SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

†
20:31

DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Twenty, Verses 1–31

My Lord and My God — the empty tomb, a woman called by name, a locked room, and a doubter on his knees

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Before dawn the stone is gone; by noon a weeping woman has heard her name; by evening frightened men behind locked doors have seen His hands and side; a week later the hardest skeptic in the room falls at His feet with the highest confession in the Gospel. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 20:1–31

the tomb · Mary · the room · Thomas

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Four movements from the stone rolled away to the purpose of the whole Gospel

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from the empty tomb to "My Lord and my God"*	3
I	**The Empty Tomb** · *John 20:1–10 · stone, cloths, belief*	4
II	**Mary!** · *John 20:11–18 · called by name*	6
III	**Peace, Sent, Breathed On** · *John 20:19–23 · peace and the sending*	8
IV	**My Lord and My God** · *John 20:24–31 · Thomas and the purpose*	9
V	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	12
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	14
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	14
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	16

"Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"" — John 20:28

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 20:1–31

My Lord and My God — From an empty tomb before dawn to the confession that crowns the Gospel — and a book written so that you may believe

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 20 in 4 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 20:31

"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."

† Before the Passage

John 19 ended with a sealed tomb in a garden and a Sabbath that began at sunset. For the friends of Jesus that Sabbath was the end of hope: their Lord was dead, His body wrapped in a hundred pounds of spices, and the disciples were hiding "for fear of the Jews." Chapter 20 is the first day of a new week. John tells it in four scenes, each built around someone who sees and comes to believe: the beloved disciple at the tomb (vv. 1–10), Mary Magdalene in the garden (vv. 11–18), the disciples in a locked room (vv. 19–23), and Thomas eight days later (vv. 24–29). Then he tells us why he wrote the book (vv. 30–31).

The other Gospels add details John leaves out — several women at the tomb, angels speaking first, Jesus meeting the women on the road. John focuses on one woman and one tomb, though Mary's "*we* do not know where they have laid Him" (v. 2) quietly admits she was not alone. The first witness to the risen Christ in John is a woman whose testimony would not have counted in a Jewish court; no one inventing a story in the first century would have written it that way.

The chapter is full of things that echo the beginning of the Gospel and the beginning of the Bible. A garden (19:41; 20:15) recalls Eden. Jesus breathes on His disciples (v. 22) with the verb God used when He breathed life into Adam (Genesis 2:7, Septuagint). Thomas's "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28) closes the circle opened by "the Word was God" (1:1). And the Shepherd who "calls his own sheep by name" (10:3) does exactly that: "Mary!" (v. 16).

Behind the resurrection stands the Old Testament hope that the Holy One would not see decay: "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Psalm 16:10), the verse Peter and Paul both preached in Acts (2:27; 13:35). Verse 9 admits that at first the disciples "did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." The empty tomb came first; understanding came after.

