

John 20 - The Resurrection; Appearance to Mary Magdalene; Appearance to 10 Disciples; Appearance to 10 Disciples + Thomas; Thomas' Confession; Purpose of John's Gospel

V. Passion Narratives (John 18:1—21:25)

(2) Resurrection (20:1—21:25)

(A) Empty tomb (20:1-10)

(a) Mary (20:1-2)

(b) Peter and John (20:3-10)

(i) Peter and John (20:3)

(ii) John (20:4-5)

(iii) Peter (20:6-7)

(iv) John (20:8-9)

(v) Peter and John (20:10)

(B) Resurrection appearances (20:11—21:25)

(a) To Mary (20:11-18)

(i) Mary (20:11)

(ii) Angels (20:12-13)

(a) Question to Mary (20:12-13a)

(b) Answer from Mary (20:13b)

(iii) Jesus (20:14-15)

(a) Mary's agony (20:14-15)

(b) Mary's ecstasy (20:16-18)

(b) To disciples without Thomas (20:19-23)

(i) The fearful disciples (20:19a)

(ii) The faithful Savior (20:19b-23)

(a) His appearance (20:19b)

(b) His comfort (20:19c-20)

(c) His commission (20:21-23)

a. Our commission (20:21)

- b. Our power (20:22)
 - c. Our message (20:23)
 - (c) To disciples with Thomas (20:24-29)
 - (i) The reluctance (20:24-25)
 - (a) The reason (20:24)
 - (b) The requirements (20:25)
 - (ii) The recognition (20:26-29)
 - (a) Manifestation (20:26)
 - (b) Invitation (20:27)
 - (c) Adoration (20:28)
 - (d) Observation (20:29)
- (C) The Mission of John's Gospel (20:30-31)

John 20

(2) Resurrection (20:1—21:25)

If the Gospel of John were an ordinary biography, there would be no chapter 20. I'm an incurable reader of biographies, and I've noticed that 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 is not like any other ordinary man. He is the Son of God. [Wiersbe]

(A) Empty tomb (20:1-10)

(a) Mary (20:1-2)

1 Now on **the first day of the week** Mary Magdalene *came early to the tomb, while it was still **dark**, and *saw the stone *already* removed from the tomb.

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

1 On the first day of the week, early in the morning and while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and noticed that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

- "...first *day* of the week" - Sunday; after Jesus' resurrection, Jewish believers in Christ shifted the day of worship from the 7th day of the week (Saturday) to the 1st day of the week (Sunday), in celebration and remembrance of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

The Jews' original day of rest and worship was Saturday because it was said that God had finished His creation and rested on the seventh day. It was written into their holy

laws. The Christians met for worship on the first day of the Jewish week in acknowledgement of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These Christians actually succeeded in changing this age-old and theologically backed day of rest to Sunday. Keeping in mind what they thought would happen if they were wrong, we must realize that this was probably one of the greatest and biggest decisions any religious body of men had ever made. How are we to explain the change from Saturday to Sunday worship unless something monumental had happened like the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. [Michael Green, scholar]

- The fact of the matter is that the empty tomb is one of the most well established objective facts in history. Our faith, even on days when we feel like it's weak, rests on the empty tomb.
- The rise or fall of Christianity rides on the fact that the tomb of Christ was empty on the third day
 - "...Mary Magdalene" - the first person at the tomb that morning, and the first person Jesus revealed Himself to after His resurrection (Cf. Mark 16:9)
 - "...dark" - the sun hadn't risen yet; but darkness in John's Gospel also refers to spiritual darkness
- Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, in the dark (Cf. 3:2). He was in spiritual darkness and came to Jesus to understand spiritual light.
- Here, we see Mary Magdalene in spiritual darkness (20:2) about Jesus' resurrection. But Jesus will appear to her (20:11) and through this encounter with Jesus, she will receive spiritual light (20:18).
- John omitted the earthquake, the angel rolling away the stone that covered the tomb's entrance, and his 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, and the women's reactions (Matt 28:5-8; Mark 16:5-8; Luke 24:4-8).

Women Who Visited the Tomb Easter Morning			
Matthew 28:1	Mark 16:1	Luke 24:10	John 20:1
Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene
The other Mary =	Mary the mother of James	Mary the mother of James	
	Salome		
		Joanna	
		others	

2 So she *ran and *came to Simon Peter and to **the other disciple whom Jesus loved**, and *said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him."

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

2 So she ran off and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus kept loving. She told them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

- "...he other disciple whom Jesus loved" - the Apostle John

- Mary Magdalene's explanation to Peter and John was her own naturalistic theory of what happened to Jesus' body. She was in spiritual darkness, and when people are in this state, they make up naturalistic theories to explain supernatural events.

(b) Peter and John (20:3-10)

(i) Peter and John (20:3)

3 So Peter and **the other disciple** left, and they were going to the tomb.

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

3 So Peter and the other disciple took off for the tomb.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

- "...the other disciple" - the Apostle John

(ii) John (20:4-5)

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

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

4 The two of them were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and came to the tomb first.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

- Why would John mention the fact that he outran Peter to the tomb? How is that relevant to the resurrection?

— The answer is that John was an eyewitness to these events (Cf. 1:14; 19:35), and the more details an eyewitness provides to the events in question, the more credible they become. This is why prosecutors question witness as to details of an event, because their recollection of minor details strengthens their credibility.

5 and he stooped to look *in*, and *saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; however he did not go in.

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

5 Bending over to look inside, he noticed the linen cloths lying there, but didn't go in.

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

- The stone was rolled away to let the people in, not to let the Lord out!

- Jesus' grave clothes were left in the tomb...

- "...the linen wrappings lying *there*" - Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb (Matt 27:57) and was prepared for burial by two rich men (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus), so the clothes Jesus was buried in were likely very expensive. If Jesus' body was stolen, why didn't the thieves take the expensive grave clothes?

- In addition, an edict by Emperor Claudius made it a capital offense to destroy tombs, remove bodies, or displace the sealing stone, or other stones. [C.K. Barrett]

(iii) Peter (20:6-7)

6 So Simon Peter also *came, following him, and he entered the tomb; and he *looked at the linen wrappings lying *there*,

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

6 At this point Simon Peter arrived, following him, and went straight into the tomb. He observed that the linen cloths were lying there,

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

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

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

7 and that the handkerchief that had been on Jesus' head was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up in a separate place.

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

- "...folded up in a place by itself" - shows that some time was taken to fold up the face-cloth and neatly place it separate from the linen wrappings

(iv) John (20:8-9)

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

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

8 Then the other disciple, who arrived at the tomb first, went inside, looked, and believed.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

- John now enters the tomb after first just stooping in to take a look (v5)

— After Peter barges into the tomb, sees what he sees, and then leaves, John finally enters the tomb

- "...believed" - John connected the dots to what he saw, the empty tomb, with what Jesus said back in 16:20-22, and he believed that Jesus had resurrected from the grave

— Peter left the tomb perplexed, not really sure what to think; John left the tomb believing in the Resurrection

9 For they **did not yet understand the Scripture**, that He must rise from the dead.

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

9 For they did not yet understand the Scripture that said that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

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

- "...did not yet understand" - John had not yet seen the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, but his faith at this point rested on the empty tomb and the promise that Jesus would rise again
- John's faith here is being contrasted by the lack of faith of Mary Magdalene and Peter. All John sees is an empty tomb and he believed in Jesus' resurrection. Mary and Peter, as well as many of the other disciples, had to have visual or physical evidence before believing Jesus had risen.
- In 20:29 Jesus said, Blessed are those who do not see, yet believe. John's faith was at a higher level than the faith of Peter or Mary Magdalene at this point. All faith is saving faith, but some faith is at a higher, deeper level than others.
- "...the Scripture" - the OT prophesied the bodily resurrection of the Messiah (Ps 16:10-11; 22:21-22; Is 53:10-11; Jonah 1:17)

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 Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11).

