THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE ARREST, TRIAL, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, JOHN 18 - 20:31

INTRODUCTION

- Warren Wiersbe, *If the Gospel of John were an ordinary biography, there would be no chapter 20. I am an incurable reader of biographies, and I notice that almost all of them conclude with the death and burial of the subject. I have yet to read one that describes the subject's resurrection from the dead! The fact that John continued his account and shared the excitement of the Resurrection miracle is proof that Jesus Christ is not like any other man. He is, indeed, the Son of God.*
- Edwin Blum, *John's Gospel comes to a conclusion with a proclamation of Jesus' victory over death (chap. 20) followed by an epilogue (chap. 21). Each Gospel writer stressed certain aspects of the events. John began with a testimony of how he came to personal faith in the Resurrection by considering the evidence found in the open tomb.*
- Thomas Constable, *John also viewed Jesus' resurrection as part of His exaltation. Jesus' exaltation would have been incomplete without His resurrection. Because of John's viewpoint, I have outlined the Resurrection as part of the passion ministry of Jesus, even though in another sense the Passion ended with His death ... John omitted the earthquake, the angel rolling away the stone that covered the tomb entrance, and the angel sitting on the stone (Matt. 28:2–3). He also did not include the appearance of two angels to the women who visited the tomb early Easter morning, before Peter and John did, and the women's reactions (Matt. 28:5–8; Mark 16:5–8; Luke 24:4–8).*
- D. A. Carson, *For John, as for all the early Christians, the resurrection of Jesus was the immutable [unchanging] fact upon which their faith was based; and their faith in large part depended on the testimony and transformed behaviour of those who had actually seen the resurrected Jesus. Their Master was not in God's eyes a condemned criminal; the resurrection proved that he was vindicated by God, and therefore none less than the Messiah, the Son of God he claimed to be [cf. 1 Cor. 15:14–17].*
- John Hart, *John's account of the resurrection is the most extensive of the four Gospels, with specific details of the empty tomb. First, Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John confirmed Jesus' resurrection (vv. 1–18). Then Jesus appeared to the disciples (except Thomas) in a closed room (vv. 19–23). Finally, Jesus appeared again to the disciples and affirmed to Thomas evidence of His resurrection (vv. 24–29).*
- Edward Klink, *The empty tomb declares that Jesus has risen from the dead. He is no corpse; he is Christ the Lord, whose resurrection is the defeat of sin and death and the declaration that the renewal of creation has begun.*
- Grant Osborne, *The witness of the Christ followers becomes greater and greater as they attest to the reality of their risen Lord. This is an account of the overcoming of the barriers to faith via the presence of the risen Lord and of the resultant transformation of the disciples from defeated, crestfallen followers to victorious spiritual giants who are about to change the world.*

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, JOHN 20-21

A. The empty tomb of Jesus (20:1-10)

1. Mary Magdalene was the first to visit the tomb (1), ***Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.***

    a. Related verses

        1) Matthew 28:1, *Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.*
        2) Mark 16:1-2, *When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.*
        3) Luke 24:1, *But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.*
        4) Matthew 27:60, *and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.*

5) Matthew 28:2, *And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.*
6) Mark 15:46, *And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.*
7) Mark 16:3-4, *And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.*
8) Luke 24:2, *And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,*

b. Comments
1) William Barclay, *It was the custom in Palestine to visit the tomb of a loved one for three days after the body had been laid to rest. It was believed that for three days the spirit of the dead person hovered round the tomb; but then it departed because the body had become unrecognizable through decay. Jesus' friends could not come to the tomb on the Sabbath, because to make the journey then would have been to break the law. Sabbath is, of course, our Saturday, so it was on Sunday morning that Mary came to the tomb.*
2) Thomas Constable, *The first day of the week was Sunday. It is interesting that all four Gospel writers referred to the day of Jesus' resurrection this way, rather than as the third day after His death. The latter description would have connected the Resurrection with Jesus' predictions of it more directly. Perhaps they did this in order to associate Easter more clearly with a new beginning ... The other evangelists noted that several women came to the tomb, but John mentioned only Mary Magdalene. Perhaps John mentioned Mary Magdalene, and none of the other women, because of the testimony that she gave after she had seen Jesus (v. 18).*
3) Charles Swindoll, *John assumes the reader is familiar with the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12), so his purpose is to bring something different to the story. The combined accounts reveal that several women, including Mary Magdalene, came to the garden tomb to complete the burial process. They arrived separately, but around the same time. Upon discovering the empty tomb, the women split up. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us what happened to the other women (Luke 24:10), while John's record focuses on the experience of Mary Magdalene.*
4) Edwin Blum, *Her devotion to Jesus, living and dead, was based on her gratitude for His delivering her from bondage to Satan. She had been an observer at the cross and now was the first person at the grave. This tomb had been closed with a large rock door (Mark 16:3–4) and had been sealed by the authority of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Matt. 27:65–66). The women were amazed to see an open and apparently empty tomb.*
5) Warren Wiersbe, *Mary Magdalene and several other women agreed to go to the tomb early on the first day of the week, so that they might show their love for Christ in completing the burial preparations. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had been forced by circumstances to prepare His body hastily, and the women wanted to finish the task. Their great concern was how to get into the tomb. Perhaps the Roman soldiers would take pity on them and give them a hand ... What they did not know was that an earthquake had occurred and the stone had been rolled back by an angel! It seems that Mary Magdalene went ahead of the other women and got to the tomb first. When she saw the stone rolled away from the door of the tomb, she concluded that somebody had broken into the tomb and stolen the body of her Lord. We may criticize Mary for jumping to conclusions; but when you consider the circumstances, it is difficult to see how she would have reached any other conclusion. It was still dark, she was alone, and, like the other followers of Jesus, she did not believe that He would return from the dead.*
6) Leon Morris, *Mary Magdalene came to the tomb very early on the first day of the week, for John tells us that it was "still dark." That it was still dark will perhaps explain why Mary did not see the things Peter and John saw later. However, she does not appear to have paused for long enough to see much, whatever the state of the light. Her early arrival is evidence of a determination to get on with the task at the soonest possible moment. It is not clear why John does not mention any woman other than Mary when all the other Gospels tell us that she was not alone. It may be that he knew that she was the first to see the risen Jesus (cf. Mark 16:9) and that he was not concerned accordingly with the others who did not see Jesus at the same time as did Mary. This is not entirely convincing, but it is difficult to arrive at a better explanation.*

7) Kenneth Gangel, *We know from Matthew's account that Mary Magdalene was not alone on this visit (Matt. 28:1). If we follow the flow of Matthew's text from 27:55 through the burial and resurrection, it would appear that "the other Mary" refers to Jesus' mother who had already taken a secondary place before the resurrection, hardly elevated in the New Testament to the worship many afford her today.*
8) William Hendriksen, *... the stone had to be removed. This was necessary for two reasons: 1. In order to indicate that the grave had been conquered, that the victory had been achieved. 2. In order that Peter and John might be able to enter (see on 20:6, 8), and that everyone might be able to see that the tomb was empty!*
9) George Beasley-Murray, *The dreadful reality of the crucifixion crushed the followers of Jesus beyond measure, and their faith also (cf. Luke 24:21a). Moreover, it is highly probable that Jesus' predictions regarding his resurrection after three days were understood to refer to the resurrection when the kingdom of God came in glory in a short time (note Martha's response to "Your brother will rise," 11:24). The disciples would not have envisaged a personal resurrection of Jesus, apart from the resurrection to the kingdom of God in the last day.*
10) Edward Klink, *The pervasively negative use of "darkness/night" in the Gospel (see 1:5; 13:30) makes its use in this context potent. The darkness that had for so long "overcome" (cf. 1:5) the world and had tried to do the same to the Son of Man was here taking its last breath before the Son—the light of the world—arose to claim his victory on the third day! ... From this garden tomb life (eternal) was recreated. Thus, as the sun rose on this new "day," so did the unique Son, for whom this day would henceforth be named "the Lord's Day."*
11) Grant Osborne, *When Mary Magdalene arrives, she first sees "that the stone had been removed from the entrance" and immediately jumps to the conclusion that his body has been taken, either by grave robbers or by the Jews themselves. Grave robbery was a crime common enough to cause the emperor Claudius to make it a capital crime meriting the death penalty.*

2. She told Peter and John that the tomb was empty (2), ***So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."***

a. Related verses
1) John 13:23, *One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,*
2) John 20:13, *They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."*

b. Comments
1) Thomas Constable, *It would have been natural for Mary, and perhaps others of these women, to report what she had seen to Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved," who was probably John himself (cf. 13:23; et al.). Mary first assumed that some people had stolen Jesus' body ("they have taken the Lord from the tomb"). Evidently robbing graves was not uncommon around Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 28:13–15). Obviously Mary meant that some of Jesus' enemies had stolen His body, but exactly who she thought they may have been remains a mystery ... A decree of Emperor Claudius, who reigned shortly after this event (A.D. 41–54), made it a capital offense to destroy tombs, remove bodies, or displace the sealing stone or other stones.*
2) Warren Wiersbe, *She ran to give the news to Peter and John, who must have been living together at a place known to the other believers. Perhaps it was the Upper Room where they had met with Jesus. Mary's use of the pronoun "we" is interesting, for it included the other women who at that moment were discovering that Jesus was alive! (see Mark 16:1–8 and Luke 24:1–8) ...*
3) Kenneth Gangel, *Startled, Mary ran to the disciples. John mentions Peter by name while implying he was the other recipient of this message. Luke tells us her report was rejected (24:11), so unbelieving were the disciples regarding Jesus' promise to rise again. Mary's fear and frustration must have propelled her back to the disciples' hiding place. We find it interesting that she recorded her findings to the person who had betrayed the Lord at the fire of the enemy. With no thought of a miraculous resurrection, Mary must have entertained all kinds of possibilities, none of which seemed to her a happy outcome.*

4) Leon Morris, *She ran off to Simon Peter (who thus appears still to have been recognized as the leading apostle, despite the denials), and to the "the other disciple" (cf. 18:15–16), "the one Jesus loved" (cf. 13:23). She had seen that the tomb was empty and concluded that the body had been stolen (what else?). Apparently the thought of a resurrection did not enter her head. So she told the two men that the body had been taken away. Her "they" is not defined, but it can scarcely mean "people in general." It will refer to the enemies of Jesus, perhaps especially the chief priests ...*
5) William Hendriksen, *It is not at all surprising that Mary, greatly alarmed (cf. Mark 16:8), ran to Peter and to John. These two were probably regarded as the chief apostles ... The opened tomb was to Mary a reason for alarmed dismay. She thinks, "The enemies have been busy again. Having murdered the Lord, they have added to their crimes by rifling the tomb. Now not even the body of Jesus is left."*
6) John Hart, *The explanation of her flight is that she saw an angel inside the tomb (Mk 16:5) and that she suspected the Jewish authorities (they) had taken Jesus' body away.*
7) William Barclay, *It was a situation Mary felt that she could not face herself; so she returned to the city to seek out Peter and John. Mary is the supreme instance of one who went on loving and believing even when she could not understand; and that is the love and the belief which in the end finds glory.*