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 20:1–10

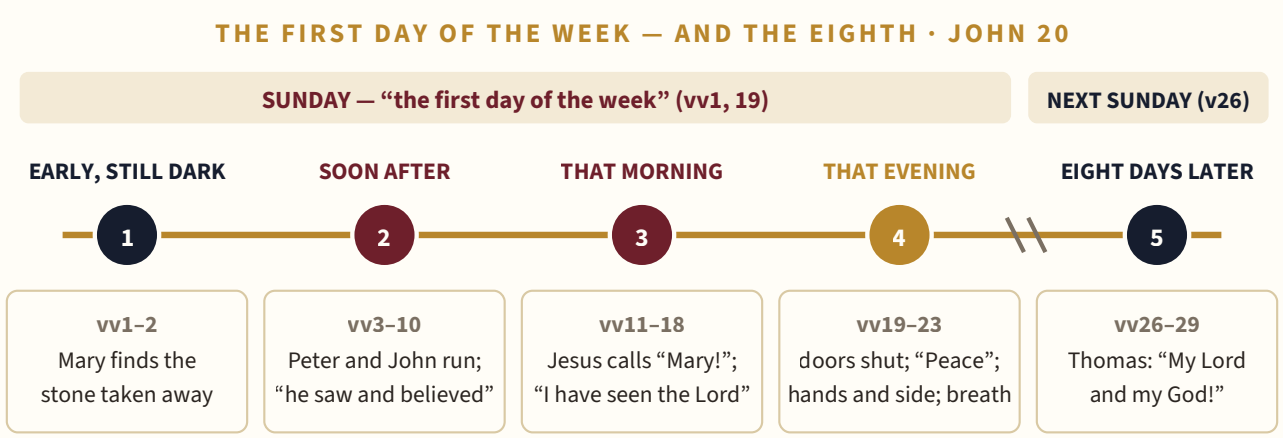
The Empty Tomb

A stone taken away, two men running, grave clothes in their place — and the first believer

> [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.* [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."* [3] *So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.* [4] *The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;* [5] *and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.* [6] *And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there,* [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.* [8] *So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.* [9] *For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.* [10] *So the disciples went away again to their own homes.*
>
> JOHN 20:1–10

> *"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."*
>
> PSALM 16:10

FIGURE · TWO SUNDAYS



Every scene ends with someone who has seen the Lord — and the last word goes to those who have not seen (v29).

Follow the five scenes left to right: four on the first day of the week, one a week later, and in each one someone sees the risen Lord.

βλέπει … θεωρεῖ … εἶδεν

BLEPEI … THEŌREI … EIDEN · "SEES … SEES … SAW" · G991, G2334, G3708

John uses three different verbs for seeing in eight verses. Mary *blepei* the stone (v. 1), and John, stooping (*parakypsas*, G3879), *blepei* the linen lying there (v. 5) — he looks. Peter goes in and *theōrei* (v. 6) — he gazes, studies, takes it in (our word "theory"). Then John enters and *eiden kai episteusen* (v. 8) — "he saw and believed." Many readers hear a progression from a glance to careful observation to seeing what it means. The words overlap in John, so don't press it too hard; but verse 8 is plainly the turning point of the scene.

ὀθόνια … σουδάριον … ἐντετυλιγμένον

OTHONIA … SOUDARION … ENTETYLIGMENON · "LINEN WRAPPINGS … FACE-CLOTH … ROLLED UP" · G3608, G4676, G1794

Othonia are the strips of linen of 19:40. The *soudarion* (a Latin loanword, "sweat-cloth") is the same word used for the cloth around Lazarus's face (11:44). Lazarus came out still wrapped and had to be unbound; Jesus left His wrappings behind. The face-cloth was not thrown aside but *entetyligmenon* — perfect participle of *entylissō*, "rolled up, folded" — "in a place by itself." Grave robbers do not unwrap a body and tidy the cloths. What John saw told him no one had taken the body.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows the race to the tomb with a smile at John's narration: he "was humble enough to avoid the mention of his own name, but competitive enough" to tell us he won. "John wanted to stop and think about it but Peter went right in." The grave clothes lying in order showed the body had not left in a normal way; Guzik quotes Barclay that they "did not look as if they had been put off or taken off," and Alford that John "believed that Jesus was risen from the dead." Yet the two still did not understand the Scripture, and Guzik stresses that knowing the fact of the resurrection is only a start — Scripture gives its meaning.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul preached John 20:1–18 on 7 September 2003; the sermon is online as Ligonier's summary. It says he noted that John mentions only Mary coming to attend to the body, yet showed from the text itself that she was not alone; he worked through other seeming inconsistencies between John and the other Gospels; and after Peter is told of the empty tomb he focused on the grave clothes. Sproul faces the harmonizing questions rather than hiding them.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees Mary come early "to wash the dead body with her tears," and draws the lesson: "Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant." Of the two runners he writes, "John could out-run Peter, but Peter could out-dare John" — each disciple has his own gift. The disciples' slowness to believe — "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" — Henry turns into an argument for the resurrection: these were not credulous men ready to imagine what they hoped for.