(20:) Peter and John (20:10)

- 10 So the disciples went away again to their own *homes*.
- 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.
- 10 So the disciples went back to their homes.
- 10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

(B) Resurrection appearances (20:11—21:25)

(a) To Mary (20:11-18)

(i) Mary (20:11)

- 11** But Mary was standing outside the tomb, weeping; so as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb;
- 11** But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;
- 11** Meanwhile, Mary stood crying outside the tomb. As she cried, she bent over and looked into the tomb.
- 11** But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,
- Mary Magdalene appears to be lingering behind after Peter and John left the tomb and went home (v10)

(ii) Angels (20:12-13)

(a) Question to Mary (20:12-13a)

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

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

12 She saw two angels in white clothes who were sitting down, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had been lying.

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

- "...two angels" - John mentions two angels (as does Luke 24:44); Matthew and Mark only mention one angel (Cf. Matt 28:2; Mark 16:5)

— Many people like to point out a contradiction here, but the fact is that Matthew and Mark only refer to one of the two angels, without stating there is only one angel or denying the existence of a second angel. Thus, this is not a contradiction.

— In fact, the verse used most to attempt to show a contradiction is Matt 28:2, which talks about the angel who rolled away the stone. It may be referring to a third angel because it doesn't reference the two angels inside the tomb that John refers to here.

- "...one at the head and one at the feet" - this detailed imagery was likely selected by John to remind us of Ex 25:18 [NASB95]: You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat.

— The Mercy Seat was underneath the two angels (cherubim), who were there to remind Israel that all of heaven was watching what was happening on the Day of Atonement, when the blood was applied to the Mercy Seat.

— When the blood was applied to the Mercy Seat, once each year, it postponed the note of indebtedness for sin for one year (Cf. Col 2:17)

(b) Answer from Mary (20:13b)

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

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

13 They asked her, "Lady, why are you crying?" She told them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him."

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

- The root cause of Mary's weeping was unbelief (Cf. Luke 24:25). The problem with Mary and the others that we'll see who are slow to believe is simply a lack of faith, a heart of unbelief.

- Mary believed at this point that someone had taken Jesus' body out of the tomb (Cf. v2). She refused to believe what Jesus clearly taught would happen (Cf. Luke 24:6-7).
— John here is highlighting his faith juxtaposed with Mary's lack of faith. The operative issue for God is faith (Heb 11:6).

(iii) Jesus (20:14-15)

(a) Mary's agony (20:14-15)

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

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

14 After she had said this, she turned around and noticed Jesus standing there, without realizing that it was Jesus.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

- Mary saw God Incarnate standing right in front of her, yet she did not recognize Him
— We learn from other passages that even the disciples had a difficult time recognizing who Jesus was (Cf. 21:4; Mark 16:12; Luke 24:16)
— After we're resurrected, our bodies will be transformed from our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory (Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2)

The fact that He appeared to Mary rather than Pilate or Caiaphas or one of His disciples is significant. That a woman would be the first to see Him is an evidence of Jesus' 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. Furthermore, Jesus may have introduced Himself to Mary first because she had so earnestly sought Him. She was at the cross while He was dying (John 19:25) and she went to His tomb early on Sunday morning (20:1).

15 Jesus *said to her, "**Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?**" Thinking that He was the gardener, she *said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you put Him, and I will take Him away."

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."

15 Jesus asked her, "**Dear lady, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?**" Thinking he was the gardener, she told him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away."

15 Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?** She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

- "...Woman" - an address of respect, not derision (Cf. 2:4)

- Jesus asks Mary Magdalene the same question the angel asked her (20:13)

- Mary did not answer either of Jesus' questions; her grief had made her somewhat irrational (Cf. 11:21,32)

- It is evident that Jesus' resurrection body changed enough that he was not recognized immediately, but was not so different that it appeared differently in form or composition to Mary Magdalene. On the other hand, there were enough similarities that eventually people recognized that He was the same One who had previously died.

(b) Mary's ecstasy (20:16-18)

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

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

16 Jesus told her, **"Mary!"** She turned around and told him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means "Teacher").

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

- Mary recognized who Jesus was when He called her name (Cf. 10:3). The Shepherd calling His sheep by name led Mary Magdalene out of unbelief and into believe and recognition of who He is.

- When Mary Magdalene recognized Jesus, she immediately swung from the depths of despair to the heights of joy

- The Bible is filled with examples of people going from agony to ecstasy in a moment:

1. Joseph - after 13 years of setback after setback, he went from forgotten in a prison cell to second in command in Egypt
2. Moses - after 40 years wandering and tending sheep in the wilderness, was called by God from the burning bush to set the Israelites free from Egyptian bondage

- But what goes through our minds when we're in the valley, when we're encountering setback after setback, is the satanic whisper "things will never change" or "things will never get better." But we need to be reminded of God and His track record. In His timing and His providence, He can move His little finger and our circumstances change in a split second.

- Mary Magdalene was a "seeker": she was at the foot of the cross (19:25); she was the first person to the tomb on Sunday morning (20:1).

— With all of her faults, to the best of her ability, she was seeking God. Jesus revealed Himself to her first because God rewards the diligent seeker (Heb 11:6b; Matt 7:7).

- Mary Magdalene:

- Healed by Jesus of 7 demons (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2)
- A person of means; a leader among the women
- Following Jesus from Galilee; ministering (Matt 27:56)
- Beheld the crucifixion from afar (Mark 15:40)
- Standing by the cross (John 19:25)
- Locating the tomb, watching the tomb (Matt 27:61)
- Coming early to the tomb with spices (Mark 16:1; John 20:1)
- Being first to see the risen Lord (Mark 16:9)
- Reported the resurrection to the disciples (Luke 24:10; John 20:18)

— Mary Magdalene did not have all the answers, she didn't have the best past, and she didn't respond right away in faith like John did, but you can say this about her: she was where God was. When Jesus was on the cross, she was there; when Jesus arose from the dead, she was there. When Jesus wasn't in the tomb, she wanted to know where He was.

— Consequently, because of her desire to be with/near Jesus, He rewards her with being the first person He encounters after His resurrection.

17 Jesus *said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

17 Jesus *said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

17 Jesus told her, "Don't hold on to me, because I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I'm ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

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

- Mary thought that once she recognized Jesus, things would go back to just the way they were before. She was clinging to an old paradigm. Jesus stopped her and focused her on His ascension back to the Father, because it was His ascension back to the Father that would be the trigger point for a new paradigm to begin.

- He assigned her to go tell the disciples that He was going to be ascending back to heaven to be with the Father (Cf. 7:33).

— Notice that His assignment was not the fact that He resurrected from the dead...it was that He was about to ascend back to heaven to be with the Father.

Why did Jesus forbid Mary Magdalene to touch Him, but later He permitted the disciples to touch Him? An interesting theory.

There are two possible answers:

1. Different Greek words are used. The Greek word which describes the case of Thomas' touching Him means "laying a hand onto someone else's skin." All He asked Thomas to do was touch the areas where His wounds were inflicted at the Crucifixion. In the case of Mary, the Greek word translated "touch" means "to cling" or "to take hold." The picture is that Mary was so happy to see Him alive that she wanted to cling to Him so He would never depart again. But it would be necessary for Him to leave this earth now that His earthly ministry was completed; she was not to cling to Him because He had to leave.
2. There is a second explanation, which is better, based upon the next phrase: "...for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." According to Heb 9:11-12,24; 10:12, it was necessary for the heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed with blood. The Tabernacle that Moses made was a copy of a Tabernacle already in existence in Heaven. Just as the earthly Tabernacle needed the cleansing of blood, even so, the heavenly Tabernacle needed the cleansing of blood.

But why did the heavenly Tabernacle need the cleansing of blood? The main reason is given in Ezek 28:11-16. In this passage, it is learned that when Satan was created and before his fall, he had various positions in heaven:

1. He was the canopy that covered the throne of God
2. He was the guardian of God's throne
3. He was the choir director in Heaven
4. He served as the high priest in the heavenly Tabernacle.

When Satan sinned, he defiled the heavenly Tabernacle, thereby requiring that it be cleansed. Just as the earthly Tabernacle needed cleansing by blood, the heavenly Tabernacle also needed cleansing by blood. The earthly Tabernacle was cleansed by animal blood; however, the heavenly Tabernacle required "better" blood, the Messiah's blood (Heb 9:23-24).

