STUDY BIBLE WORKBOOK

John 20

He Is Risen

QUICK STUDY + DEEP DIVE

Mary finds the empty tomb; Jesus calls her by name, appears to the disciples, brings peace, and invites Thomas to believe. John writes so we may have life in Jesus' name.

Scripture quotations: World English Bible Classic (WEB)

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Quick Study: Begin with the chapter overview, Bible words, Greek pronunciation, Gospel Connection, and prayer.

Deep Dive: Nine Scripture-first SOAP passages include all 31 WEB verses, substantial observations, applications, guided prayers, and full-width writing lines.

WESTERN GRACE MEDIA

John 20 — Geographic Setting

John 20 begins at the tomb where Jesus was buried near Jerusalem. It later records appearances to disciples gathered behind locked doors; no exact meeting house is named. The shaded atlas provides orientation without claiming a verified tomb coordinate.



Shared WGM regional atlas: Jerusalem is the setting; tomb and meeting-room locations are not confirmed.

Regional location



COUNTRIES IN YEAR 2020

Jerusalem (20:1–20): The setting is near the city in which Jesus had been crucified and buried.

Garden tomb (19:41–42; 20:1): The tomb was near Golgotha. John gives no surveyed modern location.

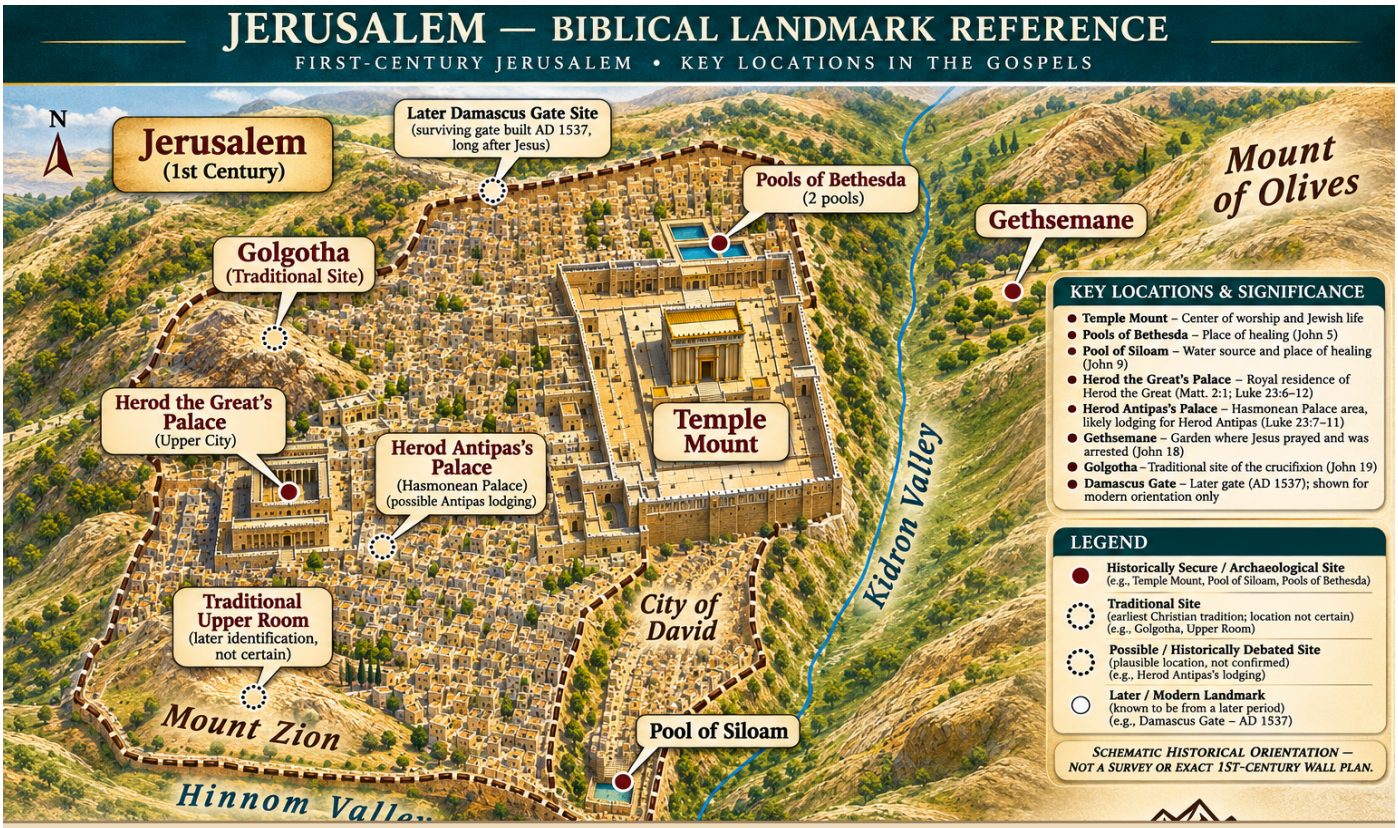
Traditional Golgotha: A significant historic identification is mapped, but it is a tradition rather than a point specified by John.

