

# “HE DWELT AMONG US”

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN LESSON 21 Chapter 20

### The Empty Tomb, Tragedy To Triumph.

Victory over death is the glorious message we will study this week. In the 20th chapter of John’s Gospel, John gives his testimony of how he came to personal faith in the resurrection as he encounters and considers the evidence he found in the empty tomb.

Confidence in the resurrection of Jesus is fundamental to us as believers today also. As Paul the apostle stated, “If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep [physically died] in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” **I Corinthians 15:17-19**. Paul then emphatically says, “But now Christ *is* risen from the dead,” **I Corinthians 15:20**. Belief in this wonderful truth gives us assurance of these things:

**Eternal Life:** Jesus told us, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (**John 11:25**).

**Hope:** Our earthly life is not all there is. We have a far better life awaiting us beyond the grave. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” (**John 14:2**). The resurrection of Christ provides the basis for that hope. He was the first, and we who believe will follow. “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (**I Corinthians 15:20**).

**Comfort:** Because of this we do not have the same fear or dread of death as unbelievers. “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O hell, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (**I Corinthians 15:54-57**).

**Abundant Life:** Because we as believers have hope for the future and are released from fear of death, we can live in the present with freedom and an eternal perspective. Our Good Shepherd, Jesus, assures us, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (**John 10:10**). The risen Christ is the proof that He has the power to offer us this life. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” (**Colossians 3:1**)

Let us, like John and the others in this chapter, seriously ponder the facts and evidence of the empty tomb. And then let us allow those truths to transform our lives as they did theirs.

**DAY #1** *\*Pray before you start your lesson each day.\**

Read **John 20:1-18**. Read through again, recording the important facts. Briefly state a title for this section.

Title:

## **DAY #2 A THANKFUL LIFE**

### **Mary Magdalene is a heartwarming example of thankful living.**

Mary Magdalene was an early follower of Jesus who traveled with the disciples and ministered to their needs out of her own resources. Jesus had freed her from the bondage of demon possession (**Luke 8:1-2**). We see in her life a response of thankfulness and commitment. In her appreciation for the freedom Christ had given her, she didn't care what others thought, she was not afraid to follow Jesus to the cross. She wasn't afraid to follow Joseph of Arimathea as he laid Jesus in the tomb. She rose while it was still dark the next morning to serve again, to anoint the body of Jesus with fragrant oils and spices.

Let us put ourselves in Mary's and the other disciple's places, pondering the thrilling truth they were about to experience.

- 1) In **John 20:1-2**, we learn that Mary discovered the stone had been rolled away.
  - A. Record the precautions that were made to set the stone in place (**Matthew 27:62-65**).
  - B. Describe how the stone was moved (**Matthew 28:2-4**).
  - C. When Mary saw that Jesus' body was gone, what was her first conclusion?

***The stone was rolled away from the door,  
not to permit Christ to come out, but to enable the disciples to go in.***

- D. \*Optional digging deeper\* Record what you learn about the cover-up story that some still believe today as recorded in **Matthew 28:11-15**.
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- 2) Read **John 20:3-7**. When Peter and John arrived at the tomb, they saw the empty grave clothes. It is interesting to note that myrrh was used by Joseph as an adhesive to wrap the linen cloth around the body. Myrrh dries as firmly as lead. Therefore, the body of the grave clothes must have looked like the shell of a cocoon. Explain how what they saw would have led them to a different conclusion than that a grave robber had stolen the body.

***The power that opened Christ's tomb  
Opens the door to the fullness of life***

- 3) Read **John 20:8-9**. John had been the one disciple at the cross who had watched the forces of jealousy and evil seemingly triumph over Jesus. He had spent the night probably overwhelmed with despair. It must have appeared to him that darkness had won. But, in an instant, as he looked at the empty tomb and clothes, He knew his Lord was alive. Jesus had won! Therefore, we who believe have won also! Share how the truth of the resurrection can affect you today and the way you look at *your* life and circumstances.