At this point in resurrection history, Jesus needed to take His blood, ascend into Heaven, and sprinkle the heavenly sanctuary, thereby cleansing it. Just as the earthly priest could not be touched until his Day of Atonement sacrifice was completed, even so, Jesus could not be touched until the heavenly sanctuary was cleansed. This meeting between Jesus and Mary Magdalene occurred just before He ascended into Heaven to cleanse the

heavenly Tabernacle. For this reason, Mary was forbidden to touch Him at this point, because He had not yet ascended unto the Father.

Apparently, sometime between this event and the time He talked with Thomas, a whole week later, Jesus had ascended into Heaven, cleansed the heavenly Tabernacle and then returned to earth for the purpose of spending forty days instructing His disciples.

The fact that Jesus would ascend into Heaven before His disciples would see Him is implied in John 20:17, He told Mary: "...go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

He instructed Mary Magdalene to tell the disciples concerning the truth of the Resurrection and that He was about to ascend to the Father. Also, note that the disciples are now called brethren. They are no longer referred to as only disciples or servants, though He still used those terms. They are also now His brethren, because there is now a new relationship between Jesus and all believers as the result of the Resurrection. In keeping with Jesus' instructions, Mary Magdalene reported of the Resurrection to the disciples.

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

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

18 So Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord!" She also told them what he had told her.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

- Mary is immediately called into service, the first such person in the post-resurrection age
- This is further proof that the Bible was authored by God and not man; if the Bible were authored by man, they would never have imagined that the first person to recognize, see and talk to Jesus after His resurrection would be a woman.

- Mary obeyed Jesus' command to go tell the disciples. They did not believe her testimony, as would've been common in that day (to not believe the testimony of a woman) (Mark 16:10-11)

- When the disciples rejoined Jesus as He was talking to the woman at the well, they were amazed that Jesus was even talking to a woman (Cf. 4:27)

- John does not mention Jesus' appearance to the other women (Matt 28:9-10), the account of the guards of Jesus' tomb reported to the Jewish rulers (Matt 28:11-15), and the appearance of Jesus' to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-32), and to Peter (Luke 24:33-35; Cf. 1 Cor 15:5).

Witnesses and Evidence for the Resurrection

No event in ancient history is supported by the testimony of so many witnesses, or recorded so close in time to the event, as the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. The disciples had no hope of Jesus' physical resurrection; it went against all they expected (Luke 24:13-24)
2. Experienced Roman soldiers sealed and guarded the tomb, yet it was empty when the angel rolled away the stone and announced the resurrection (Matt 27:62-66; 28:2-4; Luke 24:1-10)
3. Had Jesus not risen bodily, the Roman and Jewish leaders would have found evidence. Instead, the chief priests bribed the guards to say they fell asleep on duty (Matt 28:12-15)
4. The grave clothes remained in place in the empty tomb exactly where Jesus' body had lain (John 20:6-8)
5. At least two women physically clasped Jesus' feet and worshipped Him (Matt 28:1,9)
6. Jesus showed His disciples His wounds and insisted that they feel His body to know it was real (Luke 24:37-43; John 20:27)
7. Jesus walked, talked, taught and ate with groups and individual believers at many different times and places (Luke 24:13-34; John 20:19,24,26; 1 Cor 5:5-7)
8. He appeared to 500 at one time. When Paul published this fact, most of the 500 were still alive to confirm the truth (1 Cor 15:6)
9. Many witnessed Jesus rise bodily into the clouds of heaven (Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11)
10. The witnesses to the truth of Jesus' bodily resurrection gladly suffered ridicule, persecution, and death (Acts 2:1-41; 4:1-31; 5:17-31; 12:2)
11. The changed lives of believers are the enduring evidence of the resurrection (1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Thess 1:9)

(b) To disciples without Thomas (20:19-25)

(i) The fearful disciples (20:19a)

(ii) The faithful Savior (20:19b-23)

(a) His appearance (20:19b)

(b) His comfort (20:19c-20)

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

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

19 It was the evening of the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood among them. He told them, "Peace be with you."

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

- "...the first *day* of the week" - Sunday (see notes on v1)

— God rested on the seventh day (Saturday) after the six days of creation (Gen 2:2-3)

— The transaction that occurred on the cross should bring to our mind the Sabbath...on the Sabbath the work ceased; in Christ, works ceased because His work on the cross finished all the work necessary for salvation

- The disciples were together, likely in the Upper Room, minus Judas Iscariot (Cf. 13:30) and Thomas, who was present eight days later (20:26)

— Thomas, because he was not meeting regularly with the brethren, was cheated of this blessing. Thomas spent eight days in fear, doubt and anxiety. If he was where he was supposed to be, meeting with the disciples, he would have been illuminated and enlightened as the other 10 disciples were.

— Because of a lack of presence, he forfeited a spiritual blessing. He dwelt much longer in fear and doubt than he needed to if he was in regular fellowship with the disciples (Cf. Heb 10:25).

— Many Christians treat church and fellowship as optional...I don't feel like it, I'll just watch it online. Many Christians treat church or fellowship in a way that we wouldn't treat anything else in our lives...we don't treat our jobs as optional, we don't treat paying our bills or our taxes as optional, but we treat church/fellowship as if it's optional...if I don't feel like it, I won't go, and that's ok.

— When you're trying to get out the door to church or other fellowship is typically the time where you are under the biggest attack. Satan understands the power of Christian fellowship, he understands that you're going to be encouraged, fed, and changed by hearing God's Word taught so he does everything he can to discourage or dissuade you from being involved.

— If you're camping and about to leave, the best way to quickly put out the fire, other than douse it with water, is to separate the coals/wood from each other. When the coals are separated, they flame out much quicker. Same holds true for the Christian life.

- The disciples were in hiding because they were worried that after the Jews killed Jesus, the disciples were next on their hit list

— What a difference between the disciples here when compared to just a few weeks later, after Pentecost, when the disciples were under constant attack, yet continued to serve the Lord and speak His Word boldly. The only way this happens is:

1. They see the resurrected Christ (which will happen momentarily)
 2. They receive an endowment of the Holy Spirit (Cf. v23; Luke 24:49)
- God never calls us to do anything that He doesn't empower us to do first
- "...Jesus came and stood in their midst" - Jesus entered the room although the door was shut (NIV: "locked")
- It appears that Jesus' resurrection body was not bound by the typical laws of nature: He "passed through" His grave clothes, He "passed through" the walls of the tomb and the stone that was rolled in front of the entrance, and here He "passed through" the walls and locked door of the Upper Room.
- Jesus exhibited things in His resurrected body that He did not exhibit before His death. This is interesting because Jesus is the "firstfruits" of the resurrection (Cf. 1 Cor 15:20). The fact that Jesus resurrected from the dead means that I will one day resurrect in the same way, along with everyone else who ever lived.
- Jesus is the only Man who has ever resurrected from the dead who did not die a second time
- When we receive our resurrected body, it will be like His resurrected body (1 John 3:2; Phil 3:21). Our resurrected body will be like God created it, without the curse of sin upon it.
- "...Peace *be* with you" - so much more than a nice greeting to His disciples; Jesus offers them peace 3x (here, v21, v26)
- Jesus is revealing the content of His ministry: Christ's whole ministry and His purpose for coming into this world, revolves around peace. If we don't understand peace, we don't understand why He came.
- In the Upper Room, Jesus told His disciples: **Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful** (14:27). Jesus is offering peace that is inaccessible from any other source.
- Then again in the Upper Room, Jesus said: **These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world"** (16:33).
- The Bible talks about two types of peace:
1. Positional peace: a right standing before God (Rom 5:1); prior to our justification, the announcement of our righteous standing before God, we were enemies of God (Rom 5:10)
 2. Experiential peace: peace that we can experience through the resources of the Holy Spirit as we walk through the valleys and difficulties of life (Cf. Mark 4:36-38)
- Not surprisingly, peace is included alongside grace in the greeting of each epistle. Whenever Paul mentions peace in a greeting, it's always along with a mention of grace. We cannot have peace, either positionally or experientially without grace.

— In this passage, with 10 of His disciples, Jesus is not just offering a greeting to them, He's imparting peace to them. They can't have positional or experiential peace outside of Him.

The seventh day of the week, the Sabbath, commemorates God's finished work of Creation (Gen 2:1-3). The Lord's Day commemorates Christ's finished work of redemption, the "new creation."