Gathering place (20:19, 26): The disciples meet behind closed doors. No address or exact room is named.

Map caution: The map does not present an exact stone location, garden boundary, or journey route.

Jerusalem — The Garden Tomb and the Risen Lord

John 19 places a new tomb in a garden near the crucifixion site; John 20 describes that tomb found open and the appearances of the living Jesus. The shared landmark map helps locate the traditional Golgotha area relative to the Temple, Kidron Valley, and Mount of Olives. John does not give exact coordinates for the tomb or for the locked gathering room.



READ THE TEXT WITH THE MAP

Golgotha and the tomb

John locates a new garden tomb near the cross (19:41–42). The traditional location is useful context, not a proven pinpoint.

Mary at the burial site

John 20:1–18 describes the empty tomb and Mary's meeting with Jesus, without supplying a surveyed position.

The disciples behind locked doors

John 20:19 and 26 do not identify the house or room; no location marker is warranted.

My notes on the resurrection setting:

John 20 — He Is Risen

MAIN VERSE

John 20:31, WEB: but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

BIG PICTURE

John 20 does not leave Jesus in the tomb. Mary discovers the stone moved; Peter and the beloved disciple see the grave cloths. Jesus calls Mary by name, appears bodily to His fearful disciples, brings peace, and sends them to testify. Thomas confesses Him as Lord and God. John writes so that those who have not seen may believe and receive life in His name.

The Empty Tomb (20:1–2)

Mary Magdalene discovers the stone rolled away and calls the disciples.

The Disciples Investigate (20:3–10)

Peter and the beloved disciple see the empty tomb and linen cloths.

Mary Meets the Risen Jesus (20:11–18)

Jesus speaks Mary’s name and sends her with news of His resurrection.

Peace to the Disciples (20:19–20)

The risen Jesus appears among frightened disciples and shows His wounds.

QUICK STUDY NOTES

The Chapter’s Major Movements

Sent and Empowered (20:21–23)

Jesus commissions His followers and speaks of the Holy Spirit and forgiveness.

Thomas’s Honest Struggle (20:24–25)

Thomas doubts the other disciples’ report and asks for evidence.

Thomas Confesses Jesus (20:26–29)

Jesus meets Thomas, who calls Him “My Lord and my God!”

John’s Purpose (20:30–31)

John records these signs so readers may believe and have life in Jesus’ name.