3. They ran to the tomb with John arriving first (3-4), ***So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.***

a. Related verse, Luke 24:12, *But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.*
b. Comments
1) Thomas Constable, *The detail of the other disciple (John) outrunning Peter to the tomb was probably mentioned just to confirm that this was an eyewitness report. It also shows that these disciples had not removed Jesus' body. There is no basis in the text for allegorizing these two men and making them stand for the Gentile church and the Jewish church, as some theologians have done.*
2) Warren Wiersbe, *John 20:3 suggests that Peter started off first to run to the tomb, but John 20:4 reports that John got there first. Perhaps John was a younger man in better physical condition, or perhaps John was just a better runner. It is tempting to "spiritualize" this footrace and relate it to Isaiah 40:31 and Hebrews 12:1–2. When a believer is out of fellowship with the Lord, it is difficult to run the race of faith. However, both men deserve credit for having the courage to run into enemy territory, not knowing what lay before them. The whole thing could have been a clever trap to catch the disciples.*
3) Kenneth Gangel, *Although John made it sound as though they immediately dashed off to the tomb upon hearing her report, Luke gives a slightly different picture: "They did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb" (Luke 24:11–12a) ...The disciples had walked hundreds, maybe thousands, of miles with the Lord for three and one-half years. Now an empty tomb accelerated their pace.*
4) Grant Osborne, *This is a detail unique to John, but it is corroborated in Luke 24:12 (Peter's visit to the tomb and his doubt) and 24:24 (more than one "companion" at the tomb). Moreover, the vivid, realistic details fit the recollections of an "eyewitness" (19:35). The two disciples like Mary run full-blown to the tomb with both excitement and anxiety over what they may find ... their overriding concern for Jesus and what happened to his body.*

4. Peter entered the tomb and found only the face cloth and linen cloths (5-7), ***And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.***

a. Related verses
1) John 19:40, *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.*
2) John 11:44, *The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

b. Comments

1) John Hart, *When he saw the linen wrappings lying there, something prevented him from entering—perhaps respect or fear of ceremonial defilement associated with contacting a corpse. But Peter did not share this hesitancy.*
2) Thomas Constable, *John saw (Gr. blepei, cf. v. 1) the linen wrappings (ta othonia, cf. 19:40), that had formerly covered Jesus' body, lying in the tomb ... When Peter arrived at the tomb, moments later, he entered in, probably because he wanted to know exactly how things stood regardless of the consequences. He also looked at (Gr. theorei, beheld intently) not only the linen burial clothes (Gr. ta othonia), but also the face-cloth that had covered Jesus' head (Gr. soudarion, cf. 11:44). Evidently John could not see this from his vantage point outside the tomb ... That person who had folded up the face-cloth had apparently been the resurrected Jesus, or perhaps one of the angels. A grave robber would not have taken the time to fold the head covering neatly but would have left it lying in a heap.*
3) Leon Morris, *John is plainly describing an orderly scene, not one of wild confusion. This means that the body had not been taken by grave robbers. They would never have left the cloths wrapped neatly. They would have taken the body, cloths and all, or would have taken the cloths off and dropped them in a heap.*
4) Warren Wiersbe, *When John arrived at the tomb, he cautiously remained outside and looked in. Perhaps he wanted Peter to be with him when he went into the burial chamber. What did John see? The graveclothes lying on the stone shelf without any evidence of violence or crime. But the graveclothes were empty! They lay there like an empty cocoon, still retaining the shape of Jesus' body. Peter arrived and impulsively went into the tomb, just as we would expect him to do. He also saw the linen clothes lying there empty and the cloth for the head carefully rolled and lying by itself. Grave robbers do not carefully unwrap the corpse and then leave the graveclothes neatly behind. In fact, with the presence of the spices in the folds of the clothes, it would be almost impossible to unwrap a corpse without damaging the wrappings. The only way those linen clothes could be left in that condition would be if Jesus passed through them as He arose from the dead.*
5) William Hendriksen, *What John, from the outside looking in, had merely noticed, Peter, once inside, observed. He naturally saw more than John, and saw more clearly. And what he saw was truly marvelous. Here were the linen bandages lying very orderly, and the sweat-band, which had been around Christ's head, lying in a place by itself ... It is necessary to stress at this point that not more must be read into the text than is actually there. Ideas such as these, namely, that the headband was lying there as if it had not been removed from the head, and that the bandages were lying there just as if the limbs of Jesus were still enclosed by them, or as if the body had been abstracted from them, are foreign to the text. We do not even know exactly where the linen bandages and the sweat-band were lying. Neither John nor Luke (in his Gospel, 24:12) says anything about such matters. What Luke emphasizes is that the bandages were lying there by themselves, which, again, does not mean that they were being held in position mysteriously and in violation of the laws of gravity; but simply indicates that they were lying there without the body ... What they indicate is this: everything was orderly in the tomb. The body of the Lord was no longer there. No disciple had been there to remove it, nor had any enemy visited the tomb in order to pillage it.*
6) George Beasley-Murray, *The Evangelist had penned the story of Lazarus, and recorded how Lazarus, at the bidding of Jesus, came forth from his tomb, with the wrappings of the dead still binding him hand and foot, and the napkin on his head; he had to be freed to take up life again in this world. Jesus on the contrary left his wrappings in the grave as a sign of his resurrection into the life of God's eternal order.*
7) Edward Klink, *The fact that Jesus did not merely drop the face cloth or veil but carefully removed, folded, and placed it to the side is telling. "Like Moses, who put aside the veil when he ascended to meet God in glory, Jesus, the New Moses, has put aside the veil of his flesh as he ascends into the presence of God to receive from him the glory which he had with the Father before the world was made" (cf. 17:5).*
8) William Barclay, *The part that love plays in this story is extraordinary. It was Mary, who loved Jesus so much, who was first at the tomb. It was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved and who loved Jesus, who was first to believe in the resurrection. That must always be John's great glory. He was the first man to understand and to believe. Love gave him eyes to read the signs and a mind to understand.*

5. John entered and believed (8-9), ***Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.***

   a. Related verses
      1) Matthew 22:29, *But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.*
      2) Psalm 16:10, *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.*
      3) Luke 24:46, *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,*
      4) Acts 2:27, *For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.*
      5) Acts 13:34-35, *And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' 35 Therefore he says also in another psalm, "'You will not let your Holy One see corruption.'*
      6) Acts 17:3, *explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."*
      7) 1 Corinthians 15:4, *that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

   b. Comments
      1) Thomas Constable, *Encouraged by Peter's boldness, John also walked into the tomb. There he saw (Gr. eiden, perceived intelligently) this evidence of Jesus' disappearance and believed what it implied. He believed that Jesus was alive. In this chapter John carefully recorded that the disciples who saw the resurrected Jesus believed on Him (cf. vv. 16, 20, 25, 29). The writer did not explain what John believed here, but in the context of this chapter it seems clear that he believed that Jesus was alive (cf. 2:22; 11:25; 16:22). The evidence of Jesus' resurrection convinced John even before he met the risen Jesus. Disciples since John can believe in Him because of this evidence too, even though they have not yet seen the risen Jesus (cf. v. 29; 1 John 1:1–4) ... John's faith rested on the evidence that he had seen. Later he and the other disciples would have additional reasons for believing that Jesus had risen, namely, the prophetic Scriptures that the Resurrection fulfilled (e.g., Lev. 23:11; Ps. 16:10–11; 110:1, 4; Isa. 53:11–12; Hos. 6:2; cf. Acts 2:24–31; 1 Cor. 15:3–7). John's faith took a step forward here, but it was not yet as strong as it would be (cf. Luke 24:25–27, 32, 44–47) ... The Scriptures attribute Christ's resurrection to each of the members of the Trinity. All three played a part in it: the Father (Rom. 6:4), the Son (John 10:17), and the Spirit (Rom. 8:11).*
      2) Edwin Blum, *This section of John's Gospel (20:1–9) is a powerful eyewitness testimony which strikes the perceptive reader as being psychologically and historically true. John commented (v. 9) that even after a long period of teaching by Jesus the disciples still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead (cf. Pss. 16:10–11; 110:1, 4; Isa. 53:11–12)*
      3 Warren Wiersbe, *Peter and John saw the evidence and believed. Later, the Holy Spirit confirmed their faith through the Old Testament Scriptures. That evening, they would meet the Master personally! Faith that was eclipsed has now started to dawn, and the light will get brighter ... The empty cross and the empty tomb are God's 'receipts' telling us that the debt has been paid.*
      4) Kenneth Gangel, *But lest readers of this Gospel get the wrong idea about the quality of the disciples' faith at this point, John appended a parenthesis telling us that neither he nor the rest of the disciples yet understood the connection between scriptural prophecy and the resurrection. That would await Jesus' post-resurrection teaching followed by the infilling with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.*
      5) Leon Morris, *The Easter faith means more than the conviction that a resuscitation has taken place; it includes understanding that the divine purpose revealed in Scripture has now taken place. It seems that John had now come to believe that the resurrection had taken place, but that he did not yet appreciate all that meant ... It is clear from the New Testament that the early Christians viewed the resurrection as foretold in the Old Testament. But this passage shows plainly that it was belief in the resurrection that came first. Believers did not manufacture a resurrection to agree with their interpretation of prophecy. They were first convinced that Jesus was risen and in the light of that came to see a fuller meaning in some Old Testament passages.*

6) William Hendriksen, *He saw and believed. What did he see? Exactly what Peter had seen. What did he believe? That Jesus was actually risen from the dead, and was the real Messiah, the Lord of Glory, the Son of God in the most exalted sense. This is nothing less than living faith in the act of embracing the truth of the resurrection ... they now saw and believed. They saw the things which the Lord had arranged in such a manner as to arouse and strengthen faith. Scripture also began to take on a new meaning now. Previously such beautiful passages as Ps. 16:10, 11; Ps. 110:1, 4; Ps. 118:22–24; and Is. 53:11, 12—passages which referred to Christ's resurrection—had meant very little to them. Now these same passages were beginning to assume significance! They now understood that Christ's glorious resurrection was a divine must. Cf. Luke 24:26. On and after Pentecost all this would become even clearer.*
7) George Beasley-Murray, *The seeing and believing in the empty tomb is akin to the seeing and believing the "signs" of Jesus (cf. 4:48, and by contrast 10:25–26), and this was a sign from the Lord. That John writes, "he saw, and believed" clearly distinguishes the faith of the Beloved Disciple from the incomprehension of Peter ...*
8) Edward Klink, *As Jesus explained to the Jewish authorities in 2:22, the resurrection explains the Scripture (what is read), and the Scripture explains the resurrection (what is seen and experienced) in a manner similar to how bifocals serve as correctives for both nearsightedness and farsightedness.*
9) Grant Osborne, *In verse 9 John explains that "they still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead." This does not mean that the Beloved Disciple had not yet come to this belief but rather that he did so in spite of the fact that for him his faith was not yet anchored in Scripture. It was the physical evidence from the empty tomb that led him to this belief (showing the value of apologetics). Belief is the primary theme of the chapter (20:25, 29, 31), and seeing the empty tomb was enough for John. For him, seeing is truly believing.*
10) F. F. Bruce, *In general, it is true that "the early Christians did not believe in the resurrection of Christ because they could not find his dead body; they believed because they did find a living Christ." But there was one exception. The beloved disciple believed in his resurrection before he saw him alive again—not indeed because he saw the empty tomb, but because the disposition of the grave clothes suddenly made the truth clear to him.*