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

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

20 After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side, and when they saw the Lord, the disciples were overjoyed.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

- After imparting peace to them, the next thing Jesus does is reveal Himself in His resurrected body

— When Jesus appeared to them out of thin air, the disciples were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit (Luke 24:37)

— Fear quickly turned into faith, and faith quickly turned into joy. When we're walking in fear, we're not walking in faith, and we have no joy. But when we're walking in faith, fear subsides and joy tends to increase.

- If Jesus received a resurrection body, why are the wounds on His hands and feet still present? It appears that the wounds of Christ from the crucifixion are a permanent part of Jesus' resurrected body (Cf. Rev 5:6).

(c) His commission (20:21-23)

a. Our commission (20:21)

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

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

21 Jesus told them again, **"Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."**

21 Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**

- Jesus now begins to commission His disciples for their work in the church (Acts 2)

- "...Peace *be* to you" - see notes on v19
- "...just as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" - this is John's version of the Great Commission (Cf. Matt 28:18-20)
 - This reference to Jesus sending out His disciples isn't the first in John's Gospel (Cf. 17:18). This is, in a sense, the disciple's graduation day. They are moving from learning, they are moving from the classroom, immediately into ministry. They are no longer just disciples ("learners"), they are now apostles ("sent ones").
 - The word "apostle" (*apostolos*) is used two different ways in the NT. In the technical sense, it's used to describe the 11 disciples and Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot. There were clear prerequisites for being named an apostle (Acts 1:21-22).
 - In a non-technical sense, an "apostle" is one who is sent. It was used of Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14) and of those who were collecting an offering for the struggling saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:23), as well as Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25).
 - The words "disciples" (*mathētēs*) and "apostles" (*apostolos*) are used interchangeably when referring to the 12 (Cf. Matt 10:1-2)
 - We decipher whether the word is used technically or non-technically from the context

The Great Commissions (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8)

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 20:20-23; Acts 1:8). Jesus apparently gave this commission on at least four separate occasions. The first commission recorded chronologically was evidently the one in John 20:21-23. The second was recorded in Mark 16:15-16. Matt 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.

All four gospels close with a commission from our risen Lord; we can scarcely escape its crucial importance. These commissions express God's will for every believer in the present age.

Some Christians believe that Jesus intended this commission only for His original disciples. They point to the fact that the writers of the NT epistles never referred to it. However, even though they did not refer to it explicitly, they clearly presupposed its validity for the whole church.

1. They simply cast it in different terminology (2 Cor 5:20)
2. The universal scope of the commission clearly argues for its continuation.
3. The repetition of the commission (5x) clearly suggests that Jesus intended all of His disciples to carry it out.

4. This was the last instruction Jesus gave His disciples before He returned to His Father (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8).

Clearly Jesus is presenting His mission as a model for His disciples' mission. Thus, many Christians have concluded that what characterized Jesus' ministry (healing the sick, casting out demons, feeding the hungry) should characterize the Church's mission. This understanding is correct.

However, the emphasis of Jesus' mission in John's gospel has primarily been that Jesus always carried out God's will in perfect obedience (Cf. 5:19-30; 8:29). Even before His crucifixion, Jesus stressed the importance of the believer's obedience as the fulfillment of this paradigm (15:9-10). The purpose of Jesus' incarnation was the spiritual salvation of the world (1:29); this is also the believer's primary, though not exclusive, purpose (Cf. Gal 6:10). Just as Jesus always operated in dependence upon 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).

Since believers no longer belong to the world (15:19), it was necessary for Jesus to send His disciples back into the world to complete the mission. Our mission does not replace Jesus' mission, but He carries out His present mission through us.

b. Our power (20:22)

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

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

22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

- "...Receive the Holy Spirit" - two views:

1. Temporary infusion: Jesus gave the disciples a temporary infusion of the Holy Spirit so that they could listen and understand Jesus teaching about the kingdom over the next 40 days until His ascension.
 - But in the Upper Room, Jesus never spoke of two comings of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 14:16; 15:26; 16:7-8,13)
 - The "main event" whereby the Holy Spirit would begin indwelling believers did not begin here, it would begin at Pentecost. The Day of Pentecost is the key shift in the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:4).
 - If Jesus was giving His disciples a pre-endowment of the Spirit before Pentecost, why did He do it without Thomas? Why didn't Thomas get this temporary enablement eight days later when he met Jesus?
 - The change that happened in the disciples did not happen before Acts 2:

- Peter went back fishing (21:3); he went out there all night and caught nothing
 - Moments before Jesus' ascension, these same disciples were confused about the kingdom (Acts 1:6-7)
2. Promise of Acts 2
 - Jesus was making a promise, not to be fulfilled at the time He says this, but 50 days in the future on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus is speaking in "proleptic speech" meaning Jesus is speaking of something as if happened in the past or is happening now, but in reality the event is yet future.

The Power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22)

1. Great Commission (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)
 2. His power (Gen 1:2; Rom 8:11)
 3. OT (Judges 14:6; Zech 4:6)
 4. Christ (Luke 4:18-19)
 5. Early church (Acts 4:31)
 6. NT saint (Gal 5:16)
-
1. Great Commission (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)
 - Every time Jesus mentions the Great Commission in the Gospels and Acts, He mentions the Holy Spirit right alongside of it
 - The growth of the church from Pentecost to the worldwide influence that it is today is not due to clever marketing schemes; it's due to the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. His power (Gen 1:2; Rom 8:11)
 - The Holy Spirit was active in Creation
 - The Holy Spirit is the One who brought Christ out of the grave
 3. OT (Judges 14:6; Zech 4:6)
 - Samson was completely transformed when the Holy Spirit came upon him
 - God is the One who brings forth what He seeks to bring forth in our life
 - The tasks that were given to Zerubbabel were impossible, but not when he was under the power of the Holy Spirit
 4. Christ (Luke 4:18-19)
 - The Holy Spirit also empowered Jesus during His ministry
 - If Jesus was dependent upon the Holy Spirit, how much more do we need to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit?

5. Early church (Acts 4:31)

- The Holy Spirit gives us boldness (2 Tim 1:7)

6. NT saint (Gal 5:16)

- As NT Christians, we have no ability to walk the walk that God has for us without daily, moment-by-moment dependency upon the Holy Spirit

c. Our message (20:23)

23 If you forgive the sins of any, **their sins have been forgiven them**; if you retain the sins of any, **they have been retained**."

23 If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, *they* have been retained."

23 If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. If you retain people's sins, they are retained."

23 **Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

- At first read, it appears that Jesus is giving the disciples the ability to forgive sins...Roman Catholicism and many other religions interpret this verse in such a way. But that is not what Jesus is saying here...

— The problem with this interpretation is Mark 2:7c: Who can forgive sins except God alone? (Cf. Matt 9:2-3; Luke 5:21)

— So if only God can forgive sins, then how are we to interpret what Jesus says here?

- "...*their sins* have been forgiven them...they have been retained" - the second part of each conditional clause is in the Passive voice, which means the subject *receives* the action of the verb. This is different than the Active voice, which means the subject *performs* the action of the verb.

— For example...the Active voice is: Joe hits the ball; the Passive voice is: Joe was hit by the ball.

— So the verbs "forgiven" and "retained" are both in the Passive voice, meaning they received the action. In other words, someone has already done the forgiving or the retaining. It's not something that we do, it's something that has already taken place.

— Beyond this, both verbs ("forgiven" and "retained") are in the perfect tense, which indicates a one-time action in the past, with on-going benefits

- So what Jesus is saying that as the disciples go out and preach the gospel, fulfilling the Great Commission, they will run into people who will believe them and they will run into people who do not believe them. For those who believe the gospel, the disciples could tell them what God has already done in heaven, namely that He has forgiven their sins. The disciple's authority comes from announcing what God had already done.

