

# EXALTING CHRIST . . . THE LAMB OF GOD

## A Miraculous Resurrection

John 19:38–20:10

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

As you begin this study, pause to reflect on what you believe about Jesus' resurrection. Ask yourself a series of questions:

- Do I really believe Jesus was raised from the dead? If so, why?
- Have I ever truly examined the biblical evidence for this crucial doctrine of Christianity?
- How prepared am I to defend the resurrection against skeptics' questions?
- If I do believe, how does Christ's resurrection transform my life?

Thinking through these questions and others will move you to careful reflection of one of John's final scenes from his gospel.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

A fresh reading of a familiar passage of Scripture can help us glean new insights and open our eyes to truths we may have overlooked in the past. Read through John 19:38–20:10 from multiple versions or translations. Once you finish reading, make some notes about what stood out to you.

Now that you've refreshed your thinking about this moving section of John's gospel, you're ready to take a more focused look.

## Quotable

*Who moved the stone? That's a question that any thinking person must wrestle with. And your answer will affect your whole life.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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### Observation: The Reality of Christ's Death

Observation is the step in the *Searching the Scriptures* process where you identify significant details that help you build a foundation for interpretation. John carefully presented the evidence of Jesus' physical death with the express purpose of highlighting His miraculous resurrection. Making your way back through the passage, look for John's evidence that Christ died a physical death and was buried in a sealed tomb.

#### The Certainty of His Death—John 19:32–40

Skeptics of Christ's resurrection lean on the argument that Jesus was not dead when He was placed in the garden tomb. Perhaps He was unconscious or lay in a coma, awaking once in the grave. Yet John's account challenges such claims.

At this point in John's account, Jesus' lifeless body was still hanging on the cross. With the Sabbath approaching, the Jews avoided leaving bodies hanging on crosses during those sacred hours.

What did the soldiers intend to do by breaking the legs of the crucified criminals (John 19:31)?

According to John, why didn't the soldiers break Jesus' legs after doing so to the two criminals (19:33)?

How might the soldiers have concluded that Jesus was already dead?



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What did one of the soldiers do next to Jesus' body (John 19:34)?

The fluid that flowed from Jesus' pierced side came out as separated liquid—blood and water. Why is this significant?

Following the confirmation of Jesus' death by the soldiers, John revealed that close companions of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, requested access to His body so they could properly prepare it for burial (19:38–40).

How does John's description of the great care these two men took to prepare Jesus' body provide further evidence that Jesus died?

Describe how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus prepared Christ's body to be buried. Be sure to include specific details from John's account in John 19:38–40.



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What emotions do you think accompanied their actions as they carefully removed Jesus' body from the cross, lifted Him into their arms, carried Him to a place of preparation, and tenderly cleaned His mangled, lifeless form? Try to describe the scene in your own words.

Having painstakingly prepared the Savior's body for burial, Scripture simply states that, "since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there" (John 19:42). The ordeal was finally over . . . there was a finality to that moment.

### The Finality of the Tomb—John 19:41–42

How does the fact that Jesus' body was laid in an empty tomb support the evidence that He did die on the cross?

How do burial ceremonies today signify finality for grieving loved ones who participate in that solemn act?

Why do you think John took such care to chronicle what happened to Jesus' body following His death on the cross?

