas, and for many of us, seeing is believing. But Thomas’s skepticism was not the same as worldly opposition to the truth. His doubt represents a genuine, truth-loving quest. Earlier, Jesus had warned the disciples of His imminent departure and that He was going to His Father’s house to prepare a place for them. The disciples were confused by Jesus’ mysterious language. Thomas’ honest skepticism and inquisitive nature prompted him to be the first to ask, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5). Jesus answered Thomas with these notable words: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus wasn’t talking about knowing a route or a location but about knowing a person.

When Thomas told the other disciples that he needed proof to believe that Jesus had risen, he was speaking honestly. Sincere faith does not prohibit sincere investigation. Eight days after Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples met together again. This time Thomas was present. Jesus appeared to them once more and invited Thomas to touch the wounds and see for himself: “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe” (John 20:27). Jesus knew what Thomas needed to believe, and He provided the evidence.



Jesus lovingly met Thomas at the exact point of his need and then guided him back to faith. We can be honest with God about our doubts and questions; He understands our struggles and is quite capable of strengthening our faith. Like Thomas, we will be able to confess, "My Lord and my God!" in full confidence of who Jesus is (John 20:28).

After Jesus confirmed Thomas's faith, He addressed all future readers of John's Gospel with these words: "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29, NKJV). These words reach down through the ages to help and encourage all of us who have not seen the resurrected Christ and yet have believed in Him.

Some days later, Thomas was fishing with Peter and the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:2). The final mention of Thomas is in Act 1:13, where he is listed among the disciples. Extra-biblical writings and Christian tradition hold that Thomas took the gospel to either Parthia or India and that he was martyred for his faith.

In the end, the nickname "Doubting Thomas" is a rather unfortunate one. It's true that Thomas demanded evidence of the miracle of Christ's resurrection before he accepted the truth. Doubt factored into his response to his friends, but it was not the defining quality of his life. Thomas should be better known for his loyalty, his obedience to the gospel, and his faith.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Why was Thomas called the Twin \(John 11:16\)?](#)
- [Who are the twins in the Bible?](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [How can I avoid being a doubting Thomas?](#)**

**ANSWER** - We should thank God for the example of "doubting Thomas"! The famous story of the disciple [Thomas](#) is recorded in John 20:24-29. All Christians suffer doubt at one time or another, but the example of doubting Thomas provides both instruction and encouragement.

After His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared alive and glorified to His disciples to comfort them and proclaim to them the good news of His victory over death (John 20:19-23). However, one of the original 12 disciples, Thomas, was not present for this visitation (John 20:24). After being told by the other disciples of Jesus' resurrection and personal visit, Thomas "doubted" and wanted physical proof of the risen Lord in order to believe this good news. Jesus, knowing Thomas's human frailty resulted in weakened faith, accommodated Thomas.

It is important to note that Jesus did not have to fulfill Thomas's request. He was not obligated in the slightest bit. Thomas had spent three years intimately acquainted with Jesus witnessing all His miracles and hearing His prophecies about His coming death and resurrection. That, and the testimony Thomas received from the other 10 disciples about Jesus' return, should have been enough, but still he doubted. Jesus knew Thomas's weakness, just as he knows ours.

The doubt Thomas experienced in the face of the heartbreaking loss of the One he loved is not unlike our own when facing a massive loss: despair, heartbreak, and exceeding sorrow, all of which Christ sympathizes with (Hebrews 4:15). But, although Thomas did in fact doubt the Lord's resurrection appearance, once he saw the risen Christ, he proclaimed in faith, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Jesus commended him for his faith, although that faith was based on sight.

As an extra encouraging note to future Christians, Jesus goes on to say, "Blessed are those who *havenot* seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29, emphasis added). He meant that once He ascended to heaven, He would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would live within believers from then on, enabling us to believe that which we do not see with our eyes. This same thought is echoed by Peter, who said of Christ, "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Although we have the Spirit within us, we can still experience doubt. This, however, does not affect our eternal standing with God. True saving faith always perseveres to the end just as Thomas's did, and just as Peter's did after he had a monumental moment of weakness by denying the very Lord he loved and believed in (Matthew 26:69-75). This is because, "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). Jesus is "the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Faith is the gift of God to His children (Ephesians 2:8-9), and He will mature and perfect it until He returns.

So how do we keep from doubting as Thomas did? First, we must go to God in prayer when experiencing doubt. That may be the very reason God is allowing a Christian to doubt—so that we will depend on Him through prayer. Sanctification is the process of growing in Him, which includes times of doubt and times of great faith. Like the man who brought his demon-possessed child to

Jesus but was unsure whether Jesus could help him, we go to God because we believe in Him and ask Him for more and greater faith to overcome our doubts, crying, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:17-27).

Second, we must recognize that Christians fight a spiritual battle daily. We have to gear up for the battle. The Christian needs to daily be armed with the Word of God to help fight these spiritual battles, which include fighting doubt, and we arm ourselves with the "full armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-19). As Christians, we must take advantage of the lulls in spiritual warfare to polish our spiritual armor in order to be ready for the next battle. Times of doubt will become less frequent if we take advantage of the good times to feed our faith with the Word of God. Then when we raise the shield of faith and do battle with the enemy of our souls, his flaming darts of doubt will not hit their target.

Doubting Christians have two things doubting Thomas did not have—the indwelling Holy Spirit and the written New Testament. By the power of both the Spirit and the Word, we can overcome doubts and, like Thomas, be prepared to follow our Lord and Savior and give all for Him, even our lives (John 11:16).

#### Related Resource:

- [Doubting God - how can I overcome doubt in my relationship with God?](#)

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### INSENSITIVE THOMAS

READ: John 20:24-29

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.- Proverbs 16:24

Some people are good at popping the balloon of those who are feeling the excitement of a new experience. And their negative spirit tends to discourage others.

A new convert was excited about an answer to prayer. "I had a flat tire and couldn't make my jack work," he told his pastor. "I prayed that someone would stop to help me, and within a minute a man came along and had me on my way in no time." The pastor replied, "Now, don't get too excited. He might have stopped even if you had not prayed!"

Jesus' disciples were excited. They had talked with the risen Lord and were filled with joy and confidence. But Thomas, who wasn't with them on that first Easter evening, was skeptical. He said, "Unless I see ... I will not believe" (Jn. 20:25). Yes, it was astounding news. Yet Thomas could have responded positively if he had recalled what Jesus had promised. He might have said, "I'm having a hard time believing you, but I can see how excited you are, and I really want to see Jesus myself." Instead, he blurted out his unbelief, and I can't help but feel that this dampened the joy of the other disciples.

Lord, help us to respond to people with words that are kind and sensitive - even when we have doubts. Author: Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Beware of those who stand aloof  
And greet each venture with reproof;  
The world would stop if things were run  
By men who say, "It can't be done!"  
- Anonymous

Work at building people up,  
not tearing them down.

**John 20:25 So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."**

- **We have seen the Lord:** John 20:14-20 1:41 21:7 Mk 16:11 Lu 24:34-40 Ac 5:30-32 10:40,41 1Co 15:5-8
- **Unless I see:** John 20:20 6:30 Job 9:16 Ps 78:11-22,32 95:8-10 106:21-24 Mt 16:1-4 Mt 27:42 Lu 24:25,39-41 Heb 3:12,18,19 4:1,2 10:38,39

### THE DOUBTING THOMAS

**So** ([oun](#)) is a term of conclusion

**The other disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **were saying** (imperfect - again and again, repeatedly saying) **to him**, “**We have seen the Lord** ([kurios](#))!” - Johns pictures one disciple after another telling Thomas that they had truly seen the Lord. It is interesting that when the Mary and the disciples speak about Jesus, they do not call Him Jesus but **Lord!**

**But** - Term of contrast. Thomas persists in his unbelief despite many first hand witnesses (his friends and trusted brethren) repeatedly telling him the Lord was alive. Unbelief is an interesting phenomenon.

**He said to them**, “**Unless I see in His hands the imprint** ([tupos](#)) **of the nails** (helos - iron spike - only here in NT; cf Lxx use Eccl 12:11), **and put** ([ballo](#)) **my finger** ([daktulos](#)) **into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe** ([pisteuo](#)) - The imprint ([tupos](#)) describes in essence the scar tissue that remained after piercing by the nails.

**Spurgeon** - He had no right to claim such a proof; unbelief is unreasonable in its demands. (The Interpreter)

**NET NOTE** - "I will never believe it!" (Jn 20:25NET) The word “it” is not in the Greek text but is implied. Direct objects were often omitted in Greek when clear from the context. The use of “it” here as direct object of the verb πιστεύσω (pisteusō) specifies exactly what Thomas was refusing to believe: that Jesus had risen from the dead, as reported by his fellow disciples. Otherwise the English reader may be left with the impression Thomas was refusing to “believe in” Jesus, or “believe Jesus to be the Christ.” The dramatic tension in this narrative is heightened when Thomas, on seeing for himself the risen Christ, believes more than just the resurrection (see John 20:28).

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**Imprint** ([5179](#)) [tupos](#) from [túpto](#) = strike, smite with repeated strokes) literally refers to a visible mark or impression made by a stroke or blow from an instrument or object. What is left after the stroke or blow is called a print, a figure or an impression. For example, the most famous reference to a literal mark (tupos) is when Thomas doubted Jesus' resurrection from the dead declaring “*Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint* (tupos) *of the nails*” (John 20:25). (See also [ISBE Article](#)) Stated another way **tupos** properly means a “model” or “pattern” or “mold” into which clay or wax was pressed (or molds into which molten metal for castings was poured), that it might take the figure or exact shape of the mold. Our English word “**type**” is similar and originally referred to an impression made by a die as that which is struck.