QUICK STUDY FLOW

Mary finds the stone removed

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Peter and the beloved disciple inspect the tomb

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Jesus calls Mary and sends her as a witness

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Jesus appears in the locked room and brings peace

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Jesus sends His disciples with the Holy Spirit

↓

Thomas doubts, then sees and confesses

↓

John writes so readers may believe and have life

QUICK STUDY NOTES

Important Bible Words

Word / Phrase	Simple Meaning	Why It Matters
Resurrection	Jesus truly raised from the dead	The risen Jesus is the same person who was crucified.
Empty tomb	Burial place without Jesus' body	A real setting that leads toward encounters with the risen Lord.
First day of the week	The day after the Sabbath	The resurrection appearances begin on this day.
Beloved disciple	The disciple described as loved by Jesus	An eyewitness participant in the tomb account.
Rabboni	Aramaic address meaning Teacher / Master	Mary recognizes the risen Jesus.
Ascend	Go to the Father	Jesus' resurrection leads into His continuing exalted mission.
Peace	Reconciliation and wholeness	The risen Lord reassures fearful disciples.
Holy Spirit	God's Spirit promised by Jesus	He equips disciples for faithful witness.
Forgiveness	Release or remission of sins	The gospel announces real pardon through Christ.
Signs	Jesus' deeds that reveal His identity	John selects these acts so that readers will believe.

Which word helps me understand the risen Lord, His peace, and the gift of life in His name?

Translation Word Notes

Pronunciations are approximate classroom-style Biblical Greek. CAPITAL letters show the stressed syllable. Greek helps clarify meaning but is not required for understanding Scripture. NKJV/NIV/NLT phrases are brief comparisons; full Scripture quotations remain WEB.

Verse	Greek & pronunciation	NKJV	NIV	NLT	Meaning in context
20:1	mnēmeion mnay-MAY-on	tomb	tomb	tomb	A burial site; its precise modern location is not specified.
20:5	othonia oh-THOH-nee-ah	linen cloths	strips of linen	linen wrappings	Cloth left in the tomb when Jesus had risen.
20:8	pisteuō pis-TEW-oh	believed	believed	believed	Trust in what was seen, developing toward fuller understanding.
20:12	angelos ANG-geh-loss	angels	angels	angels	Messengers seen by Mary at the empty tomb.
20:16	Rabbouni rah-boo-NEE	Rabboni	Rabboni	Rabboni	Aramaic address meaning Teacher, carried in Greek text.
20:17	haptomai HAP-toh-my	cling	hold on	cling	The interaction concerns not holding Jesus back from His mission.
20:19	eirēnē ay-RAY-nay	Peace	Peace	Peace	The risen Jesus gives assurance to the disciples.
20:21	apostellō ah-poh-STEL-loh	send	send	send	The risen Christ commissions His followers.
20:22	pneuma PNEW-mah	Spirit	Spirit	Spirit	The Holy Spirit promised to Jesus' followers.
20:23	aphiēmi ah-FEE-ay-mee	forgive	forgive	forgive	Release from sins through the gospel of Christ.
20:27	apistos AH-pis-toss	unbelieving	doubting	faithless	Thomas is summoned away from unbelief into faith.
20:28	kyrios / theos KOO-ree-oss / THEH-oss	Lord / God	Lord / God	Lord / God	Thomas's direct confession of Jesus' divine identity.
20:31	zōē zoh-AY	life	life	life	The gift found by believing in Jesus' name.

Word-study notes:

The Gospel Connection

John 20 announces the victory of the risen Jesus over death. The Lord who died in John 19 is not merely remembered or honored: He is alive. His wounds identify Him with the crucified Savior, and His resurrection vindicates His identity and completed saving work. He gives peace, commissions faithful witness, and calls Thomas from unbelief to the confession “My Lord and my God!” The Gospel states its purpose plainly: these signs are written so we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name (20:30–31). Salvation is not earned by personal effort; it is received by faith in the crucified and risen Christ, whose grace produces a new life of obedient love.

Reflection: How does the risen Christ give me peace, courage, and faith in His Word?

A Short Prayer from John 20

Risen Lord Jesus, thank You for conquering death and giving Your people peace. Help me trust the witness of Your Word, bring my questions to You, and tell others that You are alive. Amen.