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 20:11–18

Mary!

Tears at the tomb, a gardener who is not a gardener, one word — and the first apostle to the apostles

11 *But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the*
tomb; 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. 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." 14 *When she had said this, she turned*
around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 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." 16 *Jesus said to her, "Mary!"*
She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 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.'" 18 *Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples,*
"I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

JOHN 20:11–18

"To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

JOHN 10:3

Ραββουνι

RABBOUNI · "RABBONI (TEACHER)" · G4462

An Aramaic form of "Rabbi," "my Master / my Teacher," more personal and more honoring than the plain title. It appears only here and in Mark 10:51, where blind Bartimaeus uses it. John translates it for Greek readers: *didaskale*, "Teacher." Mary does not recognize Jesus by sight — she takes Him for the *kēpouros* (G2780), the gardener — nor by the empty tomb or the angels. She recognizes Him when He says her name, *Mariam*. Two words pass between them, and the morning changes.

μή μου ἅπτου … ἀδελφούς

MĒ MOU HAPTOU … ADELPHOUS · "STOP CLINGING TO ME … MY BRETHREN" · G680, G80

Haptomai is to touch, take hold of, cling. With *mē* and a present imperative it usually means "stop doing what you are doing" — the NASB's "Stop clinging to Me," rather than the KJV's "Touch me not." Jesus is not forbidding contact (He invites Thomas to touch in v. 27); He is telling Mary she need not hold Him as if He were leaving now. Then the new word: "go to My *brethren*" (*adelphous*). In John this is the first time Jesus calls the disciples His brothers — after they had all run away — and the message makes them family: "My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik stays with Mary's grief until she turns and sees Jesus without knowing Him; then one word changes everything. He quotes Spurgeon, "Jesus can preach a perfect sermon in one word," and Tasker, "Never was a one-word utterance more charged with emotion than this." His own line is the heart of it: "Jesus didn't reveal Himself to Mary by telling her who He was, but by telling her who she was to Him." "Stop clinging" means stop holding on, not a ban on touch. And Jesus makes a woman the first witness — a detail Guzik counts as evidence that the account is credible.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Ligonier's summary of Sproul's 7 September 2003 sermon says he took up Mary's exchange with the two angels and with Jesus outside the tomb, and "finally Jesus' concern over physical contact." A Ligonier devotional on verses 16–18 reports that Sproul, in his commentary *John*, "notes that Jesus was telling Mary that He was not yet leaving to return to heaven." She was holding on as if she would never see Him again; she would.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 17 more than once. In "Christ's Manifestation to Mary Magdalene" (1859) he says the first sight of the risen Lord went to the one who loved Him most: "Love, you know, is a keen-eyed grace." "Embrace me not; there will be time in heaven for that" — there was work to do: "work is worship in its best form." In "Noli Me Tangere" (1883) he dwells on the title "brethren": "They were his brethren still, though they had forsaken him." And in "Supposing Him to be the Gardener" he takes Mary's mistake as truer than she knew: "The wit and wisdom of the garden lieth not in the flowers and shrubs, but in the gardener."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry holds up Mary's persistence as a model for every seeker, and observes, "Christ, in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations." She came for a body and found a living Lord. The command to stop holding Him and go to the disciples teaches a priority: "Note, Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction." The message she carries — His Father and theirs, His God and theirs — gives frightened, failing men a place in His family.

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 20:19–23

Peace, Sent, Breathed On

Locked doors, wounded hands, the Father's sending, the Spirit's breath, and the forgiveness of sins

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."*
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.* 21 *So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you;*
as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 *And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.* 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."*

JOHN 20:19–23

"Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

GENESIS 2:7

ἐνεφύσησεν

ENEPHYSĒSEN · "HE BREATHED ON THEM" · G1720

Emphysaō, "to blow into, breathe upon," occurs only here in the New Testament. It is the verb of the Septuagint at Genesis 2:7 — God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" — and of Ezekiel 37:9, where the breath comes into the dry bones of Israel. The risen Lord does over His disciples what the Creator did over Adam: a new creation begins. Then: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (*labete pneuma hagion*). Christians read this either as a real first giving of the Spirit for their mission, with Pentecost the full outpouring (Acts 2), or as an acted promise of Pentecost; both readings keep Acts 2 as the great day.