**TUPOS - 14V - example(3), examples(2), form(2), images(1), imprint(1), model(1), pattern(3), type(1).** Jn. 20:25; Acts 7:43; Acts 7:44; Acts 23:25; Rom. 5:14; Rom. 6:17; 1 Co. 10:6; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7; Heb. 8:5; 1 Pet. 5:3

**Finger** ([1147](#)) ([daktulos](#)) literally finger (Mk 7.33) and figuratively refers to one's power or authority (Mt 23.4). **Daktulos** expresses God's direct intervention in likeness of human activity (Lk 11.20 - “finger of God” = power of God the effects of which are made visible to men “by the Spirit of God” - Mt. 12:28 also Ex. 8:19) God is spirit and clearly does not literally have fingers like men but is an [anthropomorphism](#). [Anthropomorphism](#) helps us understand and relate better to the transcendent, incomprehensible God.

**Gilbrant - Daktulos** is the normal word in Greek of all periods for “finger.” Other usages in classical Greek include “toe” (a “finger” of the foot). In another sense daktulos is a term of measurement used both of physical length (a “finger's breadth”) and of metrical (poetic) pace. It also denotes a “date” (a fruit) and a kind of grape (Liddell-Scott).

**Septuagint Usage** - The Septuagint regularly uses daktulos in the literal sense (e.g., Leviticus 4:6,17,25, of the priest who dips his finger [‘etsba] in sacrificial blood). “Toes,” too, is an attested literal use (2 Samuel 21:20 [LXX 2 Kings 21:20]; Daniel 2:42; cf. 1 Chronicles 20:6, of a huge man with six fingers and toes).

Peculiar to the Septuagint, and undoubtedly influential on the New Testament writers, is the **anthropomorphic expression “finger of God”** (describing God in “human form” so as to be intelligible). The Egyptian magicians, unable to duplicate the plague of gnats, explained to Pharaoh that it was done by “the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). Elsewhere, the tablets containing the Law are said to be inscribed “by the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18; cf. Deuteronomy 9:10; Daniel 5:5, of the finger that wrote on the wall). The Psalmist used the phrase “the work of thy fingers” referring to God's creative works (8:3). Later, Jewish tradition used this expression frequently in reference to God's miraculous deeds (see Schlier, “daktulos,” Kittel, 2:20f.).

**The works of God's “fingers”**—His creative acts—caused the Psalmist to be overwhelmed (Psalm 8:3), but in contrast, Isaiah 2:8, 17:8, and 31:7 speak of human “works of fingers” as the manufacturer of idolatrous altars (cf. Wisdom of Solomon 15:15 which denounces the heathen idols as not having eyes to see, ears to hear, “nor fingers to feel with”).

**New Testament Usage** - Most often the literal sense of “finger” occurs in the New Testament. Jesus placed His fingers in the ears of the deaf man and healed him (Mark 7:33; cf. John 20:25,27 which describes putting a finger in the scars). In a more figurative sense, Jesus condemned the legal experts for not even being willing to lift a “finger” to help God’s people live righteous lives (Luke 11:46; cf. Matthew 23:4).

The expression “finger of God” occurs in an important text in Luke 11:20. Jesus declared: “If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” Here Jesus was using Old Testament language in reference to His own ministry. Theologically it says that Jesus’ miracles witness not only to the inbreaking of the Kingdom, but to His source of power as well—“by the finger of God.” ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**DAKTULOS - 8V** - Matt. 23:4; Mk. 7:33; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 11:46; Lk. 16:24; Jn. 8:6; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:27

**DAKTULOS IN SEPTUAGINT** - Ex 8:19; Ex 29:12; Ex 31:18; Lev. 4:6; Lev. 4:17; Lev. 4:25; Lev. 4:30; Lev. 4:34; Lev. 8:15; Lev. 9:9; Lev. 14:16; Lev. 14:27; Lev. 16:14; Lev. 16:19; Deut. 9:10; 2 Sam. 21:20; 1 Ki. 7:15; 1 Chr. 20:6; 2 Chr. 10:10; Job 29:9; Ps. 8:3; Ps. 144:1; Prov. 6:13; Prov. 7:3; Song 5:5; Isa. 2:8; Isa. 17:8; Isa. 59:3; Jer. 52:21; Dan. 2:42; Dan. 5:1; Dan. 5:5

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the finger of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### The Death of Doubt

Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side,  
I will not believe. John 20:25

Today's Scripture: John 11:1–16

We know him as Doubting Thomas (see John 20:24–29), but the label isn't entirely fair. After all, how many of us would have believed that our executed leader had been resurrected? We might just as well call him “Courageous Thomas.” After all, Thomas displayed impressive courage as Jesus moved purposefully into the events leading to His death.

At the death of Lazarus, Jesus had said, “Let us go back to Judea” (John 11:7), prompting a protest from the disciples. “Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?” (v. 8). It was Thomas who said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (v. 16).

Thomas's intentions proved nobler than his actions. Upon Jesus's arrest, Thomas fled with the rest (Matt. 26:56), leaving Peter and John to accompany Christ to the courtyard of the high priest. Only John followed Jesus all the way to the cross.

Despite having witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:38–44), Thomas still could not bring himself to believe that the crucified Lord had conquered death. Not until Thomas the doubter—the human—saw the risen Lord, could he exclaim, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Jesus's response gave assurance to the doubter and immeasurable comfort to us: “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v. 29). By: Tim Gustafson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Father, teach us to act on what we do know about You and Your goodness, and trust You in faith for what we don't know.

Real doubt searches for the light; unbelief is content with the darkness.

**John 20:26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus \*came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”**

- **eight:** John 20:19 Mt 17:1 Lu 9:28
- **Thomas:** John 20:24
- **Peace:** John 20:19 Isa 26:12 27:5 54:10

**DOORS STILL  
LOCKED TIGHT**

**After eight days His disciples ([mathetes](#)) were again inside, and Thomas with them** - The scene is virtually identical to that of 8 days prior with one addition, "doubting" **Thomas**.

**Jesus [\\*came](#), the doors ([thura](#)) having been shut ([kleio](#) tight or locked - perfect tense = shut and stayed shut) and stood in their midst and said, "Peace ([eirene](#)) be with you** - Eight days later and it appears they are still fearful (door locked tight) and so Jesus repeats His gift of (My) peace to their hearts, which clearly are still fearful as evidenced by the locked **doors**.

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### [In This Very Room](#)

Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" — John 20:26

Today's Scripture : John 20:19-29

At our church we often sing the beautiful song by Ron and Carol Harris: "In This Very Room." It begins, "In this very room there's quite enough love for one like me." This song reminds me that although there is great encouragement in gathering with other Christians for worship, the important thing is that Christ is present. But it goes beyond that. He is with us not just at church but in every room of our lives.

I wonder where you're reading this—a kitchen, a coffee shop, a prison cell, a military post? Perhaps you're in a hospital or a courtroom. It may be a room that reflects everything that's right in your life or a place that represents all that's wrong. And you might be afraid.

In the aftermath of the awful reality of Jesus' crucifixion, His followers met in a familiar room. John records that "when the doors were shut [locked] 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'" (John 20:19). A week later it happened again when Jesus entered through locked doors to bring peace through His presence (vv.26-29).

Wherever you are today, "There's quite enough hope and quite enough power to chase away any gloom, for Jesus, Lord Jesus, is in this very room." By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**John 20:27 Then He [\\*said](#) to Thomas, "[Reach](#) here with your finger, and [see](#) My hands; and [reach](#) here your hand and [put](#) it into My side; and [do not be](#) unbelieving, but believing."**

- **Reach**: John 20:25 Ps 78:38 103:13,14 Ro 5:20 1Ti 1:14-16 1Jn 1:1,2
- reach hither thy hand: 1Jn 1:1
- and be: Mt 17:17 Mk 9:19 Lu 9:41 1Ti 1:14

## **JESUS COMMANDS THOMAS TO BE BELIEVING**

Then He [\\*said](#) to Thomas, "[Reach](#) ([aorist imperative](#)) here with your finger ([daktulos](#)), and [see](#) ([aorist imperative](#)) My hands; and [reach](#) ([present imperative](#)) here your hand and put ([ballo](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) it into My side ([pleura](#)) ; and [do not be](#) unbelieving ([apistos](#)), but believing ([pistos](#)) - Jesus gives doubting Thomas 5 commands, the last being the most important in which He commands him to stop being faithless but keep being faithful ([pistos](#)). There is no record of Thomas ever actually touching Jesus' imprints. It is likely that the sight of them was sufficient. For Thomas seeing was believing.

**Spurgeon** - Infinite was the Redeemer's condescension. Knowing the doubts of Thomas he stooped to meet them, for he knew him to be sincere and willing to be convinced. (The Interpreter)

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**Unbelieving** (571) [apistos](#) from **a** = without + [pistos](#) = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving - in this [context](#) [apistos](#) is one who does not believe the Good News about Jesus Christ (1Ti 5:8, Titus 1:15, Rev 21:8). It is used once to describe that which is incredible (Acts 26:8<sup>+</sup>), but most NT uses describe those without faith, not trusting, unfaithful. In secular Greek use [apistos](#) described reports, etc as *incredible*. **BDAG** gives an example of an ancient secular use of [apistos](#) in the description of "a patient (who) sneers in disbelief at healings recorded in a shrine of Asclepius and subsequently receives the sobriquet (a descriptive name) : "*Apistos*"

**APISTOS** - 23X/21V - incredible(1), unbeliever(4), unbelievers(7), unbelieving(10), unbelieving

**one(1).** Matt. 17:17; Mk. 9:19; Lk. 9:41; Lk. 12:46; Jn. 20:27; Acts 26:8; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:13; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 10:27; 1 Co. 14:22; 1 Co. 14:23; 1 Co. 14:24; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 6:15; 1 Tim. 5:8; Tit. 1:15; Rev. 21:8

**Believing** (faithful) ([4103](#)) **pistos** to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc Pistos means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving.