Pray this in your own words:

QUICK STUDY COMPLETE

One Truth to Carry With You

The crucified Jesus is truly risen; His witnesses testify so that we may believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name.

READY TO GO DEEPER — NEXT PAGE

Ready to Go Deeper?

This Deep Dive follows S.O.A.P.: Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. Read the complete account of the empty tomb, the risen Lord’s appearances, and John’s purpose before reflecting on the observations, applications, and prayers.

S — Scripture

Read every verse slowly; note changes in speaker, setting, and what Jesus reveals about Himself.

O — Observation

What does the resurrection reveal about Jesus, Scripture, eyewitness testimony, and the gift of life?

A — Application

What should I believe, confess, obey, trust, or share in response to the passage?

P — Prayer

Respond prayerfully to what the passage actually says, not imagined motives or events.

Before I begin, what do I believe Jesus meant when He said, “He is risen”?

Questions and repeated words to watch for:

JOHN 20:1–2

The Stone Has Been Taken Away

S — Scripture

1 Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went early, while it was still dark, to the tomb, and
saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
2 Therefore 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 don’t know where they have laid him!”

John 20:1–2, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

Mary comes before dawn to the tomb and sees the stone moved. Her immediate conclusion is that Jesus’ body has been taken; John does not portray her as anticipating the resurrection.

Mary reports the missing body to Peter and the beloved disciple. Her words “we don’t know” convey genuine confusion and urgency, not an already developed resurrection testimony.

The empty tomb is the beginning of the evidence, not a complete explanation by itself. John leads readers onward to testimony about the risen Jesus.

My observations:

A — Application

Where have I mistaken unanswered questions for proof that God has abandoned His promise?

P — Prayer

Lord, meet me in confusion and lead me back to Your faithful Word.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:3–10

The Linen Cloths and the Disciples

S — Scripture

3 Therefore Peter and the other disciple went out, and they went toward the tomb.
4 They both ran together. The other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first.
5 Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he didn’t enter in.
6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying,
7 and the cloth that had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.
8 So then the other disciple who came first to the tomb also entered in, and he saw and believed.
9 For as yet they didn’t know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.
10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

John 20:3–10, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

Peter and the other disciple run to the tomb. John carefully reports who arrives, who enters, and the linen cloths and separate head cloth they observe.

The beloved disciple sees and believes, yet verse 9 adds that the disciples had not yet understood the Scripture concerning the necessity of Jesus’ rising. Do not assume his belief already contained every later insight.

The bodily resurrection is not presented as a vague symbol of hope. The details of an actual tomb and grave cloths prepare for personal encounters with the risen Lord.

My observations:

A — Application

Will I examine the testimony about Jesus carefully, rather than accepting either an easy dismissal or an unsupported embellishment?

P — Prayer

God of truth, help me attend to what Scripture really says and follow its evidence with faith.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:11–13

Mary Weeps Outside the Tomb

S — Scripture

11 But Mary was standing outside at the tomb weeping. 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 lain.
13 They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have laid him.”

John 20:11–13, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

While the disciples depart, Mary remains and weeps. Her sorrow is not condemned; John gives a compassionate picture of someone who loves Jesus and fears His body has been lost.

Two angels are present where His body had lain. Their question highlights Mary’s grief, yet the text does not suggest they reveal everything at this point.

The scene directs attention beyond an open tomb toward the person of the risen Christ. The hope of Christianity is Jesus Himself, not simply an unexplained absence.

My observations:

A — Application

How can I bring honest grief to God and remain attentive to what He reveals in His Word?

P — Prayer

Compassionate Savior, help me bring my tears to You and receive Your hope.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:14–18

The Risen Jesus Calls Mary by Name

S — Scripture

14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, and didn’t know that it was Jesus.
15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?” She, supposing him to be the gardener, 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, “Rabboni!” which is to say, “Teacher!”
17 Jesus said to her, “Don’t hold me, for I haven’t yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ”
18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things to her.