ἀφέωνται … κεκράτηνται

APHEŌNTAI … KEKRATĒNTAI · "HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN … HAVE BEEN RETAINED" · G863, G2902

Both verbs are perfect passive: when the disciples declare sins forgiven (*aphēte*) or retained (*kratēte*), they "have been" forgiven or retained — the disciples announce what God has already done in heaven; they do not decide it. The commission is the gospel itself: those who repent and believe are told with authority that they are forgiven; those who refuse are told the truth too. Verse 21 uses two sending verbs: the Father "has sent" (*apestalken*, G649, perfect) the Son, and the Son "sends" (*pempō*, G3992) His disciples.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik is plain about the locked doors: "The doors were shut and locked so they wouldn't get hurt." Jesus comes into their fear, shows the wounds, and speaks peace; with Morgan, "He had faced and defeated all the forces which destroy the peace of man." He commissions them as the Father sent Him and breathes on them; Guzik ties the breath to the creation account, and quotes Dods that it was meant to convey "that His very own Spirit was imparted to them," and Tenney that the Spirit "is not bestowed on the church as an ornament." The authority over sins he takes as a pattern for the church's ongoing ministry of announcing forgiveness.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's article "The Mission of the Church Is Eternal" builds on verse 21: "As the Father sent Me so send I you." The church's mission flows from the Son's mission, planned in the eternal covenant of redemption: "God's plan of redemption for this fallen world was not an afterthought or an expression of a plan B." So "The mission of the church is eternal," and "Everything that the church does today and tomorrow matters and counts forever." Ligonier's summary of his 28 September 2003 sermon adds that he explained Jesus' greeting "Peace" and the proper response, and the breathing and "Receive the Holy Spirit."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "Jesus in Our Midst" (on vv. 19–23) Spurgeon marvels that Christ came to unworthy, frightened men and came gladly — "at least four times in one day." "He stood, He did not flash across the room like a meteor, but remained in one position as though He meant to tarry." His presence makes the Scriptures precious, drives out fear, and leaves lasting gifts: a sense of His person, a commission, and the Holy Spirit. Of the locked room he says, "It is a good thing for the saints to be shut in, and the world shut out" — and of the disciples' reactions, "Like a pendulum, they swung from joy to unbelief."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that the disciples were gathered together on the first day of the week, even under threat, and Christ met them there; "Christ's wounds were to speak on earth that it was he himself," and "The exalted Redeemer will ever show himself open-handed and open-hearted." Christ breathes on them and speaks of the Holy Ghost and the remitting of sins. And Henry turns to Thomas's empty seat: "Those know not what they lose who carelessly absent themselves from the stated solemn assemblies of Christians."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 20:24–31

My Lord and My God

An absent disciple, a hard refusal, an invitation to touch, the highest confession — and why John wrote

24 *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.* 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."* 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."* 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."* 28 *Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* 29 *Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."* 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 20:24–31

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*
>
> JOHN 1:1

> *"and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,"*
>
> 1 PETER 1:8

FIGURE · FROM SEEING TO BELIEVING

FROM SEEING TO BELIEVING · JOHN 20

AT THE TOMB (vv5–8)	THE WITNESSES
βλέπει · v5 — "he looks" — John stoops and glances in	**v18** Mary: "I have seen the Lord"
θεωρεῖ · v6 — "he gazes" — Peter goes in and studies the cloths	**v20** the disciples rejoiced when they saw
εἶδεν … ἐπίστευσεν · v8 — "he saw … and believed" — John grasps it	**v25** Thomas: "Unless I see … I will not believe"
the cloths lying in place, the face-cloth rolled up by itself (v7)	**v28** Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"
	v29 "Blessed are they who did not see"
	v31 written "so that you may believe"

The last two rows are about you.