**(1) ACTIVE MEANING** = trusting or believing. This is the less frequent usage. This sense speaks of a sinner exercising faith in the Lord Jesus. In the first NT use in this sense, Jesus "said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." (Jn 20:27) Paul instructs Timothy to "let those who have believers (pistos) as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers (pistos) and beloved. Teach and preach these principles." (1Ti 6:2) When pistos is used in this active sense to refer to the faith which a lost sinner must place in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, it includes the following ideas -- the act of considering the Lord Jesus worthy of trust as to His character and motives, the act of placing confidence in His ability to do just what He says He will do, the act of entrusting the salvation of his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus, the act of committing the work of saving his soul to the care of the Lord. This means a definite taking of one's self out of one's own keeping and entrusting one's self into the keeping of the Lord Jesus.

**2) PASSIVE MEANING = trustworthy or faithful.** Here the basic idea is that of trustworthiness. In this sense **pistos** describes God, Christ, servants, His Word as faithful, reliable, worthy of belief or trust, in short, dependable. **Marvin Vincent** adds that pistos used of God describes Him as "True to his own nature and promises; keeping faith with Himself and with man." Paul writes that even "if we are faithless, He remains **faithful**; for He cannot deny Himself. (2Ti 2:13<sup>+</sup>)

**PISTOS - 62V - believe(2), believer(4), believers(5), believing(1), faithful(44), faithful one(1), faithfully(1), sure(1), trustworthy(7), who believe(1).** Matt. 24:45; Matt. 25:21; Matt. 25:23; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 16:10; Lk. 16:11; Lk. 16:12; Lk. 19:17; Jn. 20:27; Acts 10:45; Acts 13:34; Acts 16:1; Acts 16:15; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 4:2; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 6:15; Gal. 3:9; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:2; Col. 1:7; Col. 4:7; Col. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:11; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 4:9; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Tim. 5:16; 1 Tim. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:13; Tit. 1:6; Tit. 1:9; Tit. 3:8; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 3:2; Heb. 3:5; Heb. 10:23; Heb. 11:11; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Pet. 5:12; 1 Jn. 1:9; 3 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:6

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Color Blind - The famous agnostic Thomas Huxley was once lovingly confronted by a very sincere Christian. This believer stressed to Huxley that he was not in any way impugning Huxley's sincerity. Nevertheless, might it not be possible that mentally the great scientist was color blind? That is, some people cannot see traces of green where other people cannot help but see it. Could it be that this was Huxley's problem—that he was simply blind to truth that was quite evident to others? Huxley, being a man of integrity, admitted that this was possible, and added that if it were, he himself, of course, could not know or recognize it.

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**Henry Drummond** (See full sermon [Dealing with Doubt](#)) Relates to Thomas Doubting

There is a subject which I think workers amongst young men cannot afford to keep out of sight--I mean the subject of "Doubt." We are forced to face that subject. We have no choice. I would rather let it alone; but every day of my life I meet men who doubt, and I am quite sure that most Christian workers among men have innumerable interviews every year with men who raise skeptical difficulties about religion.

Now it becomes a matter of great practical importance that we should know how to deal wisely with these. Upon the whole, I think these are the best men in the country. I speak of my own country. I speak of the universities with which I am familiar, and I say that the men who are perplexed,--the men who come to you with serious and honest difficulties,--are the best men. They are men of intellectual honesty, and cannot allow themselves to be put to rest by words, or phrases, or traditions, or theologies, but who must get to the bottom of things for themselves. And if I am not mistaken,

CHRIST WAS VERY FOND

of these men. The outsiders always interested Him, and touched Him. The orthodox people--the Pharisees--He was much less interested in. He went with publicans and sinners--with people who were in revolt against the respectability, intellectual and religious, of the day. And following Him, we are entitled to give sympathetic consideration to those whom He loved and took trouble with.



First, let me speak for a moment or two about

## THE ORIGIN OF DOUBT.

In the first place, we are born questioners. Look at the wonderment of a little child in its eyes before it can speak. The child's great word when it begins to speak is, "Why?" Every child is full of every kind of question, about every kind of thing, that moves, and shines, and changes, in the little world in which it lives.

That is the incipient doubt in the nature of man. Respect doubt for its origin. It is an inevitable thing. It is not a thing to be crushed. It is a part of man as God made him. Heresy is truth in the making, and doubt is the prelude of knowledge.

Secondly: The world is a Sphinx. It is a vast riddle--an unfathomable mystery; and on every side there is temptation to questioning. In every leaf, in every cell of every leaf, there are a hundred problems. There are ten good years of a man's life in investigating what is in a leaf, and there are five good years more in investigating the things that are in the things that are in the leaf. God has planned the world to incite men to intellectual activity.

Thirdly: The instrument with which we attempt to investigate truth is impaired. Some say it fell, and the glass is broken. Some say prejudice, heredity, or sin, have spoiled its sight, and have blinded our eyes and deadened our ears. In any case the instruments with which we work upon truth, even in the strongest men, are feeble and inadequate to their tremendous task.

And in the fourth place, all religious truths are doubtable. There is no absolute truth for any one of them. Even that fundamental truth--the existence of a God--no man can prove by reason. The ordinary proof for the existence of God involves either an assumption, argument in a circle, or a contradiction. The impression of God is kept up by experience, not by logic. And hence, when the experimental religion of a man, of a community, or of a nation wanes, religion wanes--their idea of God grows indistinct, and that man, community or nation becomes infidel.

Bear in mind, then, that all religious truths are doubtable--even those which we hold most strongly.

What does this brief account of the origin of doubt teach us? It teaches us

## GREAT INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY.

It teaches us sympathy and toleration with all men who venture upon the ocean of truth to find out a path through it for themselves. Do you sometimes feel yourself thinking unkind things about your fellow-students who have intellectual difficulty? I know how hard it is always to feel sympathy and toleration for them; but we must address ourselves to that most carefully and most religiously. If my brother is shortsighted I must not abuse him or speak against him; I must pity him, and if possible try to improve his sight, or to make things that he is to look at so bright that he cannot help seeing. But never let us think evil of men who do not see as we do. From the bottom of our hearts let us pity them, and let us take them by the hand and spend time and thought over them, and try to lead them to the true light.

What has been

## THE CHURCH'S TREATMENT OF DOUBT

in the past? It has been very simple. "There is a heretic. Burn him!" That is all. "There is a man who has gone off the road. Bring him back and torture him!"

We have got past that physically; have we got past it morally? What does the modern Church say to a man who is skeptical? Not "Burn him!" but "Brand him!" "Brand him!"--call him a bad name. And in many countries at the present time, a man who is branded as a heretic is despised, tabooed and put out of religious society, much more than if he had gone wrong in morals. I think I am speaking within the facts when I say that a man who is unsound is looked upon in many communities with more suspicion and with more pious horror than a man who now and then gets drunk. "Burn him!" "Brand him!" "Excommunicate him!" That has been the Church's treatment of doubt, and that is perhaps to some extent the treatment which we ourselves are inclined to give to the men who cannot see the truths of Christianity as we see them.

Contrast

## CHRIST'S TREATMENT

of doubt. I have spoken already of His strange partiality for the outsiders--for the scattered heretics up and down the country; of the care with which He loved to deal with them, and of the respect in which He held their intellectual difficulties. Christ never failed to distinguish between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is "can't believe"; unbelief is "won't believe." Doubt is honesty; unbelief is obstinacy. Doubt is looking for light; unbelief is content with darkness. Loving darkness rather than light--that is what Christ attacked, and

attacked unsparingly. But for the intellectual questioning of Thomas, and Philip, and Nicodemus, and the many others who came to Him to have their great problems solved, He was respectful and generous and tolerant.

And how did He meet their doubts? The Church, as I have said, says, "Brand him!" Christ said, "Teach him." He destroyed by fulfilling. When Thomas came to Him and denied His very resurrection, and stood before Him waiting for the scathing words and lashing for his unbelief, they never came. They never came! Christ gave him facts--facts! No man can go around facts. Christ said, "Behold My hands and My feet." The great god of science at the present time is a fact. It works with facts. Its cry is, "Give me facts. Found anything you like upon facts and we will believe it." The spirit of Christ was the scientific spirit. He founded His religion upon facts; and He asked all men to found their religion upon facts.

Now, get up the facts of Christianity, and take men to the facts. Theologies--and I am not speaking disrespectfully of theology; theology is as scientific a thing as any other science of facts--but theologies are

## HUMAN VERSIONS

of Divine truths, and hence the varieties of the versions and the inconsistencies of them. I would allow a man to select whichever version of this truth he liked afterwards; but I would ask him to begin with no version, but go back to the facts and base his Christian life upon these.

That is the great lesson of the New Testament way of looking at doubt--of Christ's treatment of doubt. It is not "Brand him!"--but lovingly, wisely and tenderly to teach him. Faith is never opposed to reason in the New Testament; it is opposed to sight. You will find that a principle worth thinking over. Faith is never opposed to reason in the New Testament, but to sight.

With these principles in mind as to the origin of doubt, and as to Christ's treatment of it, how are we ourselves to deal with those who are in intellectual difficulty?

In the first place, I think we must make all the concessions to them that we conscientiously can.