6. They returned to their homes (10), ***Then the disciples went back to their homes.***
   a. Thomas Constable, *The translation "to their own homes" suggests that Peter and John had permanent residences in Jerusalem. That seems unlikely ... Since the gender is neuter, John may have meant that these disciples returned to their own friends or temporary lodgings (cf. Acts 12:12).*
   b. John Hart, *Since Peter and John went away again to their own homes (v. 10), John would have announced Christ's resurrection to Jesus' mother, Mary, who was now staying at his home (Jn 19:27).*
   c. Leon Morris, *John rounds off this section of the narrative by telling us that the disciples went home again. They did not figure in the appearance of Jesus to Mary. When they had seen the tomb they went away.*
   d. William Hendriksen, *The climax has been reached. In the heart of John there is rejoicing, and this is (or is soon to be) true also with respect to Peter, as he himself testifies (1 Pet. 1:3). So each goes to his respective lodging-place. At the home of John there is someone who must have been overjoyed to hear the story. That "someone" was the apostle's aunt, namely, Mary, the mother of Jesus.*
   e. George Beasley-Murray, *The lack of mention of the disciple's sharing his faith at once with his fellow disciples is often mentioned by the commentators. We do not, of course, know that he did not do so. The brevity of the resurrection accounts must be remembered. What we do know is the skepticism with which the disciples as a whole met with any notion that Jesus was alive—they even found it difficult to believe when they actually saw Jesus (Luke 24:36)! The Beloved Disciple would not have made much of a dent in their armor that morning. It is conceivable that he waited to see what further events should happen that might confirm his intuitive faith before making it known widely.*
   f. Grant Osborne, *This is a very anticlimactic ending to the first episode, for John reached the highest level of faith of the four and did nothing with it but simply "went back to where they were staying" (the upper room) with Peter. In short, he finds faith and then does nothing with it ... Several see in this an emphasis on the inadequacy of his faith, but that is not the case. It is not presented here as deficient. I think he was so filled with awe (remember, he did not enter the tomb at first either) that he was thunderstruck and couldn't speak for a while. In this there is a contrast with Mary, who did not attain his level of faith but with the risen Lord's help did so much more with it. His new faith virtually had no results.*

B. The appearances of Jesus (11-29)

1. Introductory notes

a. Charles Swindoll, *The combined accounts of the Gospels show the followers of Jesus in a state of chaos on the morning of His resurrection. They scrambled around, piecing together random bits of information, trying to make sense of what one had seen and another heard. Peter and John returned to their respective homes, reasonably sure that Jesus had risen from the dead. The other women had already been sent on their mission by the angels (Matt. 28:5–8; Mark 16:6–8; Luke 24:5–9).*

b. Thomas Constable, *This is the first of four of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances that John included in his Gospel. It is very difficult to place these appearances in exact chronological order. The New Testament simply does not give enough detailed information to do so. Consequently the major value of the chart below is that it places the post-resurrection appearances that the New Testament writers mentioned in general chronological order ... Easter morning: to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9–11; John 20:10–18), to other women (Matt. 28:9–10), to Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). Easter afternoon: to two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13–32), Easter evening: to about 12 disciples excluding Thomas (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–23). The following Sunday: to 11 disciples including Thomas (John 20:26–28). The following 32 days: to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1–23), to 500 people including the Eleven at a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16–20; 1 Cor. 15:6), to His half-brother James (1 Cor. 15:7), to His disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:44–49; Acts 1:3–8; 1 Cor. 15:7), to His disciples on Mount Olivet (Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:9–12).*

c. Leon Morris, *There is something very moving about this first meeting of the risen Lord with any of his followers. There is, moreover, a wonderful condescension involved, for we have no reason for thinking of Mary as being a particularly important person. Yet it was to her and not to any of the outstanding leaders of the apostolic band that the Lord appeared first. The story is told simply and with conviction.*

2. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (11-18)

a. Mary's interaction with two angels (11-13), ***But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."***

1) Related verses

a) Luke 24:4, *While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.*

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

2) Comments

a) Leon Morris, *"But" indicates a contrast to the two who went home. Mary was standing just outside the tomb, and weeping. John says nothing about her return to the tomb, nor about whether she got there before the two men left. He simply pictures her as standing at the tomb and weeping. While she continued weeping she stooped down and peeped in. Though she had been at the tomb before, this is the first mention of her looking inside it.*

b) Edwin Blum, *Jesus' first resurrection appearance was to Mary of Magdala, out of whom He had cast seven demons (Luke 8:2) ... The disciples returned to their homes while Mary remained outside the tomb crying. John must not have yet told her that Jesus was risen. He probably was too stunned and puzzled to say anything significant. Mary looked into the tomb and saw two individuals who were angels. In the Bible when angels appeared to people, the angels looked like men; they did not have halos or wings. In certain visions, winged beings appeared (e.g., Isa. 6) but the norm for angels was that they were in humanlike forms ... Because of her grief Mary did not notice anything unusual. Their question and her answer set the stage for the greatest "recognition scene" in all of history (perhaps the second greatest is "I am Joseph"; cf. Gen. 45:1–3). The appearance of Jesus to Mary was so unexpected that she did not realize that it was Jesus.*

c) Thomas Constable, *Apparently Mary Magdalene had returned to the empty tomb after she had informed Peter and John about it. Perhaps she returned with them. John presented her as lingering there after Peter and John departed. The other women had evidently left the tomb by the time this incident took place. Mary was still grieving over Jesus' death and weeping over the missing body of Jesus. She had not yet realized what John did. She then peered into the tomb for the second time (cf. Mark 16:5) ... This is the only place in Scripture where angels are described as sitting. Evidently Mary had seen the angels earlier (Matt. 28:5–7; Mark 16:5–7; Luke 24:4–7). Their white clothing distinguished them as angels (cf. Acts 1:10), but Mary apparently did not recognize them as such. She responded to them as she would have responded to human beings, probably because she was in the shock of grief and was weeping (cf. v. 15) ... The angels asked Mary why she was weeping, because weeping was inappropriate in view of Jesus' resurrection. However, Mary did not yet understand that Jesus had risen. Her answer revealed that she still thought that someone had removed Jesus' body from the tomb.*

d) Warren Wiersbe, *When I think of Mary Magdalene lingering alone in the garden, I recall Proverbs 8:17—"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." Mary loved her Lord and came early to the garden to express that love. Peter and John had gone home by the time Mary got back to the tomb, so they did not convey to her what conclusion they had reached from the evidence they had examined. Mary still thought that Jesus was dead. Another verse comes to mind—Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" ... When Mary looked into the sepulcher, she saw two men in white. Their position at either end of the shelf where the body had been lying makes us think of the cherubim on the mercy seat (Ex. 25:17–19). It is as though God is saying, "There is now a new mercy seat! My Son has paid the price for sin, and the way is open into the presence of God!" Mary apparently was not disturbed at seeing these men, and there is no evidence that she knew they were angels. The brief conversation neither dried her tears nor quieted her mind. She was determined to find the body of Jesus.*

e) Kenneth Gangel, *Mary wept as we would over the loss of a dear friend. Then suddenly two angels appeared, and a fascinating conversation took place. We know from Luke's record that Mary had been cured of demon possession (Luke 8:2) and also had helped support the Lord financially. We must not confuse her with the prostitute of Luke 7 or with Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Empty tomb or not, her grief was unbearable—so deep that she could not take her eyes off the grave to perceive the living Lord ... No Bible reader is surprised to find angels at the empty tomb. From the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:11, 26) to the announcement of the Holy City (Rev. 22:8–9) we find angels announcing God's plan. They not only heralded the resurrection and showed up at the ascension; they even prophesied the second coming (Acts 1:11). One of the major duties assigned these "ministering spirits" was to appear at crucial times and places to announce God's plan to individuals or groups. This is the only place where John mentioned angels in his Gospel.*

f) George Beasley-Murray, *The presence of the angels is a witness that the powers of heaven have been at work here. Their position in the tomb, one at the head and the other at the feet where Jesus had lain, is a reminder of the silent testimony of the grave clothes, but of another order; it witnesses that God, not robbers, has taken Jesus, for a purpose yet to be revealed.*

g) John Hart, *The angels did not explain to Mary that Jesus was raised (v. 13). They simply asked, Woman, why are you weeping? as if to suggest that there was really no reason for sorrow. Mary answered the angels, explaining her theory that the body was stolen. Mary's sorrow, soon turned to joy, would fulfill the promise Jesus gave the disciples in 16:20–22.*

h) Charles Swindoll, *They knew Mary had cause only for rejoicing, if she understood the truth. But the question also served to engage her in a dialogue that would help her understand. She quite naturally thought someone had moved the body of Jesus. Ironically, Jesus was standing right behind her in plain sight!*

b. She did not recognize Jesus (14-15), ***Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 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."***

1) Related verses
   a) Mark 16:9, *Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.*
   b) John 21:4, *Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.*
   c) Luke 24:16, *But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*

2) Comments
   a) Thomas Constable, *In some of the resurrection narratives Jesus is not immediately recognizable by his friends. In the story of the two disciples on the Emmaus road, for example, "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (Luke 24:16). Mary, however, may simply have been so blinded by her tears that she could only make out the form of a man standing behind her. But the kindly words in which the supposed gardener addressed her encouraged her to think that now at last she had found someone who could tell her what had happened to the body of her Lord. If that was so, he would know why she was weeping and who it was she was looking for.*
   b) Edwin Blum, *The fact that He appeared to Mary rather than to Pilate or Caiaphas or to one of His disciples is significant. That a woman would be the first to see Him is an evidence of Jesus' electing love as well as a mark of the narrative's historicity. No Jewish author in the ancient world would have invented a story with a woman as the first witness to this most important event.*
   c) Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus asked her the same question that the angels had asked, "Why are you weeping?" How tragic that she was weeping when she could have been praising, had she realized that her Lord was alive! Then He added, "Whom are you seeking?" (He had asked the mob the same question in the Garden—John 18:4.) It is encouraging to us to know that "Jesus knows all about our sorrows." The Saviour knew that Mary's heart was broken and that her mind was confused.*
   d) Kenneth Gangel, *She had experienced deep trauma; her eyes had filled with tears; it was still dark; she was very confused. But perhaps most important, she had not considered the resurrection a possibility. So the idea that she might be talking to a living Christ never occurred to her. She was looking for a body; she did not expect a resurrection.*
   e) F. F. Bruce, *In some of the resurrection narratives Jesus is not immediately recognizable by his friends. In the story of the two disciples on the Emmaus road, for example, "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (Luke 24:16). Mary, however, may simply have been so blinded by her tears that she could only make out the form of a man standing behind her. But the kindly words in which the supposed gardener addressed her encouraged her to think that now at last she had found someone who could tell her what had happened to the body of her Lord. If that was so, he would know why she was weeping and who it was she was looking for. Hence she does not repeat her sad tale, "They have taken away my Lord," but simply says, "If it is you who have removed him, tell me where you have put him."*

c. Jesus called her by name and she knew it was Him (16), ***Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).***