They saw and believed; we read their testimony and believe without seeing — and Jesus calls that faith blessed (vv29–31).

On the left, John's three verbs at the tomb move from a glance to understanding; on the right, the chapter's witnesses lead to the reader, who believes without seeing.

μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός

MĒ GINOU APISTOS ALLA PISTOS · "DO NOT BE UNBELIEVING, BUT BELIEVING" · G571, G4103

A play on one root: *a-pistos* (without faith) and *pistos* (faithful, believing). The verb is *ginou*, "become" — "stop becoming an unbeliever; become a believer." Thomas's refusal in verse 25 was emphatic: "I will not believe" uses the strong double negative *ou mē*. He had named his terms — the *typon* (G5179, imprint) of the *hēlōn* (G2247, nails) — and Jesus, who had not been in the room when he said it, quotes the terms back to him.

Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου

HO KYRIOS MOU KAI HO THEOS MOU · "MY LORD AND MY GOD!" · G2962, G2316

Both nouns have the article and both have "my": not an oath ("my God!") but an address to Jesus — "said to Him." It is the highest confession in the Gospel, closing the frame opened in 1:1 ("the Word was God") and 1:18 ("the only begotten God"). Jesus accepts it. Then verse 31 gives the book's purpose with *pisteu[s]ēte* (G4100): manuscripts differ between a present ("keep on believing") and an aorist ("come to believe") — John's Gospel serves both the seeker and the saint. The *sēmeia* (G4592, signs) were written so that believing you may have *zōē*, life, in His name.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik quotes Maclaren on Thomas's absence — he "went away to brood in a corner by himself" — and is blunt about verse 25: "Thomas didn't doubt; he plainly and strongly refused to believe." Jesus meets him with gentleness that still rebukes; Spurgeon: "The whole conversation was indeed a rebuke, but so veiled with love that Thomas could scarcely think it so," and Thomas "was the first divine who ever taught the Deity of Christ from his wounds." Of verse 29 he cites Boice: "not of a subjective faith, but of a satisfied faith." On verses 30–31 he insists the Gospel is about Jesus more than the signs; Spurgeon again: "There is no text in the whole Book which was intended to create doubt."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

On his *Ultimately* broadcast Sproul takes verse 29 personally: "If you're a Christian, you're included in that benediction." After more than fifty years of studying Jesus — "I've studied an awful lot about Jesus" — he admits, "I've never seen Him, not once," never heard His voice or touched His wounds. "And so, I am blessed and so are you if indeed, having not seen Him, you believe." Ligonier's summary of his 28 September 2003 sermon says he examined how Jesus answered Thomas's demand for proof and Thomas's response, "My Lord and My God."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "My Lord and My God" (1884) admires Christ's patience with "the only disciple absent out of the eleven": "Our good Shepherd looks after the units." The words are "a most plain and hearty confession of the true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ," and Spurgeon doubts Thomas ever touched — "after the Master had so spoken to him he would shrink from doing so." In "The Evidence of Our Lord's Wounds" (on v. 27) he warns against demanding signs — "Let us believe the Word, and crave no signs" — and points doubters to the wounds instead: "The wounds of our Lord are the tokens of his love."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is firm with Thomas — "if we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless" — but fair: "Thomas is not Judas," and Christ "will not break the bruised reed." Thomas's confession is a consent of the will, not just of the mind — the vital act of faith. "Sound and sincere believers, though they be slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted of the Lord Jesus." Those who believe without sight show more of God's grace, and the Gospel's record is enough, for "it was written to bring men to believe."

