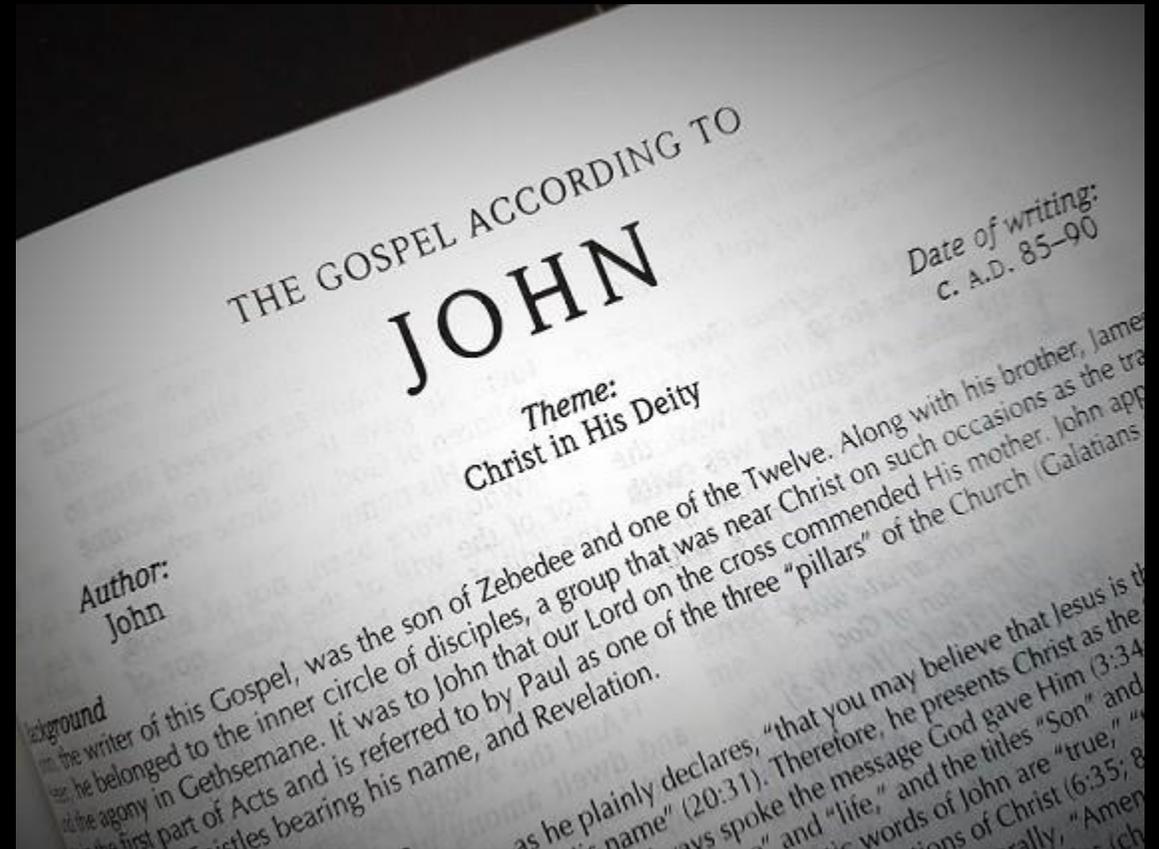


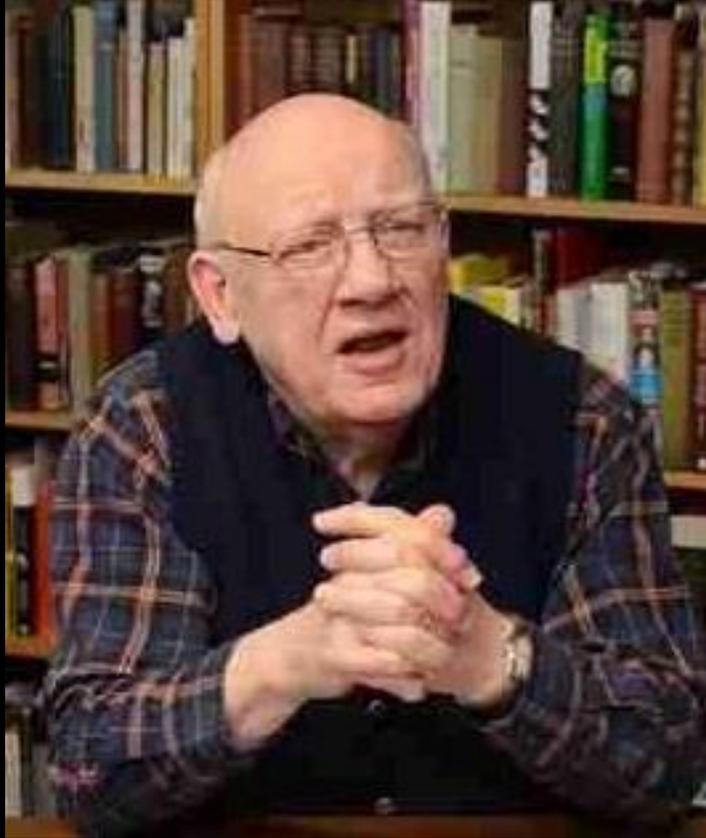
Verse by Verse

John 20



John 20 Introduction

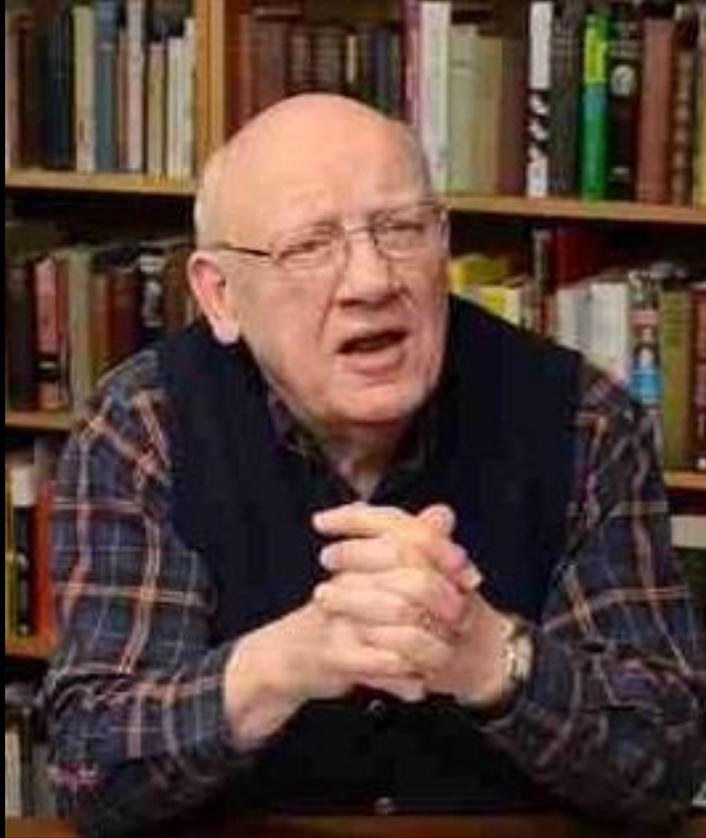
John 20 Introduction



I am an incurable reader of biographies, and I notice that almost all of them conclude with the death and burial of the subject ...

– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),
pastor, author, native Hoosier

John 20 Introduction



... The fact that John continued his account and shared the excitement of the Resurrection miracle is proof that Jesus Christ is not like any other man. He is, indeed, the Son of God.¹

– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),
pastor, author, native Hoosier

John 20 Introduction

- Last week we looked at the death and burial of Jesus.
- If this were a normal biography of a normal person, then that is where the story would end.
- Yet, here we are with two more chapters to go.
- John begins with the empty tomb and then takes us through several appearances of the risen Christ.

John 20 Key Verses

John 20 Key Verses

- John 20:30-31 (ESV)

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20 Outline

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1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10
2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18
3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23
4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29
5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- 20:1-2 On the first day of the week
- The **Gospels** all agree that Jesus rose from the grave early on Sunday morning.
- Since the earliest days of the church, Christians have celebrated the resurrection every week.
- And that is why we are gathered here right now.

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- 20:1-2 All of the Gospel accounts tell us that the women were the first to go to the tomb.
- John focuses on [Mary Magdalene](#).
- Her first reaction is a misunderstanding.
- The “[we](#)” in [v.2](#) may indicate that she was not alone, which would agree with the other Gospels.

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- 20:2-10 Peter and John are the first of the disciples to go to the tomb.
- John is, of course, “the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved.”
- John outran Peter, but Peter was the first to go in.
- This kind of detail strongly indicates an eyewitness account.

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- 20:5-8 The linen cloths and the face cloth clearly made an impression upon John.
- Mary had assumed someone moved the body.
- For John, the fact that the tomb was empty except for the wrappings indicated something else.
- Why leave those? He “saw and believed.” (v.8)

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- The **empty tomb** is the first point of faith, at least for the **other disciple** (aka John).
- **A bit of advice for dialogue with nominal Catholics.**
- It's fine to encourage a more personal, more biblical faith with a nominal Catholic – as with anyone else.
- It is better **not to focus** on the **empty cross** – as in “Jesus is no longer on the cross.”