1) Thomas Constable, *Mary recognized Jesus when He called her by name (cf. 10:3–4) ... Mary responded by calling Jesus by the name that she had undoubtedly used to address Him numerous times before: "Rabboni!" ... It simply expressed the joy of a restored relationship that she had concluded had ended. Mary swung from the depths of despair, in her emotions, to the height of joy—in one brief second.*
2) Warren Wiersbe, *Apparently Mary had turned away from Jesus, for when He spoke her name, she had to turn back to look at Him again. What a blessed surprise it was to see the face of her beloved Master! ... All she could say was, "Rabboni—my Master, my Teacher." The title Rabboni is used in only one other place in the Gospels, Mark 10:51 (in the Greek text "Lord" is "Rabboni"). "Rabbi" and "Rabboni" were equivalent terms of respect. In later years, the Jews recognized three levels of teachers: rab (the lowest), rabbi, and rabboni (the highest).*

3) William Hendriksen, *With infinite tenderness and warmth, in a tone which resembled that of former days, Jesus now addresses Mary by using just one word, "Miriam." The original Aramaic name by which her parents and friends must have addressed her many a time, the name which Jesus had always used in speaking to her, is employed also in this instance. Jesus addresses her by her native name, in her native tongue! ... When Mary hears this word—her own name in her own language—spoken in that familiar way as only One person could ever pronounce it, she quickly turns away from the tomb and toward the speaker ... and with a word of dramatic surprise, glad recognition, and humble reverence exclaims, "Rabboni."*
4) Grant Osborne, *Jesus encounters Mary right in the midst of her grief-stricken blindness and reveals himself to her simply by calling out her name, "Mary." He is the Good Shepherd who "calls his own sheep by name," with the result that they "follow him because they know his voice" (10:3–4). This finally breaks through her barriers ... Mary indeed does recognize the voice and responds from the depth of her being in her mother tongue, Aramaic, with "Rabboni" ("my Rabbi"), which the evangelist explains for the readers as meaning, "Teacher!" This is a wonderful turnaround. But at the same time she is clinging to the old earthly relationship of rabbi-teacher, and the risen Lord is bringing a new age and set of relationships with him.*
5) F. F. Bruce, ... *his calling her by name was all that was necessary. Immediately her distress vanished; here was something far better than she had dreamed possible. Instead of the dead body she had hoped to recover, she found herself face to face with her living Lord.*
6) William Barclay, ... *a Christian is essentially one who can say: 'I have seen the Lord.' Christianity does not mean knowing about Jesus; it means knowing him. It does not mean arguing about him; it means meeting him. It means the certainty of experience that Jesus is alive.*

d. He gave her instruction (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.'"***

1) Related verses
   a) Matthew 28:10, *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."*
   b) Mark 16:19, *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.*
   c) Matthew 27:46, *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*
   d) Ephesians 1:17, *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,*
   e) Revelation 3:12, *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*

2) Comments
   a) *Do not cling to me ...*

      1] Thomas Constable, *The best explanation seems to be that Mary was holding onto Jesus as though she would never let Him go (cf. Matt. 28:9) ... The reason she should release Him was that He had not yet ascended to the Father. He had other work to do first. Only in heaven would it be possible for loving believers such as Mary to maintain intimate contact with Jesus forever.*
      2] Matthew Henry, *He bade the disciples touch him, for the confirmation of their faith. She must believe him, and adore him, but must not expect to be familiar with him as formerly. He forbids her to dote upon his bodily presence, and leads her to the spiritual communion which she should have with him after he was ascended to his Father.*
      3] Edward Klink, ... *Jesus is concerned that Mary—and every other disciple—comes to understood how he is to be approached from this moment onward. The function of the command is to call attention to the unique state that now exists between Mary and the resurrected Lord.*

4] Edwin Blum, *Mary had lost Jesus once before (at His crucifixion) and it was natural to fear the loss of His presence again ... Jesus said, in effect, "This (the physical contact) is not My real presence for the church. A new relationship will begin with My Ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church." Jesus then explained the fact of the new relatives. He called His disciples His brothers. Earlier He had said they were friends: "I no longer call you servants … instead, I have called you friends" (15:15). Believers in Jesus become a part of Jesus' family with God as their Father (cf. Heb. 2:11–12; Rom. 8:15–17, 29; Gal. 3:26). Mary's new responsibility was to testify to His risen presence. She was the recipient of four special graces: to see angels; to see Jesus risen; to be the first to see Him alive; and to be a proclaimer of the good news. Christians today are also the recipients of special grace; they too are given this new responsibility to witness to the world (cf. Matt. 28:16–20).*

5] William Hendriksen, *What Jesus probably means is this: "Do not think, Mary, that by grasping hold of me so firmly (cf. Matt. 28:9), you can keep me always with you. That uninterruptible fellowship for which you yearn must wait until I have ascended to be forever with the Father." Jesus did not object to being touched. Otherwise, how can we explain his word to Thomas? See on 20:27. What he condemned was Mary's mistaken notion that the former mode of fellowship was going to be resumed, in other words, that Jesus would once again live in daily visible association with his disciples, both men and women. The fellowship, to be sure, would be resumed; but it would be far richer and more blessed. It would be the communion of the ascended Lord in the Spirit with his Church.*

6] Charles Swindoll, *Jesus reassured Mary that she would see Him again, as He had not yet ascended to the Father. He instructed her to give the same message to His other followers. His message confirmed two truths. First, His physical presence on earth was temporary; before long, He would ascend to take His place in glory. Second, His relationship with His followers would then change. Mary's physical clinging would have to give way to another kind of bond, a relationship of faith.*

b) *but go to my brothers and say to them, am ascending to my Father and your Father ...*

1] Thomas Constable, *The message that Mary was to carry to the disciples was that Jesus was going to ascend to the Father. She would obviously report that Jesus was alive, but Jesus wanted her to communicate more than that. Jesus had spoken of His ascension before (e.g., 7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17, 28). His disciples needed to understand that His death and resurrection had not wiped out these earlier predictions. Whereas the Resurrection was the fulfillment of one aspect of Jesus' ministry, it was the beginning of another. Jesus' return to His Father was the climax of events following His resurrection ... Jesus described the Father in a new way. He was Jesus' Father, but He was also the disciples' Father ... Jesus' relationship to God was similar to, though not exactly the same as, the disciples' relationship to God. The emphasis in Jesus' statement was on the privileges that His disciples now shared with Him because of His death, resurrection, and ascension (cf. Rom 8:15–16; Heb. 2:11–12).*

2] William Hendriksen, *Jesus now calls his disciples by a new name: "brothers." (Cf. Ps. 22:23; 122:8; Heb. 2:11.) A new relationship—fellowship in the Spirit, about to be poured out—requires a new name, a name even more intimate than the very beautiful name "friends ... Jesus makes a distinction here, and at the same time emphasizes the closeness of fellowship between himself, his Father, and the disciples. The distinction is clearly evident from this, that he does not say, "I am ascending to our Father." His sonship differs from theirs; hence, he says, "to my Father and to your Father" ... He is Son by nature; they are sons by adoption. Hence, also "and to my God and your God." Nevertheless, the closeness of fellowship is also stressed: the same God who is the Father of Jesus is also the Father of the disciples!*

3] Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God from eternity past. Christians are adopted children of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ, evidenced by His death and resurrection, in payment for our sins.

e. Mary went to the disciples and declared that she saw Jesus (18), ***Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.***

1) Related verses
   a) Mark 16:10, *She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*
   b) Luke 24:10, *Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles,*

2) Comments
   a) Thomas Constable, *As an obedient disciple Mary went to the other disciples and told them that Jesus was alive ("I have seen the Lord"), plus the message that Jesus had given her. Again, "the Lord" probably meant "Jesus" to her at this time, but she spoke better than she knew. Later she would understand more about the implications of that title. Mark mentioned that the disciples were weeping and mourning when Mary met them, and they failed to believe that Jesus was alive (Mark 16:10–11).*
   b) Edwin Blum, *Mary and the other women told the news to the disciples, but according to Luke, they did not believe her or the other women "because their words seemed to them like nonsense" (Luke 24:11; cf. Luke 24:23).*
   c) Warren Wiersbe, *She arose and went to where the disciples were gathered and gave them the good news that she had seen Jesus alive. "I have seen the Lord!" (note John 20:14, 18, 20, 25, 29.) Mark reports that these believers were mourning and weeping—and that they would not believe her! (Mark 16:9–11) Mary herself had been weeping, and Jesus had turned her sorrow into joy. If they had believed, their sorrow would also have turned to joy. Unbelief has a terribly deadening effect on a person. No wonder God warns us against "an evil heart of unbelief" (Heb. 3:12).*
   d) Kenneth Gangel, *Mary thus witnessed the resurrection, and her first act upon leaving Jesus was a report to the disciples. It is difficult to know from John's account whether this report or the one in verse 2 was rejected by the disciples. But for whatever reason, the women who believed the reality of the empty tomb could not convince the other disciples what had happened.*
   e) William Hendriksen, *Where the Lord went after appearing to Mary has not been recorded. Moreover, it is even a question whether, had it been recorded, we would have been able to grasp it, for it must be borne in mind that the period of his day-by-day visible association with his disciples is over. He simply appears, now to this one, then to that one; and we must not ask, "Where was he in the time which intervened between any two appearances?" We know very little about the character of the resurrection-body and about its coming and going.*
   f) Grant Osborne, *The amazing truth is that God chose not Peter or John, the first to see and believe, but Mary to be the first herald of the resurrection tidings. She is the first to be privileged to see the risen Lord, so she goes back to the upper room and tells the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" Note the progression of titles and how they demonstrate her growing understanding—from "Sir" (v. 15) to "Rabboni" (v. 16) and then "Lord" (v. 18). Her faith grows to full maturity as a resurrection faith.*
   g) Edward Klink, *Just as the Baptist preceded the start of Jesus's public ministry and heralded his arrival in the flesh (cf. 1:6–8), so also Mary preceded the conclusion of Jesus's public ministry and heralded his arrival in and by the Spirit (cf. 14:16).*