When a doubter first encounters you, he pours out a deluge of abuse of churches, and ministers, and creeds, and Christians. Nine-tenths of what he says is probably true. Make concessions. Agree with him. It does him good to unburden himself of these things. He has been cherishing them for years--laying them up against Christians, against the Church, and against Christianity; and now he is startled to find the first Christian with whom he has talked over the thing almost entirely agrees with him. We are, of course, not responsible for everything that is said in the name of Christianity; but a man does not give up medicine because there are quack doctors, and no man has a right to give up his Christianity because there are spurious or inconsistent Christians. Then, as I already said, creeds are human versions of Divine truths; and we do not ask a man to accept all the creeds, any more than we ask him to accept all the Christians. We ask him to accept Christ, and the facts about Christ and the words of Christ. You will find the battle is half won when you have endorsed the man's objections, and possibly added a great many more to the charges which he has against ourselves. These men are

## IN REVOLT

against the kind of religion which we exhibit to the world--against the cant that is taught in the name of Christianity. And if the men that have never seen the real thing--if you could show them that, they would receive it as eagerly as you do. They are merely in revolt against the imperfections and inconsistencies of those who represent Christ to the world.

Second: Beg them to set aside, by an act of will, all unsolved problems: such as the problem of the origin of evil, the problem of the Trinity, the problem of the relation of human will and predestination, and so on--problems which have been investigated for thousands of years without result--ask them to set those problems aside as insoluble. In the meantime, just as a man who is studying mathematics may be asked to set aside the problem of squaring the circle, let him go on with what can be done, and what has been done, and leave out of sight the impossible.

You will find that will relieve the skeptic's mind of a great deal of

## UNNECESSARY CARGO

that has been in his way.

Thirdly: Talking about difficulties, as a rule, only aggravates them.

Entire satisfaction to the intellect is unattainable about any of the greater problems, and if you try to get to the bottom of them by argument, there is no bottom there; and therefore you make the matter worse. But I would say what is known, and what can be honestly and philosophically and scientifically said about one or two of the difficulties that the doubter raises, just to show him that you can do it--to show him that you are not a fool--that you are not merely groping in the dark yourself, but you have found whatever

basis is possible. But I would not go around all the doctrines. I would simply do that with one or two; because the moment you cut off one, a hundred other heads will grow in its place. It would be a pity if all these problems could be solved. The joy of the intellectual life would be largely gone. I would not rob a man of his problems, nor would I have another man rob me of my problems. They are the delight of life, and the whole intellectual world would be stale and unprofitable if we knew everything.

Fourthly--and this is the great point: Turn away from the reason and go into the man's moral life.

I don't mean, go into his moral life and see if the man is living in conscious sin, which is the great blinder of the eyes--I am speaking now of honest doubt; but open a new door into

#### THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF MAN'S NATURE.

Entreat him not to postpone life and his life's usefulness until he has settled the problems of the universe. Tell him those problems will never all be settled; that his life will be done before he has begun to settle them; and ask him what he is doing with his life meantime. Charge him with wasting his life and his usefulness; and invite him to deal with the moral and practical difficulties of the world, and leave the intellectual difficulties as he goes along. To spend time upon these is proving the less important before the more important; and, as the French say, "The good is the enemy of the best." It is a good thing to think; it is a better thing to work--it is a better thing to do good. And you have him there, you see. He can't get beyond that. You have to tell him, in fact, that there are two organs of knowledge: the one reason, the other obedience. And now tell him, as he has tried the first and found the little in it, just for a moment or two to join you in trying the second. And when he asks whom he is to obey, you tell him there is but One, and lead him to the great historical figure who calls all men to Him: the one perfect life--the one Savior of mankind--the one Light of the world. Ask him to begin to

OBEY CHRIST;

and, doing His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

That, I think, is about the only thing you can do with a man: to get him into practical contact with the needs of the world, and to let him lose his intellectual difficulties meantime. Don't ask him to give them up altogether. Tell him to solve them afterward one by one if he can, but meantime to give his life to Christ and his time to the kingdom of God. You fetch him completely around when you do that. You have taken him away from the false side of his nature, and to the practical and moral side of his nature; and for the first time in his life, perhaps, he puts things in their true place. He puts his nature in the relations in which it ought to be, and he then only begins to live. And by obedience he will soon become a learner and pupil for himself, and Christ will teach him things, and he will find whatever problems are solvable gradually solved as he goes along the path of practical duty.

Now, let me, in closing, give an instance of how to deal with specific points.

The question of miracles is thrown at my head every second day:

"What do you say to a man when he says to you, 'Why do you believe in miracles?'"

I say, "Because I have seen them."

He asks, "When?"

I say, "Yesterday."

"Where?"

"Down such-and-such a street I saw a man who was a drunkard redeemed by the power of an unseen Christ and saved from sin. That is a miracle."

The best apologetic for Christianity is a Christian. That is a fact which the man cannot get over. There are fifty other arguments for miracles, but none so good as that you have seen them. Perhaps you are one yourself. But take a man and show him a miracle with his own eyes. Then he will believe.

**John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

- **My Lord:** John 20:16,31 5:23 9:35-38 Ps 45:6,11 102:24-28 118:24-28 Isa 7:14 9:6 Isa 25:9 40:9-11 Jer 23:5,6 Mal 3:1 Mt 14:33 Lu 24:52 Ac 7:59,60 1Ti 3:16 Rev 5:9-14

## THOMAS RECOGNIZES JESUS' DIVINITY

**Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord ([kurios](#)) and my God ([theos](#))** - It is interesting Thomas did not say "My Savior" or "My Redeemer," which He certainly is. He focused on the supremacy of Jesus as the Lord of his life, the One Who rightfully owns him, the One to which he has a sinful, saved man should bow. Notice the two possessive pronouns "my" leaving no doubt about Thomas having come to fully understand that the privilege of personal relationship with Jesus truly belonged to him.

*"He acknowledged the divinity he did not see  
by the wounds he did see."*

--John Boys

**Spurgeon** - Thus in a moment reading the Deity of Jesus in wounds. A sweet lesson. Oh, to learn it every day afresh. (The Interpreter)

**Brian Bell** I think it's unlikely that Thomas took Jesus up on His invitation to touch. 1. Thomas hears that Jesus had knowledge of what He said & His willingness to meet it, were sufficient. 2. My Lord & my God! - all demands for proof forgotten. Q. So for Thomas seeing/proving was believing...but to his discredit! - The greater blessing is to not see & believe! 1. W/o faith it is impossible to please God. Heb.11:6

**NET NOTE** - Should Thomas' exclamation be understood as two subjects with the rest of the sentence omitted ("My Lord and my God has truly risen from the dead"), as predicate nominatives ("You are my Lord and my God"), or as vocatives ("My Lord and my God!")? Probably the most likely is something between the second and third alternatives. It seems that the second is slightly more likely here, because the context appears confessional. Thomas' statement, while it may have been an exclamation, does in fact confess the faith which he had previously lacked, and Jesus responds to Thomas' statement in the following verse as if it were a confession. With the proclamation by Thomas here, it is difficult to see how any more profound analysis of Jesus' person could be given. It echoes Jn 1:1 and Jn 1:14 together: The Word was God, and the Word became flesh (Jesus of Nazareth). The Fourth Gospel opened with many other titles for Jesus: the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29, 36); the Son of God (Jn 1:34, 49); Rabbi (Jn 1:38); Messiah (Jn 1:41); the King of Israel (Jn 1:49); the Son of Man (Jn 1:51). Now the climax is reached with the proclamation by Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and the reader has come full circle from Jn 1:1, where the author had introduced him to who Jesus was, to Jn 20:28, where the last of the disciples has come to the full realization of who Jesus was. What Jesus had predicted in John 8:28 had come to pass: "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am" (Greek "I am"). By being lifted up in crucifixion (which led in turn to his death, resurrection, and exaltation with the Father) Jesus has revealed his true identity as both Lord (κύριος [[kurios](#)], used by the LXX to translate [Yahweh](#)) and God (θεός [[theos](#)], used by the LXX to translate Elohim).

**Treasury of Scripture** - The disbelief of the apostle is the means of furnishing us with a full and satisfactory demonstration of the resurrection of our Lord. Throughout the divine dispensations every doctrine and ever important truth is gradually revealed; and here we have a conspicuous instance of the progressive system. An angel first declares the glorious event; the empty sepulchre confirms the women's report. Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene shewed that he was alive; that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that it was at the least the spirit of Christ; that to the eleven shewed the reality of his body; and the conviction given to Thomas proved it the self-same body that had been crucified. Incredulity itself is satisfied; and the convinced apostle exclaims, in the joy of his heart, "My Lord and my God!"

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**Lord** (master, owner)([2962](#)) [kurios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (e.g., Roman emperors - Acts 25:26+) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**Colin Brown (editor)** - Classic Greek- **kyrios** (attested from Pindar on) adj. having power, authoritative, from to kyros, power, might; as a noun, lord, ruler, one who has control (over people things, himself). kyrios always contains the idea of legality and authority. kyrios is often used beside despotes which means especially an owner (with overtones of high-handedness). Later anyone occupying a superior position was referred to quite generally as kyrios and addressed as kyrie (fem. kyria). From here it penetrated as a loan-word into the Heb. of the Talmud and Midrash, and also into Aram. (cf. e.g. Tg. [Job 5:2](#); Tg. [Ps. 53:1](#)) to denote God. (NOTE -- [CLICK HERE FOR 10 PAGE IN DEPTH TREATMENT OF KYRIOS IN THE The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#) NIDNTT - page 590)

**Gilbrant - Classical Greek** Originally kurios was an adjective which meant "to have power, authority." The term also functioned as a noun, and in that case it meant "lord, master, ruler." It could be an address reserved

for those with a superior status (“sir”). In classical Greek *kurios* might be applied to the gods, but it was not usually a divine title. That did not happen until the later Hellenistic period when the Oriental emperors over the Greek people took the title for themselves, according to their custom. Later, some Roman emperors also employed the title *kurios* to themselves. They also promoted the notion of emperor worship and considered themselves divine. Here is where the term came to have religious connotations. Since Christians were unable to acknowledge such “gods,” they often met with severe persecution from the official government.