- When someone responds affirmatively to the gospel and puts their faith/trust in Christ for their salvation, we have the authority to tell them that their sins have been wiped clean. We don't wipe their sins clean, only God does that, but Jesus is giving us the authority to announce to them that their sins have been wiped clean.
- Conversely, when you preach the gospel and people reject it, Jesus is giving us the authority to announce to them that what God has done in heaven (forgiving sin) does not apply to them, that their sins have been retained and not forgiven. Because the only way to obtain forgiveness of sins is to believe/trust in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus' ministry and evangelism modeled the authority that He is giving His disciples (and believers today) here (Cf. 9:39-41). Jesus is essentially telling us to reveal to unbelievers the consequences/repercussions of their decision, whether it is to believe or to not believe.
- Our authority does not come from acting as God, it comes from announcing the will of God as disclosed from heaven

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. [Calvin]

(c) To disciples with Thomas (20:24-29)

(i) The reluctance (20:24-25)

(a) The reason (20:24)

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

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

24 Thomas, one of the Twelve (called the Twin), wasn't with them when Jesus came.

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

- Thomas missed out on a blessing that he could have had if he was present with the disciples in the Upper Room when Jesus appeared

— He spent an entire week not at the same level of spiritual insight that the other disciples were at. He spent an entire week in unbelief, in despair, lacking in faith, not understanding who Jesus really is because he was not present for whatever reason.

— *We miss a great deal when we separate ourselves from Christian fellowship and 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're alone. [Barkley]*

— There are things that God will show us, reveal to us, or strengthen in us that will not happen outside of the context of fellowship. We become fortified as believers when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are deployed and utilized in the context of Christian fellowship.

- Thomas was not in the same state as the other disciples because assembling together with them was not a priority to him for some reason
- "...Didymus" - his Aramaic name; Thomas was his Greek name

(b) The requirements (20:25)

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

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

25 So the other disciples kept telling him, "We've seen the Lord!" But he told them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger into them, and put my hand into his side, I'll never believe!"

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

- Thomas begins to lay out requirements for believing in the resurrected Christ...pretty presumptuous by Thomas. But what should completely blow our minds is that Jesus responds to those requirements!!! The God of the universe, who created all things, loves us so much that He will humble Himself to the point where He will meet our unnecessary, humanistic needs before we come to faith in Him.

- "...saying" - *legō*, imperfect tense meaning they kept on saying over and over again; they were continually saying that they had seen the Lord. You get the impression that after seeing Jesus, that was all they could talk about.

— Thomas never received this blessing because he was not present with them

- From Thomas' requirements for belief that he lays out, notice that he had no problem believing in the death of Christ. However, he did not yet believe in Christ's resurrection, even with 10 eyewitnesses telling him it was so.

Thomas' mistake was that he withdrew from fellowship, seeking loneliness instead. And because he was not present with his fellow believers, he missed the first coming of Jesus. We miss a great deal with we separate ourselves from Christian fellowship and choose to be alone. Things happen to us while in fellowship that will not happen to us when we're not. When our circumstances go south, or we're overcome with sadness, we have a natural tendency to pull away from fellowship. However, that is the very time when, in spite of our circumstances, we should seek fellowship with believers, for it is there that we are most likely to meet Jesus face to face.

(ii) The recognition (20:26-29)

(a) Manifestation (20:26)

26 Eight days later His disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "**Peace be to you.**"

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

26 A week later, his disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were shut, Jesus came, stood among them, and said, "**Peace be with you.**"

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, **Peace be unto you.**

- "Eight days later" - the originally met on Resurrection Sunday (20:19) and now they were meeting together again the following Sunday

— This shows that beginning on Resurrection Sunday and immediately following, believers in Jesus Christ began meeting on the first day of the week (Sunday) instead of the last day of the week (Saturday) as devout Jews had been doing for 1500 years (Cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2)

- Jesus entered the room by appearing out of nowhere, just as He did the prior Sunday when He met with the disciples (20:19)

— We should not think of Jesus' resurrected body as if it was Casper the Friendly Ghost. Jesus had a physical body that could be touched, as Thomas will do in a moment. Jesus was also able to eat, but He could pass through walls or teleport Himself around at will at the same time.

- "...Peace be to you" - third mention by Christ in this passage (see notes on v19)

- The fact that Jesus basically repeated the same thing in the same place, first without Thomas then again a week later with Thomas, shows that Jesus loved Thomas, and wanted to give him the same opportunity to believe as the other disciples.

(b) Invitation (20:27)

27 Then He *said to Thomas, "**Place your finger here, and see My hands; and take your hand and put it into My side; and do not continue in disbelief, but be a believer.**"

27 Then He *said to Thomas, "**Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.**"

27 Then he told Thomas, "**Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, but believe.**"

27 Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.**

- Jesus was not present when Thomas laid out his requirements for belief (20:25). This demonstrates Jesus' omniscience in knowing what Thomas needed to see and touch in order to believe (Cf. 1:48).

— Jesus had no interest in tantalizing Thomas' curiosity; what He was interested in is inculcating faith, creating an environment where faith could be exercised.

— Jesus was always about "putting the cookies on the bottom shelf" (J.V. McGee) for us; He was not interested in hiding Himself or making faith in Him become difficult. God "condescended" to our level so that we could see, hear, understand who He is because after all, He became one of us.

Although some Christians may believe Christianity is true without any evidence, Jesus never required this. Instead, Jesus asked His followers to believe *because* of the evidence.

(c) Adoration (20:28)

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

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

- "...My...my" - Thomas personalized his belief and relationship with Christ; he didn't claim salvation based on some other person or thing besides Jesus Christ

- "...Lord" - *kurios*, Jesus' title; a revelation of who He is

— The name "Lord" is a description of Jesus' title; it is not a response required by human beings to enter into a relationship with God

— Acts 16:30-31 demonstrates the use of the title "Lord": and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs [*kurios*], what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe [*pisteuō*] in the Lord [*kurios*] Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

— Notice that the Philippian jailer used the same title for Paul and Silas (*kurios*) that Paul used for Jesus (*kurios*).

- In this passage, the word "believe" (*pisteuō*) is used 5x (20:25,v27 [2x],v29[2x]). There is no mention in this passage about commitment, perseverance or surrender. If salvation were about commitment, perseverance and surrender, the focus is on me and not on Jesus Christ.

— In Acts 16:31, when the focus is on the condition that the Philippian jailer must satisfy to enter into a relationship with God, the focus is not on commitment, perseverance or surrender, it's on belief and belief alone (*sola fide*).

— Anyone who tries to add anything else to the simplicity of salvation is subtracting from what Jesus has done and in the process is unknowingly and unintentionally in some cases

teaching a false gospel. The gospel is not what we do to climb up to God through perseverance, commitment or surrender, it's what God has done for us.

- "...God" - *theos*, Thomas recognized Jesus Christ as God

- Most Christians today know Thomas as "doubting Thomas" and that reputation is well deserved. But we also should recognize that Thomas' declaration here, calling Jesus God, if uttered in public was punishable by stoning (Cf. Lev 24:16).

— In 10:30-31, Jesus claimed that He and the Father are one, and the Jews picked up stones to stone Him; in 8:58-59 Jesus claimed to be "I AM" and the Jews again picked up stones to stone Him.

Witnesses to Christ's Deity in John's Gospel

- 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)
- Thomas (20:28)
- John the Apostle (20:30-31)

Claims of Christ to Deity

- Names of Deity (8:58)
- Attributes of Deity
 - Holiness (8:46)
 - Omniscience (11:11-14)
- Prerogatives of Deity
 - Raise the dead (5:28-30; 11:43)
 - Judge all men (5:22,27)

(d) Observation (20:29)

29 Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you *now* believed? **Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."**

29 Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? **Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."**

29 Jesus told him, "Is it because you've seen me that you have believed? **How blessed are those who have never seen me and yet have believed!"**