John 20:14–18, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

Mary sees Jesus but does not recognize Him until He calls her by name. The one she thought lost now speaks to her as the living Lord.

“Rabboni” is an Aramaic form of address explained in the WEB as “Teacher.” Jesus tells Mary not to cling to Him and sends her to announce His coming ascension; the issue is His new resurrection mission, not a claim that all touch is forbidden.

Mary faithfully announces “I have seen the Lord.” Her testimony is personal and concrete, though John does not give an exact modern coordinate for the garden tomb.

My observations:

A — Application

What would change in my daily life if I lived as one who belongs to the risen Jesus and has good news to tell?

P — Prayer

Risen Lord, teach me to know Your voice through Scripture and speak truthfully of You.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:19–20

Peace in a Locked Room

S — Scripture

19 When therefore it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the middle and said to them, “Peace be to you.”

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.

John 20:19–20, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

The disciples gather behind locked doors in fear. In context, their fear concerns hostile authorities, not every Jewish person; the disciples themselves were Jewish.

Jesus stands among them and offers peace. He shows His hands and side, confirming continuity between the crucified Jesus and the risen Jesus.

Their gladness is rooted in seeing the Lord. The promise of peace does not erase every outside danger, but the risen Savior truly comes to His frightened people.

My observations:

A — Application

Where do I need to trust the risen Christ instead of allowing fear to rule my choices?

P — Prayer

Jesus, speak Your peace into my anxious heart and strengthen my courage.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:21–23

Sent by the Father; Empowered by the Spirit

S — Scripture

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, “Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.”
22 When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit!
23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, they have been forgiven them. If you retain anyone’s sins, they have been retained.”

John 20:21–23, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

The risen Jesus sends the disciples as the Father sent Him. Their mission is rooted in His authority and must continue His truth, not replace it with their own message.

Jesus breathes on them and says “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Christians discuss the relationship between this moment and Pentecost in Acts 2. John’s emphasis is the risen Lord providing for their mission.

The language of forgiving and retaining sins must be read with the gospel: the church proclaims the forgiveness found in Christ and warns that rejecting Him leaves people in their sins. This does not mean any individual can forgive sins by personal whim.

My observations:

A — Application

How can I speak the gospel with humility, clarity, and dependence on the Holy Spirit?

P — Prayer

Father, send me as a faithful witness. Holy Spirit, guide my words toward the truth of Christ.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:24–25

Thomas Asks for Evidence

S — Scripture

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, wasn’t with them when Jesus came.
25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

John 20:24–25, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

Thomas was absent at the earlier appearance. Other disciples tell him they have seen the Lord, but he insists upon seeing and touching the crucifixion wounds.

His demand shows a struggle to trust their report. John does not mock sincere questions, but he does not present unbelief as the ideal response.

Jesus will meet Thomas with an invitation to believe. The testimony of trustworthy witnesses remains central for Christians who cannot physically see Jesus today.

My observations:

A — Application

When I have questions, do I bring them honestly to Scripture while remaining willing to believe its testimony?

P — Prayer

Patient Lord, help my questions become a path toward deeper trust rather than hardened refusal.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:26–29

My Lord and My God

S — Scripture

26 After eight days, again his disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being locked, and stood in the middle, and said, “Peace be to you.”
27 Then he said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don’t be unbelieving, but believing.”
28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”
29 Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

John 20:26–29, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

Jesus returns when Thomas is present, again offering peace. He directly addresses Thomas’s earlier demand and calls him to exchange unbelief for belief.

Thomas responds to Jesus with the unambiguous confession “My Lord and my God!” This is one of the Gospel’s clearest personal acknowledgments of Jesus’ deity.

Jesus blesses those who believe without having seen Him directly. Their faith is not groundless; it rests on the Spirit-preserved apostolic testimony John is giving.