3. Jesus appeared to the Disciples (19-23)
   a. Jesus appeared to the disciples (19-20), ***On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.***

   1) Related verses
      a) 1 Corinthians 15:5, *and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*
      b) Luke 24:23, 26, *and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive … 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"*

c) John 14:27, *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*
d) Luke 24:40, *And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*
e) John 16:22, *So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.*

2) Comments
a) William Hendriksen, *It is not difficult to understand what had brought them together. There had been so many strange happenings and marvelous experiences that day that a meeting was in order. Jesus had already appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the women, to Cleopas and his companion, and to Peter ... What they had seen was just too wonderful for words. Indeed, it is not surprising that the disciples found each other's company this Sunday-evening.*
b) Edward Klink, *... on the greatest day in the history of the world, a day when God defeated death itself and inaugurated the restoration of his creation, his closest followers were not celebrating but cowering in fear ... On the evening of Easter, Christ's use of the term "peace" is less a greeting and more a pronouncement of blessing, a declaration that the peace of God—the eschatological peace promised in the OT—has now been made accessible through Jesus Christ. This symbol-laden greeting is the equivalent of "it is completed" (19:30) ...*
c) Thomas Constable, *John took his readers directly from the events of Easter morning to what occurred that evening ... Apparently the Eleven—except Thomas—were present at this time (cf. Mark 16:14; John 20:24) ... The Jewish authorities had crucified their Rabbi, so it was reasonable to think that they might come after the Rabbi's disciples as well. Contrast their boldness following Jesus' ascension just a few weeks later ... John implied that Jesus appeared miraculously, since the disciples had shut (Gr. kekleismenon, i.e., "locked" NIV) the doors (plural; cf. v. 26). Jesus' resurrection body had passed through grave clothes and a rocky tomb. Now it passed through the walls of this structure ... Jesus' greeting was common enough (i.e., Heb. shalom 'alekem). However He had previously promised His disciples His peace (14:27; 16:33). Consequently He was imparting peace rather than just wishing peace on them. This seems clear because Jesus repeated His benediction two more times (vv. 21, 26). "Shalom" summarized the fullness of God's blessing, not just the end of hostility (cf. Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7) ... Evidently Jesus showed the disciples His hands and His side—with His scars—in order to convince them that it was really He and not just a phantom (cf. Luke 24:37–40) ... The disciples' initial reaction to Jesus' unexpected appearance was terror (Luke 24:37). However, upon examining His wounds, their fear turned to faith. The disciples' joy was the proof of their perception and the testimony to their faith.*
d) Edwin Blum, *The disciples had almost been arrested with Jesus. They remained under the fear of death at the hands of the Jews (i.e., the Jewish authorities), so they met in secret at night, with fear, behind locked doors. (What a contrast with their boldness about seven weeks later on the day of Pentecost!) Jesus passed through the door, as indicated by the fact that when the doors were locked, He came and stood among them (cf. v. 26). This showed the power of His new resurrection body.*
e) Warren Wiersbe, *For centuries, the Jewish Sabbath had been associated with Law: six days of work, and then you rest. But the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, is associated with grace: first there is faith in the living Christ, then there will be works ... But His first word to them was the traditional greeting, "Shalom—peace!" He could have rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and cowardice the previous weekend, but He did not. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). The work of the cross is peace (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14–17), and the message they would carry would be the Gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15). Man had declared war on God (Ps. 2; Acts 4:23–30), but God would declare "Peace!" to those who would believe ... He showed them His wounded hands and side and gave them opportunity to discover that it was indeed their Master, and that He was not a phantom ... But the wounds meant more than identification; they also were evidence that the price for salvation had been paid and man indeed could have "peace with God.*

f) Grant Osborne, ... *Jesus stands in their midst (20:19b) and says these wonderful words, "Peace be with you!" There is double meaning here. On one level it is a simple greeting, but on the deeper level (the main one here) Jesus is offering them his messianic peace, fulfilling his own promise of eschatological peace (14:27; 16:33) in keeping with Isaiah 9:6; 52:7 ... They now know the sacrificial Lamb has become the risen Lord, the greatest truth this world will ever know. The cross and the empty tomb are a single event in salvation history, and life is anchored in death.*

g) Kenneth Gangel, ... *he showed them the nail prints in his hands and the spear scar in his side. Why such a display? These fearful believers had to grasp that the same Jesus who died now lived again and stood before them.*

h) John Hart, *At the sight of His imprinted hands and His scarred side, the disciples rejoiced (v. 20), fulfilling Jesus' promise given in the upper room (16:20–22).*

i) Edward Klink, *The display of wounds is not simply an act of identification, a proof to the disciples that the man standing in their midst is Jesus. Rather, they explain the source of his peace. The peace of God was entirely dependent on these specific wounds—the scars from the crucifixion declare shalom for the world. Isaiah was speaking about this very encounter when he announced that "the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" ...*

j) Leon Morris, *The group that met together is called simply "the disciples." This may mean the apostles only (or rather ten of them, for Thomas was not present). But the term is wide enough to include others, and there is no real reason for thinking that apostles only are in mind. Certainly if the occasion is that referred to in Luke 24:33 others were present, for Luke expressly mentions them. ... After their forsaking Jesus at the time of the arrest the disciples may well have expected rebuke or blame. Instead Jesus pronounces peace on them.*

k) George Beasley-Murray, *Never had that "common word" been so filled with meaning as when Jesus uttered it on Easter evening. All that the prophets had poured into shalom as the epitome of the blessings of the kingdom of God had essentially been realized in the redemptive deeds of the incarnate Son of God, "lifted up" for the salvation of the world. His "Shalom!" on Easter evening is the complement of "It is finished" on the cross, for the peace of reconciliation and life from God is now imparted ... the revelation of the wounds of Jesus was a means of letting the disciples realize that it was he himself, their crucified Lord, who stood before them. That clear identification was to become critically important for the Church to maintain; the Crucified is the risen Lord, in the fullest sense of the term, and the risen Lord is the Crucified, the flesh and blood Redeemer, whose real death and real resurrection accomplished salvation for the whole person and the whole world.*

l) Charles Swindoll, *Unlike Lazarus—who had been merely resuscitated, then lived with the same limitations, suffered illness and injury, and eventually died again—Jesus was resurrected. His resurrection body, while still completely human, possessed supernatural qualities. He was raised to a new kind of life, never to die again.*

b. He declared their calling (21), ***Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."***

1) Related verses

a) John 17:18, *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*

b) John 13:20, *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."*

2) Comments

a) Edwin Blum, *Jesus then recommissioned the disciples as His apostles: He was sending them as His representatives, as the Father had sent Him (cf. 17:18). They were sent with His authority to preach, teach, and do miraculous signs (Matt. 28:16–20; Luke 24:47–49).*

b) Edward Klink, ... *"just as" the mission of the Son of God involved peace, so also will the mission of the children of God involve peace, the proclamation of the eschatological shalom of the OT and that Christ's victory over the powers of evil has been accomplished ...*

c) Thomas Constable, *Jesus expressed this commission in terms of the relationships that John recorded Jesus teaching extensively in this Gospel. Jesus was sending His disciples on a mission ("I also send you"), just as His Father had sent Him on a mission (cf. 17:18). The emphasis here is on the sending and the authoritative Person doing the sending ... Each Gospel plus Acts records a different version of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:46–48; John 20:21–23; Acts 1:8). Jesus apparently gave this commission on at least four separate occasions. The first recorded commission chronologically was evidently the one in John 20:21–23. The second was the one recorded in Mark 16:15–16. Matthew 28:19–20 appears to be another account of a later event. Likewise, Luke 24:46–48 and Acts 1:8 seem to be two versions of one incident: the last giving of the commission. The reader of the Gospels can scarcely escape its crucial importance. Each Gospel closes with a commission from the risen Lord. It expresses God's will for every believer in the present age ... Even before His crucifixion Jesus stressed the importance of the believer's obedience as the continuation of His example (15:9–10). The purpose of Jesus' incarnation was the spiritual salvation of the world (1:29). That is also the believer's primary, though not exclusive, purpose (cf. Gal. 6:10). As Jesus always operated in dependence on the Father with the Spirit's enablement, so should His disciples (cf. 1:32; 3:34; 4:34; 5:19; 6:27; 10:36; 17:4). As He was a Son of God, so are His disciples sons of God (cf. 1:12–13; 3:3, 5; 20:17).*

c) Warren Wiersbe, *When Jesus saw that the disciples' fear had now turned to joy, He commissioned them: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Keep in mind that the original disciples were not the only ones present; others, including the Emmaus disciples, were also in the room. This commission was not the "formal ordination" of a church order; rather, it was the dedication of His followers to the task of world evangelism. We are to take His place in this world (John 17:18). What a tremendous privilege and what a great responsibility! ... It must have given the men great joy to realize that, in spite of their many failures, their Lord was entrusting them with His Word and His work. They had forsaken Him and fled, but now He was sending them out to represent Him. Peter had denied Him three times; and yet in a few days, Peter would preach the Word (and accuse the Jews of denying Him—Acts 3:13–14!) and thousands would be saved.*

d) Kenneth Gangel, *Why then did Christ impart the Spirit before His ascension and the actual descent of the spirit? As John Walvoord has suggested, 'apparently a temporary filling of the Spirit was given to provide for their spiritual needs prior to Pentecost.' In that sense they received a prechurch age filling of the Spirit in anticipation of the Day of Pentecost so they could fully understand the Savior's instructions" ...*

e) Leon Morris, *The thought that the Father has sent the Son is one of the master thoughts of this Gospel; it is repeated over and over. Thus it is not surprising that it comes out once more in this solemn moment. Now, as Jesus has brought to its consummation the task that he came to accomplish, the task that the Father laid upon him, he sends his followers into the world. The charge is given added solemnity from being linked thus to the mission of the Son: their mission proceeds from his. It is only because he has thus accomplished his mission, and indeed precisely because he has accomplished it, that they are sent into the world.*

g) William Barclay, *... the relationship between Jesus and God was continually dependent on Jesus' perfect obedience and perfect love. Jesus could be God's messenger only because he rendered to God that perfect obedience and love. It follows that the Church is fit to be the messenger and the instrument of Christ only when it perfectly loves him and perfectly obeys him. The Church must never be out to propagate its own message; it must be out to propagate the message of Christ. It must never be out to follow policies of human devising; it must be out to follow the will of Christ. The Church fails whenever it tries to solve some problem in its own wisdom and strength, and leaves out of account the will and guidance of Jesus Christ.*

h) Grant Osborne, *Over thirty times John describes Jesus as "sent" by God (e.g., 3:17; 5:23, 30; 8:16, 18). The program is complete with the sending of Christ's followers as the gospel proceeds from Jesus to the Spirit to the disciples and then from all to the world.*

c. The disciples were empowered (22-23), ***And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."***