29 Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

- "...Blessed" - *makarios*, doesn't mean happy, but rather being acceptable before God, holding favor with God
- What gives a person blessing and favor before God? It is responding by faith to the claims of Christ (Cf. 13:17)
- "...who did not see, and yet believed"- every believer since Jesus' ascension to heaven has believed without seeing Jesus Christ in human flesh (Cf. 1 Peter 1:8-9)
- John, when he arrived at the tomb, saw the empty tomb and believed that Jesus resurrected from the dead, before he ever saw Jesus (Cf. 20:8)
- Jesus is not bashing Thomas' faith (or lack of it). He's saying that there are many people after Thomas who will come to the same conclusion as Thomas did, without ever seeing Jesus' resurrected body or touching the scars in His hands, side, and feet. These people will be blessed/accepted/favored for their faith.
- What about commitment? What about perseverance? What about surrender? Jesus doesn't ever mention those words in a salvation/belief context because those are terms that apply to our sanctification, not our justification.
- "seeing" - to many, Jesus' reference to "seeing" is a figurative reference to evidence (i.e. Blessed are those who trust in Christ without demanding proof." This is a faulty interpretation. According to this view, Jesus was faulting Thomas for seeking evidence to buttress his belief instead of taking the "blessed" path of blind faith.
- The "blessed are those of blind faith" interpretation is contradicted by the very next verse (20:30), the purpose statement for John's Gospel. Sometimes context clarifies what the author meant, but other times context makes it clear what the author *did not* mean. In this case, Jesus couldn't be chiding Thomas for demanding evidence for faith when John says in the very next verse that this was the very reason he wrote this Gospel.
- Jesus wasn't using "seeing" here as a metaphor, He was speaking literally. He chastised Thomas for demanding a face-to-face encounter with Jesus before he would believe his friends, who did have a face-to-face encounter.
- This is confirmed in Mark's Gospel (Mark 16:14). When Jesus appeared to all 11 disciples together, including Thomas, he reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.
- So the bottom line is that Thomas' demand to poke his fingers into the pierced hands, feet, and side of Jesus was a bit much. The report of the other disciples, plus the women, should have been adequate evidence.
- Before we rail on Thomas too much, he was a warrior for Christ after Pentecost. Extra-biblical sources tell us that Thomas ministered and preached the gospel in southern India. For his efforts, he was speared to death on the east coast of India.

30 So then, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not recorded in this book.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

- "So then" - "Therefore"; connects Jesus blessing on those who believe but have never seen (20:29) with what John is about to say here, which is the purpose/reason he wrote this Gospel

— John knew that after Jesus' ascension, believers would not have access to view/touch Jesus' physical body, or see the wounds on His hands, side and feet. They would have to believe by faith, not by sight.

— John wrote this Gospel to give people guidance on how to respond in faith to Christ, after the time that Jesus ascended back to the Father in heaven. These are people that would not have the opportunity that Thomas and the disciples had to see and touch Christ's body after His resurrection.

- "...many other signs" - *sēmeion*, neuter plural; the referent of "these things" in v31. Specifically, "other signs" (here) and "these" (20:31) refer to:

1. Turning water to wine (2:1-12)
2. Jesus' resurrection (2:18-19; Cf. 20:24-29)
3. Healing a son from afar (4:46-54)
4. Healing at Bethsaida (5:1-15)
5. Feeding the 5000 (6:1-14)
6. Walking on the water (6:15-21)
7. Healing a man born blind (9:1-7)
8. Raising Lazarus (11:1-44)

— Each of the above signs are in the two "signs" sections of John's Gospel (1:19—12:50; 18:1—20:31). Verses 30-31 frames the purpose statement of these two sections.

— In 13:1—17:26, often called the Upper Room Discourse or "Discipleship Discourse," and 21:1-25, John 10:10b frames the purpose statement since these sections written specifically to believers.

— John 10:10b: **I came so that they would have life, and have it abundantly.** This statement could even be considered the overarching purpose statement for John's Gospel, superseding John 20:30-31, since it includes the purpose for Christ's ministry to believers as well as unbelievers.

- John is admitting that his Gospel is incomplete when it comes to all of the signs and miracles that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry (Cf. 21:25)
— The Bible, and in particular the Gospels, never claim to be a complete biography of Jesus' life and work. For example, we don't know anything that happened in Jesus' life between the age of 12-30 (Luke 2:42—3:23), so we can't approach the Bible or the Gospels as if they are a biography of Jesus' life, because they leave out many key details and time periods.

31 but **these have been 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.

31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

31 But these have been recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and so that through believing you may have life in his name.

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

- "...these" - neuter plural, referring directly to the "signs" in v30, which refer to the signs in the two "signs sections" of John (1:19—12:50; 18:1—20:31)

— These sections include Jesus' seven discourses, His seven "I AM" statements, and the ultimate sign: Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead.

— This is a tremendous statement on the sufficiency of Scripture. John states that Jesus performed many other signs that were never recorded, yet his conclusion isn't to look to unwritten traditions.

— John distinguishes between what was written and unwritten, then grounds saving faith in what was written. Christians didn't have to wait centuries for the church to tell them what scriptures or in general what to believe in order to be saved. The written record is presented as sufficient to bring someone to saving faith in Christ.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

GOD HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO BELIEVE AND HAVE LIFE.



JOHN ACKNOWLEDGES

Jesus did many other signs that were never written down.

JOHN 20:30



BUT HE DOESN'T POINT TO UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS.

His focus is not on what was left unwritten, but on what was written.



HE DECLARES THE PURPOSE OF WHAT WAS WRITTEN.

“

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

JOHN 20:30-31



THE WRITTEN RECORD IS PRESENTED AS SUFFICIENT TO BRING SOMEONE TO SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST.



CHRISTIANS DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT CENTURIES FOR THE CHURCH TO TELL THEM WHAT SCRIPTURES—OR IN GENERAL WHAT TO BELIEVE—IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.



**WHAT GOD CHOSE TO WRITE IS ENOUGH.
BELIEVE IT. TRUST IT. LIVE IT.**

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED AND PROFITABLE | 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

@thebibleincontext

- "...have been written" - v30 talks about what *has not* been written, but v31 talks about what *has* been written
- God has decided to communicate with humanity, His creation, through the written word, specifically in three ways:
 1. Revelation - *apocalypsis*, unveiling or disclosure
 - God came to the writers of Scripture and in some way disclosed to them truth
 - John received his disclosure of truth by being an eyewitness to Christ's ministry for three years.

2. Inspiration - the process by which the biblical writers recorded the revelation/disclosure that they received.

- As these writers wrote the pages of Scripture, the Holy Spirit was active not only disclosing truth, but actually guiding the writing process (Cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- As the Holy Spirit guided the biblical authors, He never overrode their personalities, temperaments, writing styles or life experience.

3. Illumination - the Holy Spirit's ministry of helping us understand the truth of God's Word (1 John 2:27)

- God uses the laws of language to communicate His truth. Because God has decided to communicate His truth to mankind in language, the laws of language, grammar, syntax and context govern our interpretation of His truth.
- The Holy Spirit will not override the laws of language. As we begin to understand and master these laws of language (sometimes called hermeneutics or Bible study methods), then the Spirit of God as we are open to Him, begins to bring to our awareness and understanding to our mind about what the Bible teaches.

- "...so that" - reveals a result that we are to experience after we read John's Gospel with an open heart and honest mind

— John's Gospel, as recorded by John and inspired by the Holy Spirit, will do this work in our hearts and minds if we allow it. What is that work? Belief.

— Well how can the Bible produce that result if it is incomplete? Because God did not disclose everything, but He disclosed those things that are sufficient to bring about His desired result: that humanity would believe on His Son. This is the doctrine of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

— There is an obsession by some people to search outside of the Bible to learn about things that the Bible doesn't speak on. Who cares! If we understand that Scripture is sufficient for all things related to faith and godliness, we will prioritize the study and application of biblical doctrine and not worry about or concern ourselves about topics that the Bible does not cover.

— It's easy to obsess about what the Bible doesn't say...why don't we start obsessing about what the Bible does say!

— Many people are interested about some type of private disclosure from God...a voice, a vision, a dream, some kind of lost book to find some type of secret information. But if you question them about what the Bible says about a topic, they don't know. It's better to concentrate time and effort studying this book and figure out what it says to us than chasing after some sort of secret revelation from God.

— After you master the book God gave to us, the Bible, then you can spend the rest of your life pursuing extra-biblical writings and secret revelations. And let me say, you can never exhaust the Bible.