**Septuagint Usage** - The Septuagint records *kurios* more than 9,000 times. The term equals such Hebrew words as *’ādhôn*, and *bā’al*, and the Aramaic term *marē* (cf. *marana-tha*, “our Lord come”), which all mean “lord.” Furthermore, *gēvîr* (“commander”) and *shallîṭ* (“ruler”) are also translated by *kurios*. But first and foremost *kurios* denotes God’s name as is depicted by the tetragrammaton (literally, “four letters”) YHWH (Yahweh). Thus *kurios* occurs more than 6,000 times in the Septuagint for YHWH (Bietenhard, “Lord,” Colin Brown, 2:511).

**New Testament Usage** - Of the more than 700 times *kurios* occurs in the New Testament, over 200 are in Luke’s writings and nearly 280 belong to Paul. Used in reference to men, *kurios* ordinarily has its normal Greek understanding. It may signify the owner of either animate or inanimate objects: “lord of all” (Galatians 4:1); “master of the house” (Mark 13:35); the owners of a colt (Luke 19:33); the master of servants, slaves (Matthew 10:24f.; Acts 16:16); and many, many more usages (see e.g., Matthew 9:38; 20:8). But like the Old Testament usage, *kurios* in the New Testament also functions as the name of God. Each person of the Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is called *kurios*. In the following texts *kurios* is the equivalent of *’ādhôn*: Mark 12:11/Psalm 118:22; Mark 12:36/Psalm 110:1; Acts 4:26/Psalm 2:1f.

God is frequently called “Lord” in the Old Testament citations and allusions found in the New Testament. The Father exercises His authority as Lord over all His created universe. Jesus praised Him with the address “Lord of heaven and earth” (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21). This authority is primarily a result of the fact that He is the creator of the universe: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth . . .” (Acts 17:24). God is the Lord of mankind, the Lord of the harvest (Matthew 9:38); He is the Lord of His church, the master of His vineyard. He has at His disposal human instruments who carry out the work of proclaiming His salvation (Matthew 21:33-43). Since the Lord is Lord in the ultimate sense, He is, moreover, the Lord of history who sovereignly governs all the earthly powers and rulers. He is the “blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15, NIV).

We note that *kurios* is the name most frequently applied to Jesus Christ. The extensive use of the name obviously is because the writers invested this term with more than just an ordinary meaning. The title is applied in its ultimate and divine sense to Jesus. “Jesus Lord” chiefly refers to the elevated and glorified Christ. It is a title which God has given him in response to His saving work: “Wherefore (because of His abasement and death) God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9). God has, through the resurrection and the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father, “made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

The lordship of Christ is especially related to the Church. Christ is, above all else, the Lord of His people, His body. He is “our Lord Jesus Christ,” one of Paul’s most frequently used descriptions of Jesus’ relationship to His people.

Paul uniquely emphasized Christ’s lordship over the heavenly angelic powers. The underlying assumption is that the fall of man and his subsequent rebellion against God has cosmic dimensions. Christ brings everything into subjection to His lordship; everybody will be subsumed under His headship (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20). All powers are essentially conquered through His death and resurrection; the main battle has been won (Colossians 2:15). Satan’s empire has been upended (Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:8,9). Still, there remains an ultimate battle, and everything will be under Christ’s power and rule. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25). This dominion of Christ is, though, only visible to the faithful (Hebrews 2:8).

The Old Testament witness to God as YHWH is remarkably applied to Jesus consistently in the New Testament. Here the New Testament is uniquely underscoring the reality that Jesus is Lord in the divine sense (e.g., Psalm 102:26f./ Hebrews 1:10-12 passim the New Testament; Isaiah 40:3; Joel 2:32/Romans 10:13; Malachi 3:1/Mark 1:2-4;). Almost 20 New Testament allusions and citations to Psalm 110 are applied to Jesus (e.g., Matthew 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:35; Romans 8:34; passim the New Testament writings).

The goal of Christian exhortation is to encourage the believer to place every aspect of his or her life under the lordship of Christ. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). To confess Christ as Lord one must be willing to faithfully carry out His perfect will. Any distortion of Christ's commands results in catastrophe. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say" (Luke 6:46, NIV; cf. Matthew 7:21). The one confessing Christ as Lord and not doing His will has built his faith on sand (Luke 6:49).

The final judgment of evil and good rests in the hands of the Lord as Lord of the universe, the world, the Church, the individual, the living, and the dead (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). Ever since His resurrection and ascension Jesus has assumed the role of Lord (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:5-11). The fact that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God identifies Him as the authoritative arm of God. He is Lord in the ultimate sense of the word. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

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## **Doubts And Faith**

My Lord and my God! — John 20:28

Today's Scripture : John 20:24-31

Can a believer in Jesus who has occasional doubts about matters of faith ever be effective in serving the Lord? Some people think that mature and growing Christians never question their beliefs. But just as we have experiences that can build our faith, we can also have experiences that cause us to temporarily doubt.

The disciple Thomas had initial doubts about reports of Jesus' resurrection. He said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, . . . I will not believe" (John 20:25). Christ did not rebuke Thomas but showed him the evidence he asked for. Amazed at seeing the risen Savior, Thomas exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" (20:28). After this incident, the New Testament says very little about what happened to Thomas.

A number of early church traditions, however, claim that Thomas went to India as a missionary. It is said that while there he preached the gospel, worked miracles, and planted churches. Some of these churches in India still have active congregations that trace their founding back to Thomas.

A time of doubt doesn't have to become a life pattern. Allow God to lead you into a deeper understanding of His reality. Renew your faith. You can still accomplish great things for Him. By: Dennis Fisher (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When faith grows weak and doubts arise,  
Recall God's love and tender care;  
Remind yourself of all He's done  
And of those times He answered prayer.  
—D. De Haan

Learn to doubt your doubts and believe your beliefs.

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## **Thomas Time**

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" — John 20:28

Today's Scripture : John 20:24-29

A young adult was struggling with his faith. After growing up in a home where he was loved and nurtured in a godly way, he allowed bad decisions and circumstances to turn him away from the Lord. Although as a child he had claimed to know Jesus, he now struggled with unbelief.

One day while talking to him I said, "I know that you walked with the Lord for a long time, but right now you're not so sure about Jesus and faith. Can I suggest to you that you are in the 'Thomas Time' of your life?"

He knew that Thomas was one of Jesus' 12 apostles and that he had trusted Christ openly for several years. I reminded this young man that after Jesus' death Thomas doubted that He had really risen from the tomb. But after 8 days the Lord appeared to Thomas, showed him His scars, and told him to stop doubting and believe. Finally ready to abandon his doubts, Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:24-28).

I told this young man, "Jesus patiently waited, and Thomas came back. I think you will too. I'm praying that someday you will again



say to Jesus, 'My Lord and my God!'"

Could you be in a "Thomas Time"—finding it hard to feel close to Jesus, perhaps even doubting Him? Jesus is waiting for you. Reach out for His nail-scarred hand. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

There can be times when our minds are in doubt,  
Times when we ask what our faith is about;  
But we can believe Him, we know that He cares—  
Our God is real, as the Bible declares.  
—Fitzhugh

A child of God is always welcomed home.

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Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

The English preacher Alexander Maclaren once asked,

"Why is it that one Person, and one Person only, triumphs over space and time and is the same close Friend with whom millions of hearts are in loving touch, as He was to those that gathered around Him upon the earth?"

That is a valid question. The following story, attributed to the British statesman Benjamin Disraeli, will help to answer it. A young scholar approached Disraeli one day. He had developed a new religion and written a book to explain its doctrines. The young man claimed that his newly devised creed surpassed in beauty the message of Christ and His sacrificial crucifixion on Calvary. Disraeli asked the young man about the success of the book's sales, only to hear him complain that he couldn't get anyone to buy it or to believe in his religion. The old statesman placed his hand on the young man's shoulder and said,

"No, my boy, you will never get anyone to read your book and believe in your religion until you too have been crucified on a cross and risen from a tomb."

Only the spotless Son of God, the perfect substitute for sinful man, can provide salvation. Only a dying Savior who validates His sacrifice by bodily resurrection can lift the burden of sin's guilt. Because Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us, we should give Him our love. If we have placed our faith in Him, we can exclaim like Thomas in love and adoration, "My Lord and my God." The Savior deserves our heartfelt worship. —P.R.V. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When we recognize Jesus' lordship, we'll give Him our worship.

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## **My Lord**

Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" — John 20:28

Today's Scripture : John 20:19-29

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and showed them His hands and feet. We are told that at first they could not believe for joy—it appeared too wonderful to be true (Luke 24:40-41). Thomas was not with the disciples, but he also had trouble believing until he saw for himself. When Jesus appeared to Thomas and told him to put his fingers in the nail holes and his hand in His side, Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Later, as Paul told the Philippians of his own suffering, he also declared Jesus as Lord. He testified that he had come to the place where he considered all his experiences as loss "for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

You and I have never seen Jesus calm a storm or raise someone from the dead. We haven't sat at His feet on a Galilean hillside and heard Him teach. But through eyes of faith we have been spiritually healed by His death on our behalf. Thus we can join Thomas and Paul and countless others in acknowledging Jesus as our Lord.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). When we believe, we too can call Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

—Watts

Though we cannot see Him with our eyes,  
we can believe with our heart—He is Lord!