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the breath of Eden to the joy of those who have not seen — where John 20 reaches back and forward

> *"Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."*
>
> GENESIS 2:7

> *"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."*
>
> PSALM 16:10

> *"So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken."*
>
> JOHN 2:22

> *"Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you."*
>
> JOHN 16:22

> *"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*
>
> JOHN 17:18

> *"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;"*
>
> ROMANS 10:9

> *"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."*
>
> 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20

> *"and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,"*
>
> 1 PETER 1:8

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik ties the breath of verse 22 to the creation account, where God breathed life into Adam: the risen Christ begins a new creation in His people.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Mission of the Church Is Eternal" reaches back before creation to the covenant of redemption and forward to Christ's everlasting reign: the sending of John 20:21 has its origin and its goal in eternity.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, two Sundays. Guzik keeps his eye on the details and the people — the runners, the weeping woman, the stubborn disciple; Sproul, here through his article, his radio benediction and Ligonier's sermon summaries, keeps the eternal mission and the blessing of unseen faith in view; Spurgeon preaches the risen Christ into the room; Henry turns each scene into counsel. Verses 22–23 are where readers differ most — a first gift of the Spirit or an acted promise of Pentecost, and what authority over sins means; the notes below set out the options.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The empty tomb	John humble but competitive; the cloths not put off; fact, then meaning.	Mary not alone; harmonizing faced; the grave clothes.	— (no sermon on these verses used)	Love to Christ is constant; not credulous men.
II · Mary!	He told her who she was to Him; the first witness a woman.	Not yet leaving for heaven; His concern over contact.	Love is a keen-eyed grace; brethren still, though they forsook Him.	Christ outdoes our expectations; public service before private comfort.
III · The locked room	Doors locked for fear; His own Spirit imparted; not an ornament.	"As the Father sent Me so send I you"; the mission is eternal.	He came gladly and stood to tarry; saints shut in, world shut out.	His wounds speak; don't miss the assembly.
IV · Thomas and the purpose	He refused, not doubted; the first divine to teach Deity from wounds.	"I've never seen Him, not once" — and I am blessed.	The Shepherd looks after the units; crave no signs.	Thomas is not Judas; written to bring men to believe.

JOHN 20:1–31 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The first believer believed before he understood.** John "saw and believed" (v. 8), yet "as yet they did not understand the Scripture" (v. 9). Faith may begin with the evidence; Scripture gives it its meaning (Guzik). THE TEXT
- **The grave clothes are a witness.** The linen lying in place and the face-cloth rolled up by itself (v. 7) told John no thief had been there. Lazarus came out wrapped; Jesus left His wrappings behind. THE GREEK
- **The risen Lord is recognized by His voice.** Mary knew Him when He said her name (v. 16), as the Shepherd "calls his own sheep by name" (10:3). Guzik: He told her "who she was to Him." GUZIK
- **The first witness was a woman.** In a world where a woman's testimony counted for little, Jesus sent Mary to the apostles. No one inventing a resurrection story would have written it this way. THE TEXT
- **Deserters became brothers.** "Go to My brethren" (v. 17) — after they had all run away. Spurgeon: "They were his brethren still, though they had forsaken him." SPURGEON
- **He came through locked doors with peace, not blame.** Three times, "Peace be with you" (vv. 19, 21, 26), and the first thing He showed them was His wounds. THE TEXT
- **A new creation breath.** *Emphysaō* (v. 22) is the verb of Genesis 2:7. The risen Lord breathes on His people as God breathed on Adam. THE GREEK

- **We announce forgiveness; God grants it.** "Have been forgiven" is perfect passive (v. 23): the church declares what heaven has done for those who repent and believe. THE GREEK
- **Thomas refused — and was still welcomed.** Guzik: "Thomas didn't doubt; he plainly and strongly refused to believe." Henry: "Thomas is not Judas." Jesus answered his exact terms and won the highest confession in the book. HENRY
- **The last beatitude is for us.** "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" (v. 29). Sproul: "If you're a Christian, you're included in that benediction." SPROUL

† Questions for the Table

1 **Mary came "while it was still dark." What darkness am I carrying to Jesus this week — and am I still coming?**

Henry: "Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant."