- "...you may believe" - *pisteuō*, to believe, to be persuaded of, and hence to place confidence in, to trust. It signifies, in this sense of the word, reliance upon, not mere credence [*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*]
- It is used 99x in John's Gospel; 160x in the NT
- The verb is in the subjunctive mood, meaning there is a possibility or potentiality of a person believing, not of certainty; the action of believing may or may not occur depending upon the circumstances
- Why does John use the verb *pisteuō* in the subjunctive mood here? Because the choice of whether or not to believe is individual; the choice is based upon human volition.
- We have to respond as an act of our own free will to what John discloses in this Gospel. God the Holy Spirit *will not* force Himself upon any person because we were created as image bearers of God, thus we have the choice of our own free will.
- As an image bearer of God, we share in some of God's attributes...His communicable attributes. One of God's communicable attributes is freedom of choice. God has His own free will, which He is free to exercise according to His own will.
- This is why the Tree of Knowledge was in the Garden of Eden in the first place...if the tree wasn't there, available to Adam & Eve, God would not be respecting how He created us. If you are an image bearer of God, you have to have an avenue of rebellion available if you choose to pursue that route. If you don't have that opportunity, you are no more than a puppet on a string, a robot, having no control over anything in your life.
- To be sure, there is also an enablement by God to believe (see extensive notes on 16:7-11), however that enablement will never override man's final decision
- It is the purpose of John's Gospel: that people would read it, learn about the signs that Jesus performed, and that would lead them to belief. What is provided in this Gospel is not all-encompassing, but it is sufficient/enough to inculcate faith in Jesus Christ.
- "...Jesus is the Christ" - faith is only as good as the object it is placed in
- John is saying that people need to place their faith in Jesus Christ
- "Christ" - *christos*, the Messiah, the Anointed One (Cf. 1:49; 8:24); Jesus' title
- "...the Son of God" - we aren't to only believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but we also must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is the eternally existent second member of the Trinity
- As the eternally existent second member of the Trinity, Jesus shares in the same essence of deity as the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Son is just as much deity/God as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
- However, in the Trinity, the Son (just like the Father and the Holy Spirit) maintains His own personage, meaning that He remains uniquely the Son. The Son is not God the Father nor God the Holy Spirit. He is uniquely God the Son. He has always been God the Son and He will always be God the Son.

- There is more to saving faith than to simply believe that Jesus is a miracle worker.

Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you that Jesus was a created being. This is not the same Jesus of the Bible. The Mormons will tell you that Jesus is not part of the Godhead/Trinity, and that he and Satan are brothers. This is not the same "Jesus" that the Bible teaches us about.

— In order to believe for salvation, we must believe that Jesus is both of these things: the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One prophesied in the OT; we must also believe that He is the Son of God, that He was God Himself, the second member of the Trinity, and that He has the power to keep the promises He gives to those who believe in Him, namely and most importantly, the power to forgive us of sin and reconcile us with a holy God.

- "...believing" - *pisteuō*, present active participle

— John didn't want people to simply "believe" although that is the first and most important step...he wanted people, once they believed and received salvation and eternal life, to keep on believing. John is calling on us to continue to trust Jesus throughout our life, after we come to initial faith in Christ.

— Life is hard sometimes, and what John wants us to do is to continue to trust in Christ during the hardships of life...the negative doctor's report, the job loss, the financial turmoil, the personal struggles with habits.

— There are many times when we can become "unbelieving believers"...Lord, you're enough to give me the gift of life, I have my get out of hell free card, but I just got a negative report from the doctor. I have a mortgage payment due this month. I can trust you with the safekeeping of my soul, but I'm not sure I can trust you with my finances.

— After we're saved, we often seek to handle life's problems through our own human power rather than continuing to trust in the one who gave us the gift of eternal life

— John is telling us that we shouldn't be this way...that we should continue to develop the faith that we put in Christ for our salvation, and deploy that same faith in our daily life, daily struggles, daily emergencies because Jesus Christ is sufficient to not only save our soul from hell, but also to get us through the struggles of life.

— When we become like this as believers, we think we're cheating God but in reality we're cheating ourselves. We don't miss out on salvation because that is eternally secure, but we miss out on the blessings that we could have had based on our justification.

— The textbook example of "unbelieving believers" was the exodus generation after they left Egypt and Mount Sinai. They saw the 10 plagues that God used to judge Egypt, including seeing Israelite firstborn saved by God while all of the Egyptian firstborn died. They crossed the Red Sea on dry ground as God parted the waters, with walls of water on the right and left as they walked across. They saw the waters restored and drown the Egyptian pursuers, including the Pharaoh himself. These Israelites are in the Hall of Faith

(Heb 11:29), which is a record of those who trusted in God in the OT time period, despite overwhelming odds. They were believers at that time (Ex 14:31).

— After crossing the Red Sea, they began a two month journey to Mount Sinai (Ex 19:1). God provided them the entire time. After receiving the Law at Sinai, then all they had to do was to keep trusting God to get into Canaan, the Promised Land. It should've been only an 11-day journey between Sinai and Canaan (Deut 1:5). But because of their lack of faith, their 11-day journey turned into a 40-year nightmare (Num 13-14).

— When they arrived at the border of the Promised Land, in Kadesh-Barnea, they sent out spies. When the spies came back, all of them were terrified, saw giants in the land, and recommended that they don't enter. Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies who had the faith in God to want to enter the land, knowing that God would provide for them. They understood God's promises that He would give them this Land, and they didn't forget the miraculous wonders that God did to get them out of Egypt.

— Joshua and Caleb were overruled, and the Israelites did not enter in the Land that God had given them. So God judged them and said that, except for Joshua and Caleb, all of the adult Israelites at that time would continue to wander in the wilderness until they had all died, and at that point God would work with their children.

— The Israelites, minus Joshua and Caleb, are perfect examples of unbelieving believers...people who trusted in God for their salvation, but they would not trust Him to help them with a problem in life that was greater than they were.

— You have some theologians who will tell you that the Israelites did not enter the Promised Land, and the Promised Land is a type of heaven, so these Israelites were not saved. If so, what do you do with Moses? The Promised Land was never a type of heaven, it was called numerous times in the Torah Israel's "inheritance" (Num 16:14; 18:20; 26:53-56; 27:7-11; 32:18-19,32; 33:54; 34:2,14-18,29; 35:2,8). If your theology is that you don't believe the Exodus generation is in heaven today, you miss the point of the entire first five books of the OT.

— These estimated 1.5M Israelites did not make it into Canaan, but they made it into heaven. What did they miss? What did they forfeit? Not salvation, but rather the blessing that they could have had that flowed from their salvation, because of their lack of faith. To the extent that we keep on believing is the extent that we receive and enjoy the temporal blessings that God has for us, and to the extent that we are "unbelieving believers" is the extent that we forfeit those blessings. It's not a question of heaven or hell, but of temporal blessings or the forfeiture of those blessings.

- Peter is another great example of an "unbelieving believer"...no one questions Peter's salvation, he was the main man in Acts 1-10. Yet many times in Peter's life, his circumstances were bigger than him and he took matters into his own hands and took his eyes off the Lord:

— Matt 14:28-31 - Peter asks the Lord to go out onto the water, and he begins to walk on the water. But then Peter sees the wind and became frightened and began to sink. He took his eyes off the Lord and put them onto his problems, and he sank.

— What Peter forfeited by taking his eyes off the Lord was not heaven or hell, but a temporal blessing of some sort if he would've kept his eyes and faith on the Lord

— John is teaching us here that the same Lord who saved us is the same Lord who wants to help us in our daily circumstances and in the trials of life, if we would just take our eyes off our circumstances and keep them on Him. To the extent that we don't do this, is the extent we cheat ourselves out of temporal blessings.

- What does "believing" not mean? Contrary to what is widely taught today by Calvinism, the wrong interpretation of "believing" is that you must keep on believing to prove you're a believer in the first place. In other words, according to Calvinism, the evidence that you are truly a child of God is manifested by the fact that your faith will never fail under any circumstance.

— They get to this interpretation by arguing that "believing" [*ho pisteuōn*] is an articular present tense participle (a present tense participle with a definite article in front of it), which they say means that an on-going/continual belief is a necessary condition for salvation.

— However, this is a mis-interpretation of the present tense "believing." Just because "believing" is an articular present tense participle doesn't mean that it requires on-going belief in order to be true. There are many examples of articular present tense participles in the NT that are obviously not life-long, continuous events. In each of the verses below, the word in **bold** is an articular present tense participle (in the same form as "believing" in v31), but in none of these examples does the verb go on continually/forever:

John 4:13: Jesus answered and said to her, "**Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again;**

John 4:26: Jesus *said to her, "**I am He, the One speaking to you.**"

John 4:36: **Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the one who sows and the one who reaps may rejoice together.**

John 5:3: In these *porticoes* lay a multitude of those who were **sick**, blind, limping, or paralyzed.