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## J C RYLE - THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

My Lord and my God. JOHN 20:28

CHRIST WAS ADDRESSED BY A disciple as "God," without prohibition or rebuke on his part. The noble exclamation which burst from the lips of Thomas, when convinced that his Lord had risen indeed - the noble exclamation, "My Lord and my God" - admits of only one meaning. It was a distinct testimony to our blessed Lord's divinity. It was a clear, unmistakable declaration that Thomas believed him, whom he saw and touched that day, to be not only man, but God. Above all, it was a testimony which our Lord received and did not prohibit and a declaration which he did not say one word to rebuke. When Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter and would have worshipped him, the apostle refused such honor at once: "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26). When the people of Lystra would have done sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, "they rent their clothes and ran in among the people. . . saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:14,15). But when Thomas says to Jesus, "My Lord and my God," the words do not elicit a syllable of reproof from our holy and truth-loving Master. Can we doubt that these things were written for our learning?

Let us settle it firmly in our minds that the divinity of Christ is one of the grand foundation truths of Christianity and let us be willing to go to the stake rather than let it go. Unless our Lord Jesus is very God of very God, there is an end of His mediation, His atonement, His advocacy, His priesthood, His whole work of redemption. These glorious doctrines are useless blasphemies, unless Christ is divine. For ever let us bless God that the divinity of our Lord is taught everywhere in the Scriptures and stands on evidence that can never be overthrown.

He is God and therefore is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him."

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## George Morrison John 20:28-29

Not only is imagination an aid to love.<sup>44</sup> It is also an aid to faith in the unseen. In imagination unseen realities draw very near. Like a breath of wind it plays on the mists till they scatter and show the everlasting hills. And so imagination, which is an aid to love, is also an aid to faith in the invisible, for it draws into something of visionary clearness the objects on which faith must always rest. Imagination is not faith, any more than it is love. But imagination may be their foster mother. Faith is the whole being turning Godward and coming to rest in the eternal certainties. The imagination is only a particular faculty or power of that being. No one is saved by imagination. It is a question if anyone is saved without it. Without its vivifying and realizing help, the task of faith is simply overwhelming. And therefore, because it wakes the sleeping past, because it helps to [compassion], because it helps to God, I want you to realize that the imagination is a religious power of the highest order.

Friends, among all the services of Christ to a world that he has redeemed and is redeeming, there are not many more notable and blessed than his quickening of the imagination. It would be much had he taught us perfect truth, but he has done more: he has shown us perfect beauty. He has given us a vision of such grace that it haunts the heart and will not let it go. It is that figure, so tender and so loving, so brave and patient, so silent, so unselfish, that has cast a spell on the imagination and through the imagination reached the heart. No worse curse can fall on a person than to have a corrupt imagination. There is no greater purifying power than an imagination that is pure. And the person who dwells in the communion of Christ has such a vision of what is fair and lovely that things unclean and bestial and base steal away into the forests of the night.

**John 20:29 Jesus \*said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."**

- **blessed:** John 20:8 4:48 Lu 1:45 2Co 5:7 Heb 11:1,27,39 1Pe 1:8

## BLESSED ARE THOSE BELIEVING WITHOUT SEEING

Jesus \*said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed (pisteuo)? - Jesus does not doubt that Thomas has now

believed He is God.

**Blessed** ([markarios](#)) are they who did not see, and yet believed ([pisteuo](#)) - The blessing is for believing without sight. This means this blessing is for every believer who has placed their faith in Christ after about 30-33 AD!

**Spurgeon** - The richest blessing falls to the share of those simple minds who believe the word of God, even when surrounded with difficulty and unsupported by signs and evidences. The more childlike the faith the happier the heart. (The Interpreter)

**Brian Bell** Blessed are those who have not seen - Blessed are those who believe, even in the pitch black when no stars are shining; Blessed are those who believe even when the sun hasn't shone for days, but stays hidden behind the darkest blanket of clouds; Blessed are those who believe when there is no friendly voice amidst the crowd. To believe then is to get very near the heart of Him who on the cross clung to the Father in the midnight darkness. Trusting is believing. Relying on Jesus, blesses Him. Habakkuk ends his letter with a Hymn of Faith! His name means "embrace/one who embraces/or clings." Habakkuk chooses to cling firmly to God regardless of what he sees before his eyes! (see Hab 3:17-19) Here is one of the greatest confessions of faith! Though Babylon comes to destroy; Though You send away your people; Though the bottom drops out of everything...yet I will trust in you!!! Had he looked ahead he would only see the invading Babylonian army; Had he looked within he would only see fear & trembling; Had he looked around he would only see everything falling apart; But by looking up by faith he saw God...& all his fears vanished! To walk by faith means to focus on the greatness & glory of God! God became Habakkuk's Strength, Song, & his Salvation! "If my legs were shaking, I probably would be looking for a place to sit down... not bounding up the side of a mountain, like a deer!" The Lord gives us bounding feet so we can overcome the obstacles of life. God doesn't always change the circumstances, but He can change us to meet the circumstances! Faith gives you the ability to stand sure-footed like a deer, & to be able to run-swiftly & go higher than ever before! Like the eagle & like the deer, God made us for the heights! They both will go down into the valley, but that's not where they live! (us too!)

**NET NOTE** - Some translations treat πιστεύσαντες (pisteusantes) as a gnomic aorist (timeless statement) and thus equivalent to an English present tense: "and yet believe" (RSV). This may create an effective application of the passage to the modern reader, but the author is probably thinking of those people who had already believed without the benefit of seeing the risen Jesus, on the basis of reports by others or because of circumstantial evidence (see John 20:8).

**Spurgeon Study Bible** - "Jesus said, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.' " We have a special and singular blessing through not having seen and yet having believed. So let us not diminish it by looking for a voice, or a vision, or a revelation—something that is like sight—so that it could not then be said of us that we have not seen. Perhaps we have said to ourselves, "Oh that God would in some way reveal himself to me so that my senses might assist my faith. Oh that I might be hidden away in some cleft of the rock and might see the hem of Jehovah's robe. If I might hear some divine voice whisper that I am his, then I would, indeed, rejoice and never doubt again. Or if I might see some miracle, something I was sure was the finger of God so that I would never doubt again, what a grand thing it would be!"

We should not ask for anything like that. We should not wish to have it even if we could, for "blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." We would be waiting for something that is practically the same as sight. We would show that we do not feel content to swim in the pure sea of faith. After all, it is only vanity that we are waiting for, so he will deny it to us and will say, "My children, instead of wanting to see, believe, trust, follow me in the dark, for it is better for you not to see. Even if you did see and believe, you would have obtained only an inferior gift; for the higher blessing, the cream of blessing, belongs to those who have not seen and yet have believed."

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**Blessed** ([3107](#)) [makarios](#) from root **makar**, but others say from **mak** = large or lengthy) means to be divinely favored and is not based on positive circumstances. Some say makarios describes a person as being **happy**, but that is not the best description, because the English word "happy" ([from hap \(n.\) "chance, fortune"](#)) is the favorable state that depends on what happens! **Makarios** means spiritually contented and fulfilled and focuses on the state of happiness (independent of circumstances) experienced by people who have received God's blessings. **Makarios** does not refer to how a person feels (although a blessed person of course may still "feel" blessed), but more importantly to the divinely bestowed inner spiritual condition of those who are the objects of God's supernatural favor. From the Biblical perspective **Makarios** describes the person who is free from daily cares and worries because his every breath and circumstance is in the hands of His Maker Who gives him such an assurance (such a "blessing"). **Kenneth Wuest** adds that when **makarios** is "used of the state or condition of the believer, we would say that it refers to the spiritually prosperous state of that person who is the recipient of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, Who is enabled to minister these blessings to him **when** the believer yields to Him for that ministry and cooperates with Him in it."

**THOUGHT** - Are you (am I) in such a spiritual state that the Spirit can bestow supernatural blessing on you? (If not see [Psalm 1:1-3](#) for one "formula" for receiving divine blessing. [Ps 1:1](#) in Hebrew actually begins with same Hebrew word twice = "blessed, blessed" for emphasis! God desires to bless His people!)

See [New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#) from 4 page article - Excerpt - (makarizo), call or consider blessed, happy; (makarismos), blessing.

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### **Vance Havner - The Beatitude of the "and Yets"**

Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20:29.

Thomas could have made a great story of his experience, for few ever had such a privilege as he. But our Lord did not magnify it: rather He magnified the commoner experience of believing without seeing. All of us can claim that beatitude! It is not so glamorous and it does not make a sensational story, but precious in the sight of the Lord are His saints who can relate no amazing experiences but who believe, anyway.

Peter sensed the importance of walking by faith instead of sight when he wrote, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And yet have believed... yet believing. There was only one Thomas who could put his finger in the nailprints of the Saviour but their number is legion who have believed without seeing. For reasons best known to Himself our Lord sometimes gives extra tokens to one now and then, but it is very evident that He values highly those who get along without them. Ours is the beatitude of the and yet's, and in its blessing we carry on until we see Him as He is

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### **Streams in the Desert** - "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29.)

HOW strong is the snare of the things that are seen, and how necessary for God to keep us in the things that are unseen! If Peter is to walk on the water he must walk; if he is going to swim, he must swim, but he cannot do both. If the bird is going to fly it must keep away from fences and the trees, and trust to its buoyant wings. But if it tries to keep within easy reach of the ground, it will make poor work of flying.