1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- Here is why:

The cross of Jesus



The crosses of others, like the two thieves – also empty



1. The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- The **empty tomb** is highly significant.
- The empty cross is not so significant.
- **To Catholics, Jesus is not exactly still on the cross.**
- People can be a little superstitious with a crucifix, which is a cross with Jesus on it.
- People can be equally superstitious about a cross without Jesus on it.

2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

- 20:12-13 Woman, why are you weeping?
- The angels had the appearance of men (Luke 24).
- When they ask her, she reveals that she still does not understand what happened.

2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

- 20:14-18 Even upon first seeing Jesus, she thinks it must be the gardener.
- This is a reasonable conclusion according to 19:41.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb ...

2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

- 20:14-18 Jesus plays along for a minute, much like the angels, even asking the same question in v.15
“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”
- Mary’s eyes are opened when Jesus calls her by name.

2. Jesus & Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

- John seemed to believe when he saw the empty tomb with the orderly burial cloths in it.
- Evidently, such was not the case with Peter or with Mary, but Jesus still gently brings them to faith.
- Faith in Christ and belief in the resurrection are both essential to our faith.
- How or how long it takes to get there is variable.

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

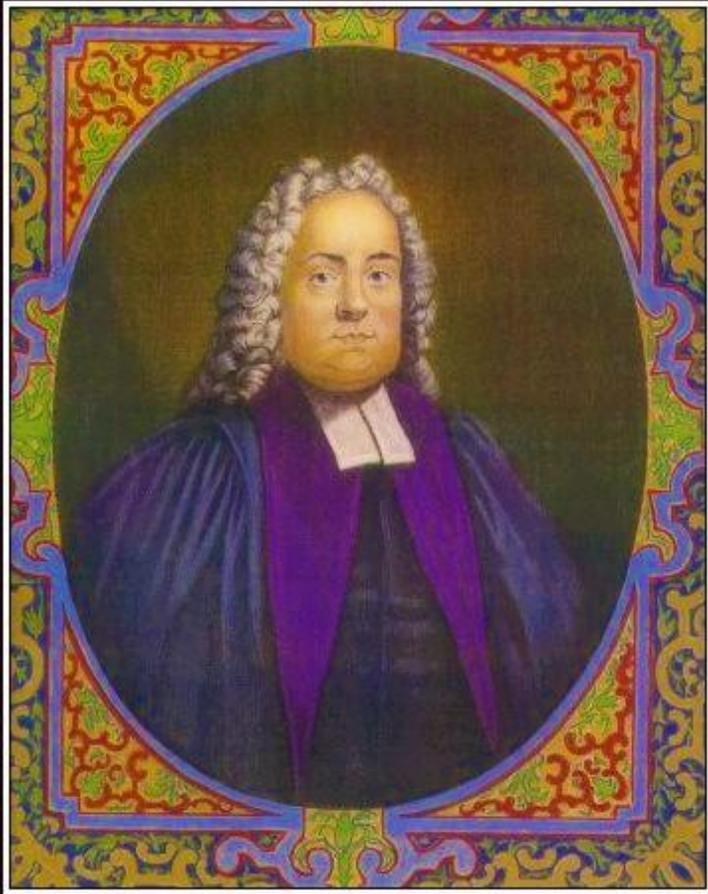
3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

- 20:19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week (that is, Sunday).
- So this is still that same day.
- The doors being locked ... for fear of the Jews

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

- 20:19 Jesus came and stood among them
- Jesus appears to them through the locked doors.
- 20:20 Christ showed them his hands and his side as evidence that it was truly him.
- He was dead and how he is alive – and they knew it.

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23



Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds. Christ's wounds were to speak on earth that it was he himself, and therefore he arose with them; they were to speak in heaven, in the intercession he must ever live to make. ²

*—Matthew Henry (1662 – 1714),
British Nonconformist Minister*

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

- 20:21 “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
- When we say we represent Jesus to the world, that is not just a nice-sounding expression.
- He has sent us just as the Father once sent him.

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

- 20:22 “Receive the Holy Spirit”
- This should be understood as a limited gift or a limited empowering, with the fullness coming at Pentecost.
- Even in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit empowered believers at times, just not as he does now.

3. Jesus & the Disciples 20:19-23

- 20:23 If you forgive ... if you withhold forgiveness
- Forgiveness of sins is ultimately God's business.
- Still, our commission involves proclaiming what God has done in Christ on the basis of a person's faith.
- We have the ability to declare those who believe forgiven and those who do not believe – not forgiven.

4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

- We sometimes call Thomas “Doubting Thomas.”
- In v.27, Jesus does seem to at least mildly rebuke him.
- “Do not disbelieve, but believe.”
- But look at Thomas’ strong expression of faith in v.28, “My Lord and my God!”