1) Related verses
   a) Genesis 2:7, *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*
   b) John 7:39, *Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*
   c) Matthew 16:19, *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*
   d) Matthew 18:18, *Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

2) Comments
   a) *Receive the Holy Spirit*

      1] Thomas Constable, *Still others believe that Jesus was giving these disciples a symbolic and graphic memorable introduction to the Spirit, who would come upon them later. It was a demonstration of what Jesus would do after He returned to the Father, and which He did do on Pentecost. He was not imparting the Spirit to them in any sense here. This interpretation accounts for Thomas not receiving the Spirit before Pentecost ... Evidently there was only one coming of the Spirit on these disciples, and that happened on Pentecost. This view seems to me to be most defensible ...*
      2] Edwin Blum, *The image and wording of breathing on them recalls God's creative work in making Adam (Gen. 2:7). Now this post-Resurrection "breathing" was a new kind of creative work for they would soon become new creations (Eph. 2:8–10). 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.*
      3] Warren Wiersbe, *John 20:22 reminds us of Genesis 2:7 when God breathed life into the first man. In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for "breath" also means "spirit." The breath of God in the first creation meant physical life, and the breath of Jesus Christ in the new creation meant spiritual life.*
      4] John Hart, *It is unlikely that He gave, and the disciples received, the Spirit at this time. Jesus said earlier that the Spirit would not come to them until He left them (Jn 7:39; 16:7), and even immediately prior to His ascension He instructed them to wait for the Spirit's coming (Ac 1:4, 5, 8).*
      5] Edward Klink, *Jesus is establishing by the Spirit his body as a ministering agent in the world, and by the same Spirit Jesus is empowering this new humanity to do what Adam and others had failed to do: to be God's representatives and ministers in the world.*
      6] Charles Swindoll, *He illustrated His promise of the coming Holy Spirit by breathing on the disciples, recalling the image of creation (Gen. 2:7) and Old Testament prophecy (Ezek. 37). This was either a temporary foretaste of Pentecost (Acts 2) or merely a symbolic gesture.*

   b) *If you forgive .... if you withhold forgiveness ...*

      1] Edwin Blum, *Forgiveness of sins is one of the major benefits of the death of Jesus. It is the essence of the New Covenant (cf. Matt. 26:28; Jer. 31:31–34). Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins was the prominent feature of the apostolic preaching in the Book of Acts. Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) the privilege of announcing heaven's terms on how a person can receive forgiveness. If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. If a person rejects Jesus' sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is not forgiven.*

2] Thomas Constable, *The Great Commission not only requires supernatural power to carry it out (v. 22), but it also involves the forgiveness of sins (cf. Jer. 31:31–34; Matt. 26:28) ... Here the context is evangelism ... Jesus appears to have been saying that when His disciples went to others with the message of salvation, as He had done, some people would believe and others would not. Reaction to their ministry would be the same as reaction to His had been. He viewed their forgiving and retaining the sins of their hearers as the actions of God's representatives ... If people ("any" or "anyone," plural Gr. tinon) believed the gospel, the disciples were given the authority to tell these new believers that God had forgiven their sins. If they disbelieved, they could tell them that God had not forgiven but retained their sins. Jesus had done this (cf. 9:39–41), and now His disciples would continue to do it. Thus their ministry would be a continuation of His ministry relative to the forgiveness of sins, as it would be in relation to the Spirit's enablement. This, too, applies to all succeeding generations of Jesus' disciples—since Jesus was still talking about the disciples' mission.*

3] Warren Wiersbe, *... the disciples did not provide forgiveness; they proclaimed forgiveness on the basis of the message of the Gospel.*

4] Kenneth Gangel, *The duty of the disciples was to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; the actual forgiving would take place in heaven by the Lord who paid for those sins. Nevertheless, the claims of the gospel are clear—forgiveness only on the basis of Jesus' death on the cross.*

5] J. Vernon McGee, *How can you and I remit sins? By telling the gospel!*

6] John Calvin, *When Christ enjoins the apostles to forgive sins, He does not convey to them what is peculiar to Himself. It belongs to Him to forgive sins—He only enjoins them, in His name, to proclaim the forgiveness of sins.*

7] William Barclay, *This sentence does not mean that the power to forgive sins was ever entrusted to any individual or group; it means that the power to proclaim that forgiveness was so entrusted, along with the power to warn that forgiveness is not open to the impenitent. This sentence lays down the duty of the Church to convey forgiveness to the penitent in heart and to warn the impenitent that they are forfeiting the mercy of God.*

8] Edward Klink, *The total mission of the church could be summarized by the forgiving and retaining of sins. For "everything the church does is a prolongation in time and space of the victory of the Lamb over the world's sin by making it a victory over our sins." This explains why Jesus had to show his scars from the crucifixion (v. 20), and this explains how peace has been established and can now be declared. The message of the church is the forgiveness of sins through Christ, and the mission of the church is to liberate the world from the power of sin.*

9] Charles Swindoll, *This is consistent with how Jesus saw His own ministry. While He both healed and forgave certain individuals, He said it was their faith that saved them, healed them, or made them whole (5:24; also Matt. 9:29; 15:28; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). And while His presence became a moment of moral crisis for some, it was their unbelief that condemned them (John 3:18–19; 5:22; 9:39–41).*

3) Concluding remarks

a) Thomas Constable, *This resurrection appearance has a threefold importance in John's Gospel: It validated again Jesus' bodily resurrection, and it provided the setting for the commissioning of Jesus' disciples. It also provided the background for Jesus' appearance when Thomas was present and Thomas' climactic statement of faith that followed (vv. 24–29).*

b) William Hendriksen, *The apostles who were gathered in this room on this glorious Easter day needed this comfort. In themselves they were weak and sinful. This had been demonstrated again and again, also during the last few days. Did they still have the right to call themselves apostles, Christ's official representatives, chosen to bring his message to the children of men and to exercise authority in the company of believers? The risen Savior speaks this word of encouragement. Without authority, chaos reigns supreme!*

4. Jesus appeared to Thomas (24-29)
   a. Introductory comments
      1) Thomas Constable, *This resurrection appearance has a threefold importance in John's Gospel: It validated again Jesus' bodily resurrection, and it provided the setting for the commissioning of Jesus' disciples. It also provided the background for Jesus' appearance when Thomas was present and Thomas' climactic statement of faith that followed (vv. 24–29).*
      2) Edwin Blum, *In his Gospel, John has traced the development of unbelief, which culminated in Jesus' enemies crucifying Him. Conversely, John also traced the disciples' development of faith, which was now climaxed in Thomas.*
      3) Leon Morris, *... as Thomas makes abundantly clear, the appearances were not at first welcomed. They were resisted as idle talk, and those who had not actually seen Jesus for themselves refused point blank to accept the stories. Only the plainest of evidence could have convinced a skeptic like Thomas. But convinced he was, which shows us that the evidence was incontrovertible.*

   b. The disciples told Thomas that they saw Jesus (24-25), ***Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."***

      1) Related verses
         a) John 11:16, *So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."*
         b) John 20:20, *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

      2) Comments
         a) Edward Klink, *The very disciples who had just been sent with the Spirit-empowered authority of the Lord to announce his person and work to the world (20:21–23) were immediately rejected by one of their own—indeed, by one who had already exhibited belief in Jesus.*
         b) Thomas Constable, *John's previous pictures of this disciple present him as a loyal and courageous, though somewhat gloomy and pessimistic, follower of Jesus. His more common identification as a doubter comes only from the present event ... He insisted on touching Jesus, and specifically His crucifixion wounds, not just seeing Him. No one else in the New Testament made demands like these before believing.*
         c) Edwin Blum, *The disciples were affirming Jesus' resurrection to Thomas ... But he remained unconvinced. He wanted bodily proof of Jesus' risen state.*
         d) Charles Swindoll, *Thomas wanted concrete proof, not to satisfy his doubt but to overcome his hopelessness. He said, in effect, "Risen? This is too good to be true. I will not allow myself to hope until I can be sure my hope will not be dashed."*
         e) Kenneth Gangel, *The disciples kept on telling Thomas they had seen the Lord. Thomas, fed up with such nonsense, grew weary of holding on to a faith that had crumbled. He took the old motto "seeing is believing" to frightening dimensions. He removed himself from the disciple band, telling them he wanted to hear no more about this ridiculous notion of a resurrection. Thomas used strong language with his friends, indicating the frustration to which the events of the past week had driven him.*
         f) William Hendriksen, *Thomas is willing to believe … that is, on certain conditions! And he himself will lay down these conditions. The mysterious person about whom the others have been saying so much must measure up to certain standards which Thomas will establish; he must submit to certain tests which Thomas will apply.*
         g) Grant Osborne, *... Jesus responds with every bit as much mercy and understanding as he did with Mary and the other disciples. Thomas needs more help and has further to go, but Jesus meets his needs just as they are and lifts him up to understanding. Mary needed the voice of the Good Shepherd; the disciples needed to see Jesus' wounds and know it was truly him; Thomas needs to touch those self-same wounds. Jesus meets those needs right where they are and turns his life around.*

h) William Barclay, *Thomas made one mistake. He withdrew from the Christian fellowship. He sought loneliness rather than togetherness. And because he was not there with his fellow Christians he missed the first coming of Jesus. We miss a great deal when we separate ourselves from the Christian fellowship, and when we try to be alone. Things can happen to us within the fellowship of Christ's Church which will not happen to us when we are alone.*

i) Warren Wiersbe, *Thomas is a good warning to all of us not to miss meeting with God's people on the Lord's Day (Heb. 10:22–25). Because Thomas was not there, he missed seeing Jesus Christ, hearing His words of peace, and receiving His commission and gift of spiritual life. He had to endure a week of fear and unbelief when he could have been experiencing joy and peace! Remember Thomas when you are tempted to stay home from church. You never know what special blessing you might miss!*

c. Jesus returned to the disciples with Thomas present (26-29)

1) Jesus proclaimed peace on them (26), ***Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."***

a) Related verse, John 20:19, *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

b) Comments

1] George Beasley-Murray, *"After eight days" the Lord appears in the same manner as before, or on the "eighth" day, i.e., the following Sunday (this according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, counting the first and the last days in the period). The language will have reminded early readers of their own meetings for worship on the first day of the week, marking the day when Jesus rose from the dead.*

2] Edward Klink, *It is as if the narrator magnifies the importance of this day, the Lord's Day, imaging in his account what all Christians receive when they gather on Sunday, the presence of the Lord with his people, the church. Although this is impossible to know, it is almost as if the disciples had decided to meet again on the next Lord's Day, one week later, starting what would become the customary day of gathering for the church. In any case, Jesus appeared a second time to them (cf. Rev 1:10).*