**DAY #3**

***“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” Psalm 30:5***

- 1) Read **John 20:11-16**. Mary remained at the tomb.
  - A. Why do you think she looked again into the tomb? (**verse 11**)
  - B. Comment on Mary’s reaction to seeing two angels. (**verses 12-13**)
  - C. Mary didn’t recognize Jesus at first. Then He said her name! Share your thoughts on that moment. (**John 10:3-4**)
- 2) Share the blessing you receive as you ponder the fact that Mary was the first person Jesus revealed Himself to after the resurrection.
- 3) Read **John 20:17-18**. Mary’s first reaction was probably to fall at Jesus’ feet and wrap her arms around His ankles.
  - A. Why would He tell her not to cling to Him physically?
  - B. Explain how their relationship, and now ours, was enhanced when He ascended to the Father. Also review **John 16:7**.
  - C. Jesus told her “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God” (**John 20:17**). Prayerfully consider and share the connection He was making by stating “our and His Father.” How does this bless you?
- 4) Mary now knew that her Lord was alive. She now believed.
  - A. From **John 20:17**, what was the first thing Jesus told her to do with this truth?

- B. Mary probably ran to go tell the others the Good News, “*Jesus is alive!*” This message is as true and as good as it was that Sunday morning, the first Easter! Stop and pray right now that the Lord will help you to daily remain as excited as Mary to share this great message.

*\*Quote\* The Gospels do not explain the Resurrection; the Resurrection explains the Gospels. Belief in the Resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith. John S. Whale*

#### **Day #4**

Read **John 20:19-31**. Read through again, recording the important facts: the who, what, when, where, why. Give a short title to this portion.

Title:

#### **DAY #5**

- 1) Carefully read **John 20:19**, picturing the scene as if you were present.
  - A. Describe the emotions and the different conversations that might have occurred between the disciples as they were gathered.
  
  - B. Why do you think that the *first* words Jesus said to them was “Peace be with you”?

- C. From **verses 19 and 20**, we can learn information about the form and capabilities of the resurrected body of Jesus. If you study carefully, you will be able to learn at least three facts. State what you discover.

**\*\*Optional Digging Deeper\*\*** To gain more information about our future resurrected bodies, read **I Corinthians 15:35-52**. Share what you learn and also the hope you receive from this knowledge.

- 2) Jesus said “Peace to you.” The peace we have in Christ is threefold, peace *with* God, the peace *of* God, and peace with each other. This peace is sorely lacking in the world around us. Prayerfully ponder, personalize, and share the insights you gain from the two or three of the following verses.

A. **Romans 5:1**

B. **Philippians 4:6-7**

C. **Ephesians 4:2-3**

D. **Colossians 3:15**

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

Read **John 20:21-23**

- 3) Jesus said “**As** the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (**John 20:21**). Read **Matthew 28:18-20** and discover more details about *how* and *why* we are sent.
- A. Would you consider that these verses describe an *optional* activity for us as Christians? Why or why not? It is important that you explain your answer.
- B. Do you think “go” means that we necessarily need to all go across the world or to a faraway place? Explain.

C. What does “go” mean to you personally? Prayerfully ponder and share a specific area or person you feel the Lord would have you go to.

D. Read **Matthew 28:20** and **John 20:22**.

1. *Who* will go with us each time we step out in obedience to this command?
  
2. How does it give you courage to know that you don't have to go alone in your own strength?

**\*Commentary\*** The Bible Knowledge Commentary gives us excellent insight on **John 20:23**:

“Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the Church) the privilege of announcing heaven’s terms on how a person can receive forgiveness. If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. If a person rejects Jesus’ sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is not forgiven.”

## **DAY #6**

Read **John 20:24-31**

- 1) John believed when he saw the empty grave clothes. The other disciples believed when Jesus came to them (**verse 19**). Now Thomas alone struggled, not yet believing the wonderful truth the others knew and believed.
  - A. Again, the first thing Jesus said to Thomas was “Peace to you.” What would this mean to Thomas at this time?
  
  - B. Thomas was the last of the disciples to believe. He is often called doubting Thomas. Yet when he did come to faith, he made a strong statement of faith and commitment. Define both titles he ascribes to Jesus and explain what they meant to him, and what they mean to you personally.
    1. *My Lord*
  
    2. *My God*

2) In **John 20:30, 31**, John gives us the purpose of the Gospel of John. Explain what it is. Share how your study of this gospel has accomplished this goal in your life.

3) Share two lessons you have learned and desire to personally apply from this study of **John, chapter 20**.

A.

B.

*“Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” John 20:21*