4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

- 20:28 “My Lord and my God!”
- This may be the clearest declaration of Christ’s deity anywhere in Scripture.
- It takes us all the way back to John 1:1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

Notably, when John wrote his Gospel, the same designation (Latin Dominus et Deus) was applied to the Roman emperor Domitian (AD81 – 96) ...

– Andreas Köstenberger,
in *Encountering John*



4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

*... The countercultural message of John's Gospel is clear; Jesus, not the Roman emperor, is Lord and God, and he alone must be worshiped.*³

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in *Encountering John*



4. Jesus & Thomas 20:24-29

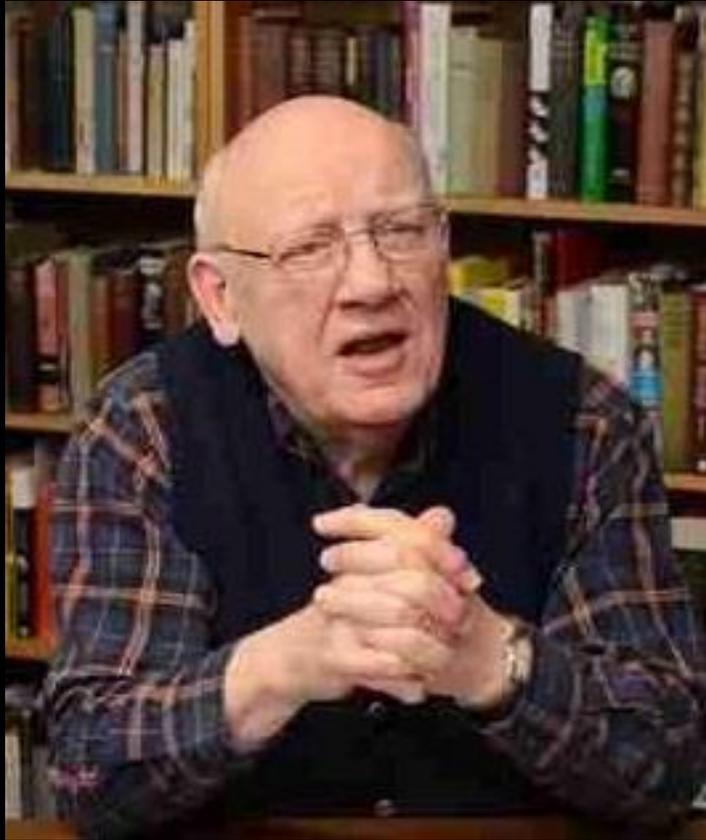
- 20:29 Thomas got a very personal kind of proof of Christ's resurrection, but that is not typical.
- Jesus anticipates the first readers of this Gospel as well as us when he says,
- "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31

5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31

- All through this Gospel John has been challenging us and pushing us toward faith in Christ.
- He presents these signs as evidence for us to believe.

5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31



It is not necessary to “see” Jesus Christ in order to believe. Yes, it was a blessing for the early Christians to see their Lord and know that He was alive; but that is not what saved them. They were saved, not by seeing, but by believing. ⁴

– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),
pastor, author, native Hoosier

5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31

- It is “by believing you may have life in his name.”
- John “saw and believed” at the empty tomb.
- Mary and the disciples seemed to lack understanding until they saw the risen Christ.
- Thomas needed a little bit more and Jesus offered it to him.

5. Why Write a Gospel? 20:30-31

- We may never get to see Jesus this side of heaven.
- And yet, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
- John has provided us with plenty of eyewitness testimony, more than we get for most things.
- It is up to us to take that step to put our faith in Christ.

John 20 What We Just Read

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John 20 Key Points

John 20 Key Points

- The **empty tomb** was the first thing that prompted faith in these early Christians.
- Since that time, Christians have set aside **the first day of the week** for worship.
- The faith of the disciples grew gradually.
- Different people believed at different time, based on different points or levels of evidence.

John 20 Key Points

- And yet, they were saved by the fact that they believed – as with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!”
- What they saw or heard did not matter without a personal decision of faith.
- John wrote this Gospel with the goal of bringing us to that personal faith decision.
- Our responsibility is to believe.

John 20 A Prayer

John 20 A Prayer

- Dear Lord Jesus,
- We have not seen you like these early disciples, nor do we expect you to appear personally to us, and yet we have taken that step to believe.
- With Thomas we proclaim that you are our Lord and our God.

John 20 A Prayer

- We thank you for dying for our sins and rising from the grave. You truly have defeated sin and death.
- As the Father sent you and as you sent those earliest disciples, we accept the mission you have given us.
- We are sent to proclaim the forgiveness of sins to all who believe, who put their faith and trust in Christ and Christ alone.

John 20 A Prayer

- Please empower us to carry out that mission.
- Breathe your Holy Spirit onto us and fill us with his presence and power.
- In your name we pray,
- Amen

John 20 References

1. Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 387). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
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