3] Thomas Constable, *The disciples were still meeting behind closed doors because they feared the Jewish authorities (cf. v. 19). Jesus again materialized in the presence of these disciples as He had done a week earlier (v. 19). He also repeated His benediction (v. 21). Perhaps Jesus did these things because He knew that the disciples had told Thomas that He had appeared this way and said these things. Thus repeating the miraculous appearance would have bolstered Thomas' faith.*

4] Charles Swindoll, *Eight days after the Lord's first visit in the disciples' hideout, Jesus appeared as He had before and offered the same greeting, "Peace be with you." He immediately gave attention to the neediest man in the room. I am comforted by the Lord's gentle approach. While belief was the issue to be addressed with Thomas, Jesus knows the disciple's trouble to be hopelessness, not an obstinate unwillingness to believe.*

5] William Barclay, *There is something very lovable and very admirable about Thomas. Faith was never an easy thing for him; obedience never came readily to him. He was the man who had to be sure; he was the man who had to count the cost. But once he was sure, and once he had counted the cost, he was the man who went to the ultimate limit of faith and obedience. A faith like Thomas' is better than any glib declaration; and an obedience like his is better than an easy acquiescence which agrees to do a thing without counting the cost and then goes back upon its word.*

2) He called on Thomas to believe (27), ***Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."***

a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus then invited Thomas to satisfy himself that He really was the crucified Jesus, as Thomas had said he would have to do if he was to believe that Jesus was alive. Jesus knew what Thomas had said, even though He had not been physically present when Thomas had said it. This is a further implication of Jesus' deity. The purpose of this test was not just to satisfy Thomas' curiosity, however. It was also to bring him to faith that Jesus was the resurrected Messiah.*

b) Warren Wiersbe, *It is not easy to understand the psychology of doubt and unbelief. Perhaps it is linked to personality traits; some people are more trustful than others. Perhaps Thomas was so depressed that he was ready to quit, so he "threw out a challenge" and never really expected Jesus to accept it. At any rate, Thomas was faced with his own words, and he had to make a decision.*

c) Kenneth Gangel, *... rather than showing his hands and side to the entire group, he turned to Thomas and invited empirical investigation. Sincere Christianity has always welcomed sincere research. Jesus did not scold Thomas or condemn his hesitation. He provided the evidence. Only then did he say to him, Stop doubting and believe.*

d) William Hendriksen, *The question has been asked, "Did Thomas actually do as Christ commanded him?" Though the answer is not specifically stated, it is probable that he did. In fact, the question might be asked, "Did he have any choice in the matter?" Was he not obliged to do as instructed? Besides, there is Luke 24:39 and especially 1 John 1:1.*

e) George Beasley-Murray, *The Lord whose care extends to his people at all times has heard the declaration of Thomas, and takes up his challenge. As he extends his hands, with the invitation to touch them and for Thomas to put his hand in his side, he adds a saying which is half rebuke and half appeal: "Stop being unbelieving, and show yourself a believer!" Did Thomas extend his finger and hand, as he was invited? The tradition early arose that he did, and that others did so with him ... The impression given by the narrative is that Thomas was overwhelmed by the appearance of the Lord and his words to him, and without any further demonstration he burst out with his confession.*

f) Charles Swindoll, *... the Lord offered Thomas the reassurance he wanted. His gentle rebuke said, in effect, "It's okay to place complete confidence in Me; I won't let you down. I am here, I am real, and I won't abandon you."*

g) Edward Klink, *The narrative does not reveal if he does touch Jesus's wounds, and that may be precisely the point. Based upon what the text reveals, the issue is less the physical experience of Jesus and more the nature of a legitimate witness to him. For while Thomas may not have touched Jesus, he certainly did see him, just like the rest of the disciples had the Sunday before and declared afterward to Thomas (v. 25) ... the actions of Thomas suggest that he is acting in an unbelieving manner, not that he is an unbeliever. He is willing (and able) to believe, as he himself confessed (v. 25), but only on his own terms. Thomas wants to return to his preresurrection faith relationship with Jesus, the Jesus in the flesh. "He is demanding that Jesus be for him as he had been prior to the glorification." This is not doubt, as it is often interpreted; this is rebellion, a refusal to relate to God on his own* terms. *It is no less prideful than what the Jewish authorities displayed, who would not relate to God through Jesus but demanded the former mode of mediation—their temple and their laws. Thomas likewise pits life with Jesus against life in the Spirit and chooses only to relate to the former. He was not rejecting the disciples when he denied their witness, he was rejecting God.*

h) Grant Osborne, *Can you imagine this scene! For the third time (after 20:19, 21) Jesus suddenly appears through locked doors and offers them his messianic peace. He accommodates Thomas's demands and says, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side" (v. 27). We can picture Jesus pulling back his robe to show his gaping wounds ... We don't know if Thomas actually did so, but he was undoubtedly on his knees, tears coursing down his face, awe consuming him. Jesus then adds, "Stop doubting and believe," literally, "Be not unbelieving [apistos] but believing [pistos]." His level of faith was the lowest of them all, but Jesus calls him back from the abyss. He has not committed apostasy and become an unbeliever, but he has refused to exercise faith in the witness of others.*

i) F. F. Bruce, *The appearance of Jesus in front of them, together with his greeting, is recorded in much the same language as before. But now he has a special word for Thomas, inviting him to exploit his sense of touch as well as sight, and incidentally revealing that he knew what Thomas had said to the others. Thomas's resolute scepticism vanished; the evidence of eye and ear sufficed, and there was no need now to satisfy himself with probing fingers. Thomas might have been slower than his fellow disciples to come to faith in the risen Christ, but when he did so, his faith was expressed in language which went beyond any that they had used.*

3) Thomas declared Jesus his Lord and God (28), ***Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"***

a) Related verses
1] John 1:1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
2] John 1:49, *Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"*

b) Comments
1] Thomas Constable, *Evidently Thomas did not take up Jesus' offer. The sight of his Savior seems to have been enough to convince him (cf. v. 29). Thomas then uttered one of the most profound declarations of saving faith in Scripture. For a Jew to call another human being "My Lord and my God" was blasphemy under normal circumstances (cf. 10:33). Yet that is precisely who Thomas believed Jesus was. It is also who John presented Jesus as being throughout this Gospel. Both titles were titles of deity in the Old Testament. Thomas had come to believe that Jesus was his Lord (master) in a fuller sense than before, and he now believed that Jesus was fully God ... Now Thomas believed like his fellow disciples had come to believe (cf. v. 25). His confession is a model that John presented for all future disciples. It is the high point of this Gospel (cf. 1:1, 14, 18). John's other witnesses to Jesus' deity were John the Baptist (1:34), Nathanael (1:49), Jesus Himself (5:25; 10:36), Peter (6:69), the healed blind man (9:35), Martha (11:27), and John the Apostle (20:30–31).*
2] Leon Morris, *Nobody has previously addressed Jesus like this [in the Gospels, i.e., as "God"]. It marks a leap of faith. In the moment that he came to see that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead Thomas came to see something of what that implied. Mere men do not rise from the dead in this fashion. The One who was now so obviously alive, although he had died, could be addressed in the language of adoring worship.*
3] Edwin Blum, *Thomas' response, My Lord and My God! is the high point of the Gospel. Here was a skeptical man, confronted by the evidence of Jesus' resurrection. He announced that Jesus, the Man of Galilee, is God manifest in the flesh. Thus the truths in the first chapter were realized personally in this apostle (1:1, 14, 18). The Resurrection (a) demonstrated that what Jesus predicted about His being raised was true (Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; John 2:19), (b) proved that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4) and was sent by God ("vindicated by the Spirit," 1 Tim. 3:16), (c) testified to the success of His mission of salvation (Rom. 4:25), (d) entitled Jesus to a position of glory (1 Peter 1:11), and (e) proclaimed that Jesus is the "Lord" (Acts 2:36).*
4] Warren Wiersbe, *We need to remind ourselves that everybody lives by faith. The difference is in the object of that faith. Christians put their faith in God and His Word, while unsaved people put their faith in themselves.*
5] Kenneth Gangel, *Thomas moved quickly from rough-talking skeptic to willing worshiper. In the New Testament, no one had yet said to Jesus, My Lord and my God. Here again the theme of our study looms large—believing is seeing.*
6] William Hendriksen, *He who a little while ago was trying "to lord it over the Lord" (laying down conditions for him to meet), has become submissive. No longer does Thomas wish to rule supreme. In Jesus he recognizes his sovereign, yes even his God! For a Jew that was a remarkable confession.*

7] George Beasley-Murray, *So it comes about that the most outrageous doubter of the resurrection of Jesus utters the greatest confession of the Lord who rose from the dead. His utterance does not simply acknowledge the reality of the resurrection of Jesus, but expresses its ultimate meaning, i.e., as revelation of who Jesus is. Yet it is not an abstract theological definition concerning the person of Christ. The personal pronoun is of vital importance "my Lord, and my God." He confesses to the risen Jesus that he belongs to him as his willing subject; he adores him and henceforth will serve him as he deserves.*

8] Edward Klink, *Thomas does not extend himself toward Jesus with his touch but with his words, for God in the person and work of Jesus can only be grasped fully by faith, by the words of a prayer or confession, and by statements of adoration … Thomas not only acknowledges the identity of Jesus but also his personal relationship to him … Thomas's statement speaks beyond the confirmation of the resurrection and addresses the meaning of the resurrection. The resurrection reveals who Jesus truly is! Yet it is not an abstract theological definition concerning the person of Christ, for at the same time Thomas speaks of the Lord as "my Lord" and of God as "my God." By this the uniqueness of the Christian faith is made clear. The God of creation can be claimed by the believer as "my God" and even "my Father." The Gospel is the declaration that all the cosmological purposes of God and his grand love for the world through the person and work of Jesus Christ are ultimately applied to specific individuals. The good news is not only universal but also particular; it is for Thomas and therefore also for the individual reader.*

9] Grant Osborne, *It is an astounding leap of faith and understanding, as Thomas had spent the last seven days doubting Jesus' resurrection and now all of a sudden affirms that he is the one and only God. This shows a remarkable depth. Many critics refuse to believe it could have happened, thinking an affirmation of Jesus' deity was years away for the early church. Yet it actually makes sense logically, for all the while Thomas was saying, "I won't believe unless …" he was also thinking, "What if?" By the time Jesus appeared to him, he had carefully thought through the implications and was ready … The progression of Thomas's understanding makes a lot of sense. If Jesus had truly risen from the dead, then everything he had taught about himself and the Father was correct, for instance, "I and the Father are one" (10:30) and all of the "I am" sayings. The origin of this deep confession is most likely these teachings combined with the Old Testament confession of Yahweh as Lord God (2 Kgs 19:19; Isa 26:13; Rev 4:11).*