God had to bring Abraham to the end of his own strength, and to let him see that in his own body he could do nothing. He had to consider his own body as good as dead, and then take God for the whole work; and when he looked away from himself, and trusted God alone, then he became fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able to perform. That is what God is teaching us, and He has to keep away encouraging results until we learn to trust without them, and then He loves to make His Word real in fact as well as faith.—A. B. Simpson.

I do not ask that He must prove  
His Word is true to me,  
And that before I can believe  
He first must let me see.  
It is enough for me to know  
'Tis true because He says 'tis so;  
On His unchanging Word I'll stand  
And trust till I can understand.  
—E. M. Winter

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### **The Limits Of Sight**

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. — John 20:29

Today's Scripture : John 20:19-31

"Seeing is believing," according to the old saying. But if we believe only what we can see, we will never know God or experience His presence.

I traveled to England during the height of the foot-and-mouth disease epidemic. At home I had read newspaper stories of the tragic effects on farmers. I had watched television reports of slaughtered animals being burned and buried to try to stop the spread of the disease. But as I traveled by train from London to Devon, I saw many flocks of healthy sheep and herds of cattle in the fields. Nowhere did I see a sign warning of foot-and-mouth disease. Should I believe my eyes or the reports of reliable sources?

After Jesus was raised from the dead, Thomas refused to believe the reports that He was alive. He said that unless he touched the nail marks in Jesus' hands and the wound in His side, he would not believe (John 20:24-25). When the Lord appeared to the disciples 8 days later, Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not

seen and yet have believed" (v.29).

Even though we have not seen Jesus, we accept by faith the word of reliable witnesses, we embrace the living Lord, and we believe. —By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I know by faith in whom I have believed,  
I know that God's free gift I have received,  
I know that He will keep me to the end,  
My Savior, my Redeemer, and my Friend.  
—Anon.

Faith sees what the eyes cannot.

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### [Come To Me](#)

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. —John 20:29

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:24-31

Charlotte Elliott wrote the hymn "Just As I Am" in 1834. She had been an invalid for many years, and though she wanted to help with a fund-raiser for a girl's school, she was too ill. She felt useless, and this inner distress caused her to begin doubting her faith in Christ. She wrote "Just As I Am" as a response to her doubt. The crux of her distress is perhaps best expressed in these words:

Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

Three days after His death and burial, Jesus rose from the grave and invited the disciple whom history has nicknamed "Doubting Thomas" to examine the marks of His crucifixion (John 20:27). When Thomas touched Jesus' wounds, he finally believed in the resurrection. Christ responded, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (v.29).

As Christians today, we are the ones who have not seen but still believe. Yet at times our earthly circumstances create serious questions in our souls. Even then, we cry out: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Jesus welcomes us to come to Him just as we are. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Dear Jesus, help me to trust You when life doesn't make sense. Please take my doubt and replace it with fresh faith in You.

The risen Christ opens the door for you to have fullness of life.

**John 20:30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;**

- John 21:25 Lu 1:3,4 Ro 15:4 1Co 10:11 2Ti 3:15-17 2Pe 3:1,2 1Jn 1:3,4 5:13
- **SEE IN DEPTH COMMENTARY ON John 20:30**

## **THE DISCIPLES WITNESS COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF SIGNS**

**Therefore** ([oun](#)) is a term of conclusion. This is almost like the "conclusion" of the Gospel as he finalizes the purpose for this book.

**Many other** ([allos](#)) **signs** ([semeion](#)) **Jesus also performed** ([poieo](#)) **in the presence** ([enopion](#)) **of the disciples, which are not written in this book** - First note the word many which indicates probably thousands of signs over 3+ years. The 4 Gospels have at least 40 miracles (+/-). John has 7 miracles he identifies specifically as signs. **Other** is the adjective [allos](#) which describes these signs as others of the same kind, all divine, all intended to point to the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus used [allos](#) in Jn 14:16 when He explained to the disciples that the Father would give them "another ([allos](#)) Helper" of the same kind as He had been to them.

A **sign** directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. In other words, the **signs** were like giant flashing billboards pointing to One Person, the Son of God. The signs were meant to give visible, outward compelling proof of His divinity and divine authority. In short, **semeion** describes a miracle whose purpose is to attest to authenticity of the claims of the One performing the miracle. Jesus claimed to be God and the **many other signs** repeatedly pointed to this truth.

In John a sign is generally a "miraculous sign" that points to a deeper spiritual significance in connection with the event. For example, John 2:11+ says "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."

**NET NOTE** - The author mentions many other miraculous signs performed by Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in the Gospel. What are these signs the author of the Gospel has in mind? One can only speculate. The author says they were performed in the presence of the disciples, which emphasizes again their role as witnesses (cf. 15:27). The point here is that the author has been selective in his use of material. He has chosen to record those incidents from the life and ministry of Jesus which supported his purpose in writing the Gospel. Much which might be of tremendous interest, but does not directly contribute to that purpose in writing, he has omitted. The author explains his purpose in writing in the following verse.

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**Signs** (4592) **semeion** from **sema** = sign) a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. In the NT a sign speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message to be conveyed. In other words, in John's Gospel (where semeion is most concentrated) the apostle recorded certain miracles not for the wonder (cf "wonders") they produced, but because of the message they taught (Jn 20:31). Most of the 77 occurrences of **semeion** are found in the Gospels (68/77 with 17 in John's Gospel), Acts and Revelation. A sign is a distinctive mark by which something is known. In 2Th 3:17 semeion is something that Paul specifically wrote that served as a mark of genuineness of this letter.

**Wayne Detzler** on **semeion** - Early in its use this word meant a visible sign which someone saw. For instance, when Constantine was embroiled in battle he saw the sign of a cross and the words, "In this sign conquer." This turned him to Christianity, and he granted toleration to the Christians in 313. So first of all semeion meant a real or imagined visible sign. Later it came to mean the intervention of the deities in our world. This is the meaning which the Bible attaches to miracles, when God breaks into the natural world to accomplish some special feat. (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#)).

**SEMEION - 77X/69V - distinguishing mark(1), miracle(2), sign(35), signs(39).** Matt. 12:38; Matt. 12:39; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 16:3; Matt. 16:4; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 26:48; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 13:4; Mk. 13:22; Mk. 16:17; Mk. 16:20; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 21:11; Lk. 21:25; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:41; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 20:30; Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12; Rom. 4:11; Rom. 15:19; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 14:22; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:17; Heb. 2:4; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:20

**Presence** (before, in sight of) (1799) **enopion** from **en** = in + **ops** = the eye/see [cp optanomai = see, perceive with eyes, look at, implying not only the mere act of seeing but actual perception of what one sees]) means literally in sight, in front of, in the presence of. Being in sight. Before the face and thus the idea of face to face! Of doing something in someone's presence.

**Enopion** can be summarized into three basic meanings

- 1) **in front of, before, a position in a spatial sense, in the presence of** (Lk 1:19; Acts 10:30, Rev 3:8, 7:15)
- 2) **in the sight of, in the presence of** (Lk 23:14, Jn 20:30, Acts 10:33, 1Ti 6:12, Re 3:5, 13:13)
- 3) **in the opinion of, in the judgment of** (Lk 16:15, 2Co 8:21)

**Wuest** writes that **enopion** "was used in such expressions as, "the case will be drawn up against you in the court at Heracleopolis in the presence of," "deliver personally," "I gave notice in person." It is used of one who does or says something in the presence of someone else, and does it with the consciousness that that one has him in sight and mind. Paul delivered this solemn charge to Timothy, conscious of the fact that he was doing so in the sight of God, and he wished Timothy to ever so regard the charge."

**ENOPION - 89X/82V - before(46), front(1), presence(20), sight(22).** Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:19; Lk. 1:75; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 4:7; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 5:25; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 12:6; Lk. 13:26; Lk. 14:10; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 16:15; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 24:43; Jn. 20:30; Acts 2:25; Acts 4:10; Acts 4:19; Acts 6:6; Acts 7:46; Acts 9:15; Acts 10:30; Acts 10:31; Acts 10:33; Acts 19:9; Acts 19:19; Acts 27:35; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 12:17; Rom. 14:22; 1 Co. 1:29; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 7:12; 2 Co. 8:21; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:3; 1 Tim. 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:13; 2 Tim. 2:14; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 4:13; Heb. 13:21; Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:22; 3 Jn. 1:6; Rev.



1:4; Rev. 2:14; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 3:5; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 4:6; Rev. 4:10; Rev. 5:8; Rev. 7:9; Rev. 7:11; Rev. 7:15; Rev. 8:2; Rev. 8:3; Rev. 8:4; Rev. 9:13; Rev. 11:4; Rev. 11:16; Rev. 12:4; Rev. 12:10; Rev. 13:12; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 14:3; Rev. 14:10; Rev. 15:4; Rev. 16:19; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:12

## THE SEVEN SIGNS JOHN 1-12

SIGN	SIGNIFICANCE	BELIEF	UNBELIEF	SCRIPTURE
Water to wine	Jesus' power over quality	The disciples	-	Jn 2:1-11
Healing son of Official	Jesus' power over space	The official and his household	-	Jn 4:46-54
Healing the Paralytic	Jesus' power over time	Paralytic??	The Jews	Jn 5:1-9
Feeding the 5000	Jesus' power over quantity	Some in the crowd	See Jn 6:26-66	Jn 6:1-15
Walking on Water	Jesus' power over nature	The disciples	-	Jn 6:16-21
Healing man born blind	Jesus' power over adversity	The blind man	The Pharisees	Jn 9:1-12
Raising Lazarus	Jesus' power over death	Martha, Mary, Many Jews	The Jewish Authorities	Jn 11:1-16

[From Dr Thomas Constable](#)

**John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

- **these:** John 20:28 1:49 6:69,70 9:35-38 Ps 2:7,12 Mt 16:16 27:54 Lu 1:4 Ac 8:37 9:20 Ro 1:3,4 1Jn 4:15 5:1,10,20 2Jn 1:9 Rev 2:18
- **believing:** John 3:15,16,18,36 5:24,39,40 6:40 10:10 Mk 16:16 1Pe 1:9 1Jn 2:23-25 5:10-13
- **In His Name:** Lu 24:47 Ac 3:16 10:43 13:38,39
- **SEE IN DEPTH COMMENTARY ON John 20:31**

## THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

**But these** - What is **these**? Clearly the signs and what is the contrast? The contrast is between the **many other signs** (Jn 20:30) and **these** signs in the Gospel of John, **these** referring specifically to the 7 signs John recorded.