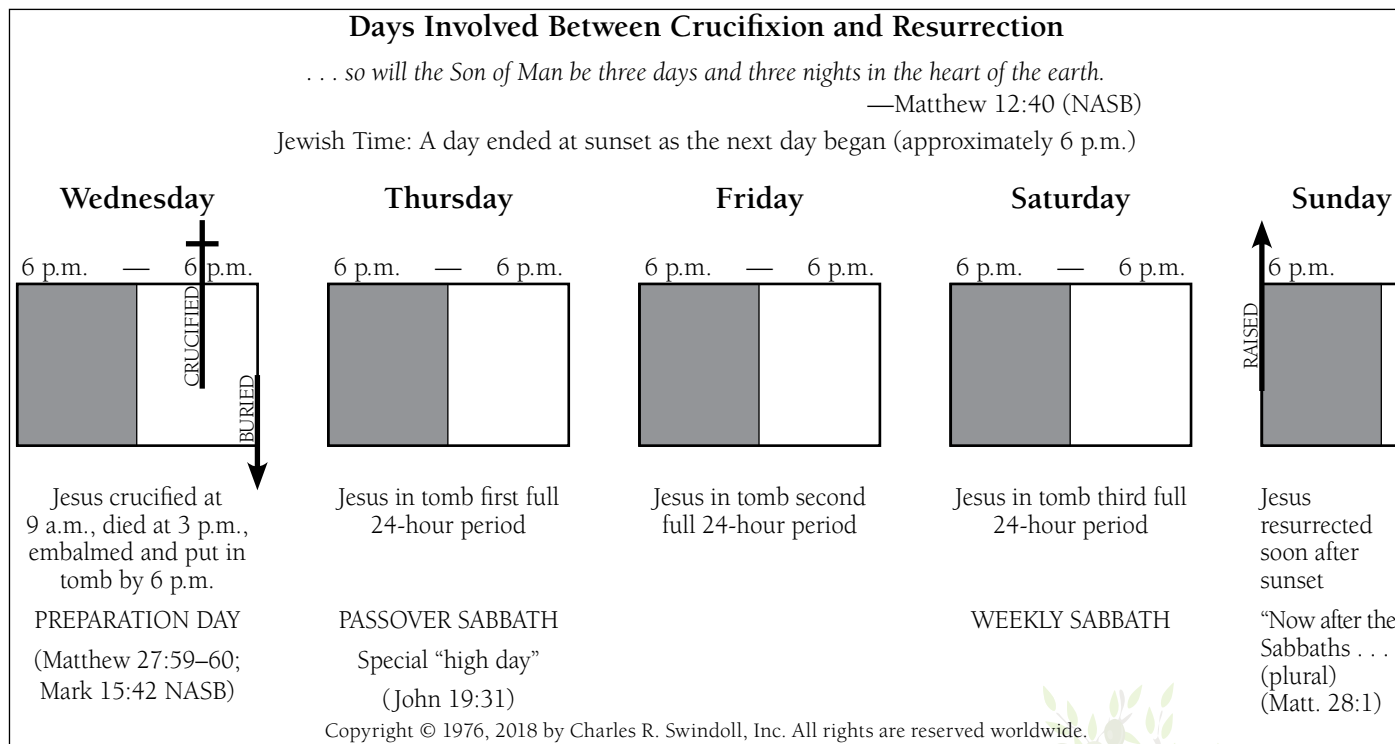




### Pausing for Perspective

Many biblical scholars agree that Jesus died and was buried on a Friday. Christian tradition has long observed this understanding by celebrating Christ’s death and burial as part of Good Friday services around the world. Chuck Swindoll holds to the view that Christ’s death occurred on Wednesday. This view is founded on a literal interpretation of Matthew 12:40 in which Jesus declared, “For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” While Jews in that day viewed any portion of a day as an entire day, when nights are mentioned in the Bible, mere idiom becomes a literal expression of time. In other words, Jesus would have been in the grave for three entire days and three entire nights, and Friday evening to Sunday morning doesn’t calculate.<sup>1</sup>

Study Chuck’s chart below for further insight into his view of the timeline of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.



John 18 concludes with the grim events surrounding the night of Christ's death. But John opened a window of hope in chapter 19 through which the shining beams of resurrection fill the once dark tomb of grief. Surely, this is what it all means!



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

John carefully walked us through the images of the garden tomb like a tour guide introducing tourists to a fascinating site. By focusing on details, John brought deep meaning to the reality of Christ's resurrection.

The gospel of John states that Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive at the tomb early Easter morning (John 20:1).

What do you think Mary was expecting to see or to experience?

Describe in your own words what happened to Mary. What was her experience according to John 20:1?

What message did Mary relay to the disciples following her experience at the tomb (20:2)?

Once Peter and John arrived at the tomb, what did they do (20:5–8)?



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Notice John’s use of the word translated “noticed” or “saw.” John used three different Greek words for “noticed” or “saw” in John 20:3–9, each marking a progression from physical to spiritual sight.

John used the Greek word *blepo* when he wrote that John (speaking of himself) “saw the linen wrappings lying there” (John 20:5, emphasis added). John peered into the cave and noticed the linen wrappings but didn’t recognize their significance at first.

How would you characterize John’s initial observation?

Next came Simon Peter, huffing and puffing from his run and eventually making his way into the tomb. Scripture says that Simon Peter also “saw” the linen wrappings, but this time the Greek word used was *theoreo*, from which is derived the English word *theorize* (20:6).

Peter saw something he wasn’t expecting, and it stopped him in his tracks. What might Peter have been theorizing at that point?

Though Peter had a theory, he remained confused about what he was seeing. John, however, was beginning to see the light: he “went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead” (20:8–9, emphasis added).

In this instance, John used the Greek word *horaō*, meaning “to perceive.” That means John got it! The light went on in his head and in his heart, and in his own words, “he believed”!

How does John’s progression from physical sight to spiritual understanding help you interpret this passage?



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In a couple of sentences, summarize how you would explain the resurrection to an unbelieving friend or relative.

Even more than the truths surrounding the suffering and death of Jesus, the fact of His resurrection influenced the writings and ministries of New Testament writers. John's firsthand account of Christ's death and resurrection helped fashion the bedrock upon which all New Testament doctrine formed.



### **Correlation: How Does It Relate?**

For every individual confronted with the reality of Christ's resurrection, the evidence must move from the head down to the transforming center of the heart. That is a work of the Holy Spirit. Take some time to examine what the Holy Spirit revealed to other writers of Scripture about what that empty tomb of our risen Savior accomplished and continues to accomplish in peoples' lives. Write your thoughts below each reference.

Acts 13:30–39

Romans 1:1–4

Romans 6:1–14





1 Corinthians 15:50–58

Ephesians 1:18–23

Colossians 2:9–12



### Application: Jesus Our Model in Suffering

What glorious transformation awaits everyone who ultimately believes, as John did, the witness of the empty tomb! The shining light of Christ's gospel is the hope of resurrection for all who believe in His name.

Two principles emerge from our study on Christ's miraculous resurrection:

1. *To live without faith in the resurrection is to deny biblical evidence.* John clearly and compellingly laid plain the evidence of both the death and resurrection of Christ. All who read his words must wrestle honestly with it. Do you believe his testimony?
2. *To die without hope of resurrection is to face a barren eternity.* How many people in your life do you know who have yet to hear the witness of God's Word surrounding the resurrection of Jesus? Ask the Lord to deepen your burden for the lost and increase your devotion to praying for those who have yet to believe.





### A FINAL PRAYER

*Thank You, Father, for the miracle of Christ's resurrection and for the promise of eternal life in His name. Give me boldness to proclaim the witness of Your Word to those You have brought into my life who don't know You or Your Son. Open their hearts, Father. In Jesus' life-giving name, amen.*

#### ENDNOTE

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 65–66.



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### Tools for Digging Deeper



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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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