4) Jesus proclaimed blessing on those who believe by faith not by sight (29), ***Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."***

a) Related verses

1] 1 Peter 1:8, *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,*

2] 2 Corinthians 5:7, *for we walk by faith, not by sight.*

b) Comments

1] Thomas Constable, *"Blessed" (Gr. makarios) does more than just describe the person in view as happy. It also declares him or her acceptable to and favored by God (cf. Matt. 5:3–12). Most believers have believed on Jesus because of sufficient evidence, without the physical confirmation that Thomas required (cf. v. 8; 1 Pet. 1:8–9). Those were the people whom Jesus had in view when He made His second statement. This beatitude does not make believers who live after Jesus' ascension superior to those who saw Him in the flesh. But it does guarantee their blessing by God.*

2] Edwin Blum, *Jesus then pronounced a blessing on all who would come to faith without the help of a visible, bodily manifestation to them (John 20:29; cf. 1 Peter 1:8). This blessing comes to all who believe on the basis of the proclaimed gospel and the evidences for its validity. Believers living today are not deprived by not seeing Him physically; instead, they are the recipients of His special blessing: Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*

3] A. B. Bruce, *He [Jesus] would have those who must believe without seeing, understand that they have no cause to envy those who had an opportunity of seeing, and who believed only after they saw.*

4] Warren Wiersbe, *John could not end his book without bringing the Resurrection miracle to his own readers. We must not look at Thomas and the other disciples and envy them, as though the power of Christ's resurrection could never be experienced in our lives today. That was why John wrote this Gospel—so that people in every age could know that Jesus is God and that faith in Him brings everlasting life ... It is not necessary to "see" Jesus Christ in order to believe. Yes, it was a blessing for the early Christians to see their Lord and know that He was alive; but that is not what saved them. They were saved, not by seeing, but by believing. The emphasis throughout the Gospel of John is on believing. There are nearly 100 references in this Gospel to believing on Jesus Christ ... You and I today cannot see Christ, nor can we see Him perform the miracles (signs) that John wrote about in this book. But the record is there, and that is all that we need.*

5] Leon Morris, *Jesus does pronounce a blessing on those who have believed without seeing. At the time the words were spoken this would not have been a large number, but perhaps not all the first Christians were as skeptical as Thomas. Some had believed Peter and the others (Luke 24:34). These are now said to be blessed. And, of course, the words will refer as well to all those who in the future would follow in the same way. There is a special blessing for those possessed of a faith that can trust absolutely and that does not need to "see" at every turn.*

6] William Hendriksen, *For the benefit of those who would come to believe in him in the years that were to follow, Jesus now says, "Blessed are they who, though not seeing, are yet believing." Faith which results from seeing is good; but faith which results from hearing is more excellent. This is the clear lesson of Scripture throughout; see, for example, Matt. 8:5–10; John 4:48; Rom. 10:14; and 1 Peter 1:8.*

7] Charles Swindoll, *Thomas didn't need to touch the Lord's wounds. And his confession is a pinnacle moment in John's narrative: "My Lord and my God!" Jesus affirmed the disciple's confession of faith and then responded with a blessing on all those who had accepted the truth of His resurrection because of faith in God's promises, rather than physical evidence (cf. 4:50). This blessing on the faith of past believers suggests similar blessing on the generations of future believers ...*

8] Edward Klink, *Although the physical appearance to Thomas confirmed his own role as an apostle and personal eyewitness, the repetition of the appearance with all the disciples was intended to rebuke Thomas for disbelieving the witness and to confirm for the disciples that their testimony is both valid and authoritative. By his dismissal of the disciples' testimony, Thomas undercut his own role as an apostolic witness. For this reason Jesus reestablishes it, giving freight to the apostolic mission in the previous pericope (20:19–23) and making clear that the apostolic ministry is a necessary ground upon which the mission of God will continue.*

9] Grant Osborne, *Future converts will not have that luxury, for the risen Lord will no longer be present. So Jesus gives them a special blessing from God for finding faith without the incredible experience of physically seeing the risen Lord.*

10] F. F. Bruce, *This last beatitude had a special message for the readers of this Gospel when it was first published; it has the same message for readers of the Gospel today. They had not seen, and neither have we; yet they might believe, and so may we. Thomas was no different from the other disciples in this respect. They did not believe until they saw; if they believed a week earlier than Thomas, that was because they saw a week earlier than he. Even of the beloved disciple it is said that "he saw—and believed" (verse 8), although the visible evidence that wrought faith in him was not the sight of the risen Lord but the disposition of the grave clothes in the tomb. But since the apostolic generation passed from earth, all believers in the crucified and risen Lord have believed without seeing, and to them is assured the special blessing here pronounced by him. To us, faith comes not by seeing but (as Paul puts it) "from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Romans 10:7). John knows this, and therefore he presents his readers with "the preaching of Christ"—the story of Jesus—in written form, that faith may come to them.*

C. The purpose of the Gospel of John (20:30-31)

1. John was not exhaustive but selective in declaring Jesus' signs (30), ***Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;***

   a. Related verses
      1) John 21:25, *Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*
      2) Acts 10:41, *not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.*

   b. Comments
      1) Thomas Constable, *John followed the climactic proof that Jesus is God's Son with an explanation of his purpose for writing his account of Jesus' ministry. This explanation constitutes a preliminary conclusion to the book ... John wrote his Gospel because those who believe on Jesus without seeing Him in the flesh are acceptable to God ... There were many other evidences ("signs") of Jesus' deity that John could have presented. However, he chose those that he recorded here in order to lead his readers to the type of faith that Thomas had just articulated and that Jesus had just commended. That was John's confessed strategy in composing this Gospel under the Holy Spirit's inspiration.*
      2) Edwin Blum, *John explained His purpose in writing this Gospel, that people might contemplate and perceive the theological significance of Jesus' miracles (semeia, "signs"). Many people today ignore, deny, or rationalize Jesus' miracles. Even in Jesus' day some people attributed them to God whereas others attributed them to Satan (3:2; 9:33; Matt. 12:24). To ignore, deny, or rationalize them in that day was impossible because the miracles were manifold and manifest. In fact, 35 different miracles are recorded in the four Gospels ... John selected 7 for special consideration in order that people might come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, and the Son of God.*
      3) Warren Wiersbe, *John could not end his book without bringing the Resurrection miracle to his own readers. We must not look at Thomas and the other disciples and envy them, as though the power of Christ's resurrection could never be experienced in our lives today. That was why John wrote this Gospel—so that people in every age could know that Jesus is God and that faith in Him brings everlasting life ... It is not necessary to "see" Jesus Christ in order to believe. Yes, it was a blessing for the early Christians to see their Lord and know that He was alive; but that is not what saved them. They were saved, not by seeing, but by believing.*
      4) Kenneth Gangel, *He chose the works and words of Jesus that would prompt readers to faith. That faith would give meaning to experience as believers found life in the name of Jesus.*
      5) William Hendriksen, *In addition to the great sign of the resurrection, those signs which are recorded in the Fourth Gospel are: the changing of the water into wine, the healing of the courtier's son, the cure of the "withered" man at the pool of Bethzatha, the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the opening of the eyes of the man born blind, and the resurrection of Lazarus ... Hence, we arrive at the conclusion that from start to finish the Fourth Gospel is a book of signs. It records Christ's wonderful deeds and their meaning!*
      6) John Hart, *The apostle's purpose for his book is evangelistic ... John carefully selected his content for evangelism, especially among the Jewish people. To believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (these titles indicate His humanity, royalty, and deity, see also comments on 1:20, 34) means to be fully convinced that Jesus alone provides eternal life and resurrection ... Locating the purpose statement here rather than at the end of the book highlights Jesus' blessing on those who believe in His death/resurrection apart from physical sight (v. 30). It also demonstrates that the resurrection is the greatest sign of the book.*
      7) William Barclay, *... the gospels were not meant to be biographies of Jesus, but appeals to take him as Saviour, Master and Lord. Their aim was not to give information but to give life. It was to paint such a picture of Jesus that the reader would be bound to see that the person who could speak and teach and act and heal like this could be none other than the Son of God; and that in that belief he might find the secret of real life ... When we approach the gospels as history and biography, we approach them in the wrong spirit. We must read them not primarily as historians seeking information, but as men and women seeking God.*

2. John selected evidences to call people to faith in Jesus (31), ***but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.***

   a. Related verses
      1) 1 John 5:13, *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.*
      2) John 11:27, *She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."*
      3) Matthew 14:33, *And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*
      4) John 3:15-16, *that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
      5) John 5:40, *yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*
      6) John 6:53, *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*
      7) John 10:10, *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*
      8) Acts 10:43, *To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."*
      9) 1 Corinthians 6:11, *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

   b. Comments
      1) Thomas Constable, *This verse unites many of the most important themes in the fourth Gospel. It summarizes John's theology as well as spelling out his purpose. John's purpose was clearly evangelistic. His Gospel is an excellent portion of Scripture to give to an unbeliever. It is probably the most effective evangelistic tool available ... John's purpose was not academic; it was not simply that people might believe intellectually that Jesus is the divine Messiah. It was rather that they might believe those foundational truths, so that they might receive salvation and experience the life of God fully (cf. 10:10) ... John's clear purpose statement concludes the body of this Gospel. I regard 20:31 as the key verse in the book.*
      2) Leon Morris, *John does not think of faith as a vague trust, but as something with content ... Here he singles out two things in faith's content. The one is that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the Messiah, the long-expected one. The other is that he is the Son of God. We take these two as more or less identical, but the Jews of the day did not. The Messiah was not expected to stand in that very close relationship to the Father of which John speaks. John's conception of messiahship is fuller and richer than that of contemporary Judaism (see the comments on 1:20, 41). The combination of terms indicates the very highest view of the Person of Jesus, and one that it must be taken in conjunction with the fact that John has just recorded the confession of Thomas that hails Jesus as "My Lord and my God." There cannot be any doubt but that John conceived of Jesus as the very incarnation of God.*
      3) Warren Wiersbe, *John was not content simply to explain a subject ... He wanted his readers to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved! He was not writing a biography to entertain or a history to enlighten. He was writing an evangel to change men's lives ... Eternal life is not "endless time," for even lost people are going to live forever in hell. "Eternal life" means the very life of God experienced today. It is a quality of life, not a quantity of time. It is the spiritual experience of "heaven on earth" today. The Christian does not have to die to have this eternal life; he possesses it in Christ today.*
      4) Edward Klink, *By making Jesus the subject matter of the Gospel and the object of faith, the Gospel of John has confronted the reader with God himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This God can only be accessed and understood through Jesus and by faith. In short, as the "Christ" Jesus is the powerful expression of God, the king and judge of the saving sovereignty of God, who has enacted the new creation; as "the Son of God" Jesus is the personal expression of God, who makes God known and accessible to humanity. God has established his rule and relationship to the world through Jesus Christ.*
      5) F. F. Bruce, *As John has already testified, "he who believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36). In order that men and women might believe in the Son and live, he wrote his Gospel, and nineteen centuries bear witness to the abundant degree in which his noble purpose has been achieved.*