20:1, 11; Ps 30:5

2 **Jesus called Mary by name before she recognized Him. When have I known that Jesus knew me personally — not just mankind in general?**

He revealed Himself by telling her who she was to Him.

20:15–16; 10:3

3 **The disciples were behind locked doors "for fear." What fear has me locked in right now, and what does Jesus say when He comes in?**

Peace first, then His wounds, then a mission.

20:19–21; 14:27

4 **"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." Where is Jesus sending me this week — and to whom?**

The mission flows from the Son's mission and counts forever (Sproul).

20:21; 17:18

5 **Thomas missed the meeting and dug in. When have I pulled away from the brothers — and what did it cost me?**

Henry: those who absent themselves "know not what they lose."

20:24–25; Heb 10:24–25

6 **I have not seen Jesus with my eyes. What helps me believe — and how can I help a man who is where Thomas was?**

"Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." The book was written for exactly that.

20:29–31; 1 Pet 1:8

John 20 is a chapter of people who did not expect what they found — an empty tomb, a living Lord, a breath, a commission, wounds that could be touched. John wrote it down for those of us who were not there, so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name. Say it with Thomas: "My Lord and my God!"

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

- Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary, John 20 — https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-20/
- Ligonier Scripture index, John 20 — https://learn.ligonier.org/scripture/john-20
- Sproul, "The Resurrection" (John 20:1–18, 7 Sep 2003) — Ligonier summary — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/resurrection-john
- Sproul, "Doubting Thomas" (John 20:19–31, 28 Sep 2003) — Ligonier summary — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/doubting-thomas
- Sproul, "The Mission of the Church Is Eternal" (article, John 20:21) — https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/mission-church-eternal
- Sproul, "Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen" (Ultimately with R.C. Sproul, transcript) — https://learn.ligonier.org/podcasts/ultimately-with-rc-sproul/blessed-are-those-who-have-not-seen
- Ligonier devotional "Mary Recognizes Her Lord" (cites Sproul, John) — https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/mary-recognizes-her-lord
- Ligonier devotional "The Fourth Gospel" (cites Sproul, John) — https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/fourth-gospel
- Spurgeon, "Christ's Manifestation to Mary Magdalene" (John 20:17, 3 Jul 1859, MTP 47) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/christs-manifestation-to-mary-magdalene
- Spurgeon, "Noli Me Tangere" (John 20:17, 4 Feb 1883, MTP 44) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/noli-me-tangere
- Spurgeon, "Supposing Him to be the Gardener" (John 20:15, No. 1699, 31 Dec 1882) — https://biblehub.com/library/spurgeon/spurgeons_sermons_volume_29_1883/supposing_him_to_be_the.htm
- Spurgeon, "Jesus in Our Midst" (John 20:19–23) — https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/jesus_in_our_midst.htm
- Spurgeon, "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28, 13 Apr 1884, MTP 30) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god
- Spurgeon, "The Evidence of Our Lord's Wounds" (John 20:27, No. 2061) — https://biblehub.com/library/spurgeon/spurgeons_sermons_volume_34_1888/the_evidence_of_our_lords.htm
- Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, John 20 — https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/john/20.html
- Greek interlinear and Strong's numbers, John 20 — https://biblehub.com/interlinear/john/20.htm
- NASB 1995 — Genesis 2:7 — https://biblehub.com/genesis/2-7.htm
- NASB 1995 — Psalm 16:10 — https://biblehub.com/psalms/16-10.htm
- NASB 1995 — Romans 10:9 — https://biblehub.com/romans/10-9.htm
- NASB 1995 — 1 Corinthians 15:20 — https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/15-20.htm
- NASB 1995 — 1 Peter 1:8 — https://biblehub.com/1_peter/1-8.htm

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Greek: SBL Greek New Testament; Strong's numbers per biblehub.com. · Smith For Christ Publishing · Ed Smith