



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Using your imagination is one of the best ways to prepare to search the Scriptures. Imagine for a moment you live in first-century Jerusalem. You are there during the weekend of Jesus' death. As you're walking past the garden tomb where He was buried, you suddenly sense the presence of a person. You're startled to see it's Jesus! What do you feel? What might you say? What do you imagine He would say to you? Describe the encounter in your own words.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Down through the centuries, thoughts and reflections on Christ's resurrection have spawned the composition of hymns of praise, more contemporary worship songs, and even grand symphonic oratorios. Read John 20:11–31 with an attitude of worship. Then write your own worship song or hymn of thanksgiving to God, expressing praise that Jesus is alive!



Observation: The Reality of Christ's Death

Take some time to make basic observations from John 20:11–31. Focus on words, conversations, and any details John provided to add richness to the scenes. In the space below, write down anything that stands out to you as important.

Quotable

*The great news is
Jesus did rise! And
that fact has made
all the difference.
Because He rose,
good overcame
evil, light overtook
darkness, love
overthrew hate, and
life overwhelmed
death.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



Under each name below, write down what is unique about the individual's reaction to the empty tomb.

Mary (John 20:2)

Peter (20:6–7)

John (20:8–10)

Encounters with the Risen Christ—Mary Magdalene

The first individual Jesus sought to visit was the grieving Mary Magdalene. We can only imagine the delight He took in turning her sorrow into joy.

What details did John include about where Mary was and her emotional state just prior to encountering Jesus (John 20:11–13)?

What was Mary's assumption regarding Jesus' missing body?



At first, whom did Mary assume she was talking to that morning (John 20:14–15)?

Describe Mary's response after she realized she was speaking with the risen Jesus (20:16–17).

Encounters with the Risen Christ—The Disciples

Abruptly, John cut to another scene. The room was dark, lighted only by an oil lamp. The disciples were huddled together in fear, terrified of what the Jewish officials may have in store for them now that they had eliminated Jesus. But Jesus Himself pierced their gloom.

What details did John include about the setting of the disciples' first encounter with the risen Jesus (John 20:19)?

What did Jesus do to verify for His disciples that it was truly Him standing before them (20:20–23)?

Though John's accounts of the disciples encountering Jesus are chock-full of thrilling details that help build his case for Jesus' resurrection, Thomas' dramatic encounter with the Savior solidifies the meaning behind it all.





Interpretation: The Reality of the Resurrection—John 20:1–10

Often, embedded in the dialogue of a scene are clues for interpretation. That’s why, particularly in narrative sections of Scripture, you should pay close attention to what is said by key individuals in the scene.

Thomas has long been considered the “doubting” disciple because of his reluctance to believe Jesus was alive. But John detailed Thomas’ personal encounter with Jesus after the resurrection in which, through a series of interactions with Jesus, his doubt turned to triumphant faith!

Why do you think Thomas had such doubts regarding the resurrection?

How can God use our doubts to begin to lead us to a place of faith?

What proof of His resurrection did Jesus offer to Thomas (John 20:26–28)?

Explain how Thomas’ bold declaration of faith in Jesus helps support John’s stated mission in writing his gospel so “that you may continue to believe” (20:31)?



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

Decades after Thomas made his bold statement of faith in Jesus, the apostle Paul stood on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece, before a curious but skeptical audience of philosophers, poets, and intellectuals. This New Testament scene provides a compelling correlation to the truth John revealed in his gospel. Read carefully Paul’s stirring words to this august group of doubters.



“God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man [Jesus] he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30–31)

Thomas struggled with doubt. The skeptics on Mars Hill, according to Paul, were ignorant of truth. But neither was exempt from coming to terms with the clear evidence—the proof—that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

How does this passage provide you confidence in the resurrection so you can testify to its veracity with certain boldness? In other words, how does Christ’s glorious resurrection strengthen your faith and embolden your witness?

Application: Jesus Our Model in Suffering

How does doubt diminish your ability to trust God for things you cannot see or understand regarding your present circumstances?

How can the truth of the resurrection bring you to a deeper level of trust in God’s power?

A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for the miracle of Christ’s resurrection. Thank you for helping me overcome the limitations of my faith—my doubts, my fears, and even my lingering moments of unbelief. Give me greater boldness to believe in Your power and to willingly and passionately share with others the message that Jesus is alive! In the name of the risen Jesus, amen!



EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

Reactions to the Resurrected Lord

John 20:11–31

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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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