**have been written** ([grapho](#)) - **Have been written** is in the perfect tense indicating that **these** things have been inspired by the Spirit Who moved John to record them on parchment (2Pe 1:21+) in the last half of the first century and then to reverberate throughout the centuries that followed (and, yea, even into eternity)! This is God's love letter to the otherwise hopeless, doomed children of Adam (Ro 5:12+). And the perfect tense signifies that this Gospel will continue to bear fruit and save souls as long as souls need saving!

**So that** - Term of purpose or result. What prepares the way for the achievement of the purpose? Clearly it is the things which **have been written** in the Gospel of John. The purpose is to save lost souls. The result is to stimulate faith, not only of unbelievers but also unbelievers (See **THOUGHT** below).

**You may believe** ([pisteuo](#)) **that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing** ([pisteuo](#) in present tense) **you may have life in His Name** - Where is real life to be found? Only in His Name, which of course translates to only in Jesus Who is "the Life" (Jn 14:6+), and Who becomes the supernatural life in all who receive (believe in) His Name (Col 3:4a+). The Gospel of John is to lead lost sinners to see the Savior and believe that He is the Christ, the Messiah, about Whom there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament ("Moses and the Prophets" Lk 16:31+).

**THOUGHT** - This passage clearly teaches that the primary purpose of this Gospel is to get souls saved and

into the Kingdom of God. However note the phrase "**believing you may have life**." Of course that speaks first to eternal life for those who are dead in their trespasses and sins. But it also speaks to those who are saved, that they too might have **life** in the here and now (they are guaranteed life in eternity future). How many of God's saints are *aint's* in respect to "**life**"? By that I mean how many are truly experiencing what Jesus desires for all of us, to "**have life and have it abundantly**" (Jn 10:10). It follows that this Gospel is for unbelievers and believers! In respect to believers Paul taught that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17+). As a believer immerses himself or herself in the Gospel of John, they will be exposed to the beautiful life giving word of Christ. As a result they will continue to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18+). In short, they will begin to experience the abundant life in Christ as their faith grows.

**Spurgeon** - Have we so believed? If not, the Bible has been read by us in vain. (The Interpreter)

Crown him, the Lord of Love;  
Behold his hands and side,  
Rich wounds, yet visible above  
In beauty glorified.

Crown him, the Lord of Peace,  
Whose power a sceptre sways  
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,  
Absorb'd in prayer and praise:

His reign shall know no end,  
And round his piercèd feet  
Fair flowers of Paradise extend  
Their fragrance ever sweet.

All hail! Redeemer, hail!  
For thou hast died for me:  
Thy praise shall never, never fail  
Throughout eternity.

**NET NOTE** - A difficult textual variant is present at this point in the Greek text. Some MSS ( 66vid  $\kappa^*$  B  $\Theta$  0250 pc) read the present subjunctive πιστεύητε (pisteuēte) after  $\nu\alpha$  (hina; thus NEB text, "that you may hold the faith") while others (2 $\kappa$  A C D L W  $\Psi$  f1, 13 33 ) read the aorist subjunctive πιστεύσῃτε (pisteusēte) after  $\nu\alpha$  (cf. NEB margin, "that you may come to believe"). As reflected by the renderings of the NEB text and margin, it is often assumed that the present tense would suggest ongoing belief (i.e., the Fourth Gospel primarily addressed those who already believed, and was intended to strengthen their faith), while the aorist tense would speak of coming to faith (i.e., John's Gospel was primarily evangelistic in nature). Both textual variants enjoy significant ms support, although the present subjunctive has somewhat superior witnesses on its behalf. On internal grounds it is hard to decide which is more likely the original. Many resolve this issue on the basis of a reconstruction of the overall purpose of the Gospel, viz., whether it is addressed to unbelievers or believers. However, since elsewhere in the Gospel of John (1) the present tense can refer to both initial faith and continuation in the faith and (2) the aorist tense simply refrains from commenting on the issue, it is highly unlikely that the distinction here would be determinative for the purpose of the Fourth Gospel. The question of purpose cannot be resolved by choosing one textual variant over the other in 20:31, but must be decided on other factors. Nevertheless, if a choice has to be made, the present subjunctive is the preferred reading. NA27 puts the aorist's sigma in brackets, thus representing both readings virtually equally (so TCGNT 220).

**NET NOTE** - A major question concerning this verse, the purpose statement of the Gospel of John, is whether the author is writing primarily for an audience of unbelievers, with purely evangelistic emphasis, or whether he envisions an audience of believers, whom he wants to strengthen in their faith. Several points are important in this discussion: (1) in the immediate context (20:30), the other signs spoken of by the author were performed in the presence of disciples; (2) in the case of the first of the signs, at Cana, the author makes a point of the effect the miracle had on the disciples (2:11); (3) if the primary thrust of the Gospel is toward unbelievers, it is difficult to see why so much material in chaps. 13–17 (the last meal and Farewell Discourse, concluding with Jesus' prayer for the disciples), which deals almost exclusively with the disciples, is included; (4) the disciples themselves were repeatedly said to have believed in Jesus throughout the Gospel, beginning with 2:11, yet they still needed to believe after the resurrection (if Thomas' experience in 20:27–28 is any indication); and (5) the Gospel appears to be written with the assumption that the readers are familiar with the basic story (or perhaps with one or more of the synoptic gospel accounts, although this is less clear). Thus no account of the birth of Jesus is given at all, and although he is identified as being from Nazareth, the words of the Pharisees and

chief priests to Nicodemus (7:52) are almost certainly to be taken as ironic, assuming the reader knows where Jesus was really from. Likewise, when Mary is identified in 11:2 as the one who anointed Jesus' feet with oil, it is apparently assumed that the readers are familiar with the story, since the incident involved is not mentioned in the Fourth Gospel until 12:3. These observations must be set over against the clear statement of purpose in the present verse, 20:31, which seems to have significant evangelistic emphasis. In addition to this there is the repeated emphasis on witness throughout the Fourth Gospel (cf. the witness of John the Baptist in 1:7, 8, 15, 32, and 34, along with 5:33; the Samaritan woman in 4:39; Jesus' own witness, along with that of the Father who sent him, in 8:14, 18, and 18:37; the disciples themselves in 15:27; and finally the testimony of the author himself in 19:35 and 21:24). In light of all this evidence it seems best to say that the author wrote with a dual purpose: (1) to witness to unbelievers concerning Jesus, in order that they come to believe in him and have eternal life; and (2) to strengthen the faith of believers, by deepening and expanding their understanding of who Jesus is

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### The Reason for Writing

But these are written that you may believe. John 20:31

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:24–31

"The Lord is my high tower . . . . We left the camp singing." On September 7, 1943, Etty Hillesum wrote those words on a postcard and threw it from a train. Those were the final recorded words we would hear from her. On November 30, 1943, she was murdered at Auschwitz. Later, Hillesum's diaries of her experiences in a concentration camp were translated and published. They chronicled her perspectives on the horrors of Nazi occupation along with the beauty of God's world. Her diaries have been translated into sixty-seven languages—a gift to all who would read and believe the good as well as the bad.

The apostle John didn't sidestep the harsh realities of Jesus' life on earth; he wrote of both the good Jesus did and the challenges He faced. The final words from his gospel give insight into the purpose behind the book that bears his name. Jesus performed "many other signs . . . which are not recorded" (20:30) by John. But these, he says, were "written that you may believe" (v. 31). John's "diary" ends on the note of triumph: "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God." The gift of those gospel words allows us the opportunity to believe and "have life in his name."

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) are diary accounts of God's love for us. They're words to read and believe and share, for they lead us to life. They lead us to Christ. By: John Blase (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How might it change the way you read the Gospels if you thought of them as diaries? How are you being led to the heart of Christ through them?

Gracious God, thank You for the gift of the Scriptures, written down by faithful hands so that I might believe and have life.

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### Information and Evidence

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. John 20:31

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 20:26–31

When Doris Kearns Goodwin decided to write a book about Abraham Lincoln, the fact that some fourteen thousand books had already been written about America's sixteenth president intimidated her. What could be left to say about this beloved leader? Undeterred, Goodwin's work resulted in *A Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Her fresh insights on Lincoln's leadership style became a top-rated and top-reviewed book.

The apostle John faced a different challenge as he wrote his account of the ministry and passion of Jesus. The final verse of John's gospel says, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25). John had more material than he could possibly use!

So John's strategy was to focus on only a few selected miracles (signs) that supported Jesus' "I am" claims throughout his account. Yet behind this strategy was this eternal purpose: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (v. 31). Out of the mountains of evidence, John provided plenty of reasons to believe in Jesus. Who can you tell about Him today? By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How do you view the biblical evidence for Jesus and His claims? What does it mean for you to believe in Him?

Heavenly Father, please strengthen my faith with solid evidence so that I may truly live for Jesus.

Learn how to better [defend your faith](#).