John 5:24: "**Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.**

John 6:14: Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to **come** into the world."

Mark 6:14: And King Herod heard *about it*, for His name had become well known; and *people* were saying, "John **the Baptist** has risen from the dead, and that is why these

miraculous powers are at work in Him."

- "...the Baptist" - articular present tense participle: did John the Baptizer's baptism activity ever stop? Of course it did because at this point in time, John the Baptist *was dead*.
 - This articular present tense participle could not be describing John the Baptist's continual baptizing because he was dead at this time. It was just describing him as a person (a "baptizer").

— Where the "continual belief" comes in biblically is not to determine whether or not a person is saved/justified, but rather if they are a disciple (Cf. 8:30-31). Continuous belief is not required for our justification, but it is required for our sanctification.

— Calvinism camps primarily on three doctrines to the near-exclusion of all others:

1. Total Depravity - the lost sinner is so lost in their trespasses and sins that they don't even have the ability to believe. And because they don't have the ability to believe, God has to grant them the gift of faith in order for them to believe. They see the unbeliever as someone who has the same ability to believe as a cadaver. God only gives the gift of faith to those who are His "elect." He has to give them the gift of faith because of man's depravity. And then they say that the faith that God gave us can never fail in the believer (a person can never struggle with doubt or sin) because God can't fail. If God's gift of faith fails, God fails.
 - This then brings in the content of "spurious" faith or faith that is not authentic. It's is man's faith, not a gift from God. Thus, "spurious" faith may appear to be "real" faith for a time, but when a believer backslides or apostasizes or is caught up into habitual sin, they have "spurious" faith and were never "truly" saved.
2. The Sovereignty of God - Calvinism believes that if you leave man any wiggle room whereby to believe the gospel, you have somehow diminished the sovereignty of God; and if you damage God's sovereignty, you damage His glory. In their minds, for man to exercise any decision whatsoever in salvation is to diminish God's glory.

3. The Glory of God

— There are no problems whatsoever with these three doctrines when they are interpreted properly, but Calvinism doesn't interpret them properly. However, Calvinism gives them a disproportional influence in the Word of God to the extent that other concepts or doctrines are damaged or ignored.

- If you believe this heresy (that faith is a gift), it will have a tremendous affect on your Christian life:

1. Lack of assurance - you'll spend your entire Christian life worried about whether or not you have the right kind of faith. You'll lack any notion of the assurance of your salvation.

- *It is the privilege, not of some but of all by the Spirit through faith who are born again in Christ to be assured of their salvation from the very moment they place their trust in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their soul. This assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word.*
2. A harsh judgmentalism and pharisaicalism takes over - spiritual leaders, and worse, lay people, get into the business determining whether someone is saved or not. They get into the business of judging whether each other are saved or not. They get into the business of judging whether they themselves are saved or not.
 3. The faith as a gift mentality begins to corrupt the presentation of the gospel - if the heresy of hyper-Calvinism is correct, the lost person does not even have the *ability* to believe the gospel. If they don't have the ability to believe the gospel, why share it with them? What they would need to pray for is, God please give me the gift of faith.
 - Nowhere in Acts, a history of the beginning and evangelizing of the church, do we find someone praying to receive the gift of faith, or the disciples praying for those whom they are evangelizing to pray for the gift of faith.
- So how does an unbeliever come to Christ? If we're not given the gift of faith from God, then how does salvation really work? John 16:7-9 explains it. It was to the disciple's (and our) advantage that Jesus would ascend and send the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit would convict the unbelieving world of their sin of unbelief.
- The Holy Spirit is not giving a certain select few the gift of faith...He is convicting the world of their need to believe. And as they come under the conviction (convincing) of the Holy Spirit, they believe of their own volition/free will. We make a conscious decision to believe the gospel out of our own free will, the Holy Spirit does not believe for us. He simply convicts/convinces us of the truth of the gospel and our need for it.
- Man is indeed dead in trespasses and sin, demonically influence, depraved, and doomed to judgment (Eph 2:1-3). If left to our natural devices, we would absolutely not seek God. This is why the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit is so critical. But as that convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit comes upon an unbeliever, it is not as if the Holy Spirit overrides human volition/free will and gives people the gift of faith whether they want it or not.
- It's interesting that our relationship with the Lord is analogized to a bride and groom. When a man sees a beautiful woman, he is immediately attracted to her. Then as he gets to see her inner beauty, he must have her! He begins to woo her and put on the full court press. But whatever the man does to woo the woman, she must at some point out of her own volition/free will give in and love him back.
- There is no scenario in Scripture where the husband coerces or forces the bride to become his wife against her will. You don't find those teachings in Christianity at all, maybe in Islam, but not in Christianity.

- Once we're convicted/convinced and come to Christ by faith, it does not diminish God's glory or His sovereignty one iota.

Rom 4:4-5: Now to the one who works, the wages are not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness

— In the mind of God, faith is the one thing that people can do that is not a work. This is how God thinks about salvation and why He has orchestrated the plan of salvation around our faith in Him. Because allowing people to believe of their own volition is the mind and plan of God, it does not diminish His glory or His sovereignty one bit.

— Jesus in Luke 8:6 describe a seed (the gospel) that fell on rocky soil...it grew up but then withered away because it had no moisture. In v13, Jesus interprets this parable for us: the seeds that fell on the rocky soil heard and received the word with joy, but they had no firm root. They believe for awhile, and in time of temptation fall away.

— The Calvinist looks at this verse and says they are an example of someone who never received the gift of faith because if their faith was real, it would have endured. But what do you do about the fact that Jesus said that they believed, and the crop sprang up? The person where the gospel fell on rocky soil did not forfeit heaven, they forfeited temporal blessings that God had available for them because of their lack of on-going (not initial) faith/belief.

- "...you may have" - *echō*, subjunctive mood, indicating possibility or potentiality

— John is saying you have these promises of Jesus that I have documented in my Gospel, now the ball is in your court. What are you going to do with this information? Maybe you'll respond and believe, maybe you won't. That's the meaning of the subjunctive mood here.

— Other verses that put the responsibility on us, in the second tense of our salvation (sanctification), to make moment-by-moment decisions that please God include: Luke 8:14; John 15:2; Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 2:10.

- "...life" - *zoē*, life, but refers to regeneration (see Regeneration for 14 Truths About Regeneration)

— The Greek word for regeneration is *palingenesia*, used only 2x in the NT (Matt 19:28; Titus 3:5). It's a compound word: *palin* = again; *genesia* = creation (Genesis). Chafer describes regeneration as a "God-induced metamorphosis."

— So regeneration can be defined as "the impartation of divine life"; it is the impartation from God to us of the very life of God

— Chafer says that at least 85 NT passages describe the fact that the Christian is a changed person by virtue of the fact that he has received the very life of God. So 85x the Bible tells us that if we are truly Christians, we have received the life of God.

— Some synonyms for regeneration include: the new birth, spiritual reproduction, spiritual renewal, born from above, born again, and re-creation

— The notion of regeneration doesn't just show up in the NT...it is something that was described in the OT (Ezek 36:24-28), where the nation of Israel is being regathered in her own land in the last days. As this vision is interpreted for us in Ezek 37:11-14, it's described as a valley of dry bones.

— *Regeneration is not an experience, it is the foundation of all Christian experience.*

[Walvoord]

— God begins His relationship with us through regeneration, which is the impartation of the life of God

A SUMMARY OF THE SEVEN SIGNS IN JOHN				
Sign	Significance	Belief	Unbelief	Reference
Changing water to wine	Jesus' power over quality	The disciples		2:1-11
Healing the official's son	Jesus' power over space	The official and his household		4:46-54
Healing the paralytic	Jesus' power over time	The paralytic?	The Jews	5:1-9
Feeding the 5,000	Jesus' power over quantity	Some people in the crowd		6:1-15
Walking on the water	Jesus' power over nature	The disciples		6:16-21
Healing a man born blind	Jesus' power over misfortune	The blind man	The Pharisees	9:1-12
Raising Lazarus	Jesus' power over death	Martha, Mary, and many Jews	The Jewish authorities	11:1-16