My observations:

A — Application

Can I confess “My Lord and my God” not only with my lips but also with daily obedience?

P — Prayer

Lord Jesus, I worship You as my Lord and my God. Grow in me faithful, obedient belief.

Pray this in your own words:

JOHN 20:30–31

These Things Are Written So You May Believe

S — Scripture

30 Therefore Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:30–31, WEB

O — Observation

What does the passage reveal about the risen Jesus, faith, witness, and new life?

John acknowledges that Jesus performed many more signs than the Gospel records. He has selected sufficient testimony with a clear purpose.

The purpose is that readers believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John does not present faith as a mere intellectual compliment; life is found in His name.

The Gospel invites people who never saw Jesus in person to trust the written witness. John 20 prepares us for the continued call to follow the risen Lord in John 21.

My observations:

A — Application

What is my response to John’s stated purpose—do I trust Jesus as the Christ and seek life in His name?

P — Prayer

Father, thank You for giving this trustworthy witness. Help me believe in Your Son and live in His name.

Pray this in your own words:

Hard Questions

Does the empty tomb alone prove the resurrection?

John includes the empty tomb, linen cloths, Scripture, and eyewitness meetings with the risen Jesus. The empty tomb is important evidence, but the chapter builds a fuller testimony than an empty space by itself.

What did the beloved disciple believe in John 20:8?

Verse 8 says he saw and believed, while verse 9 says the disciples still lacked full understanding of the Scripture about resurrection. We should not claim he already understood every implication at this moment.

Why was Mary unable to recognize Jesus at first?

John reports that she did not know it was Jesus until He spoke her name. The passage does not explain the cause, so we should not invent details about His appearance.

Does “Don’t hold me” mean Jesus could not be touched?

No. John 20:17 fits the announcement that He is ascending to the Father and sending Mary as a witness. Jesus later invites Thomas to examine His wounds. The text does not support a rule that His risen body was untouchable.

Questions and study notes:

Hard Questions (continued)

Where exactly was Jesus' tomb?

John 19:41–42 places a new tomb in a garden near the crucifixion site; John 20 reports the same tomb. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an ancient traditional identification, but John gives no surveyed coordinates.

How could Jesus appear when the doors were locked?

John states both that the doors were locked and that Jesus stood among the disciples. This highlights the reality and power of His resurrection. The text does not explain the physics, so we should not supply a speculative mechanism.

Were the disciples afraid of all Jewish people?

No. The disciples themselves were Jewish. In this setting their fear concerns possible hostility from specific authorities after Jesus' execution. Scripture must never be used to assign blame collectively to Jewish people.

How does John 20:22 relate to Pentecost in Acts 2?

Evangelicals interpret the timing in different ways: as a symbolic anticipatory act, an initial bestowal, or an aspect of the same mission later publicly empowered at Pentecost. John emphasizes Jesus' giving of the Spirit; Acts describes the outpouring at Pentecost. Neither passage should be ignored.

Questions and study notes:

Hard Questions (continued)

Can disciples forgive sins by personal authority in John 20:23?

Forgiveness belongs to God and comes through Christ. Jesus authorizes His witnesses to announce the gospel and its consequence: those who receive Christ have forgiveness; those who reject Him remain in sin. Christians differ on aspects of church practice, but the commission cannot mean forgiveness by arbitrary human preference.

Was Thomas wrong to ask for proof?

His reluctance is real, and Jesus corrects his unbelief. Yet Jesus graciously meets him and directs him to believe. Questions should lead us toward Scripture's testimony rather than endless refusal.

Why is Thomas's confession important?

"My Lord and my God!" is addressed to the risen Jesus. It supports John's consistent teaching that Jesus is not merely a teacher but truly divine, as already expressed in John 1:1 and 1:14.

What does "believe" mean in John 20:31?

John records true signs so readers may trust Jesus as the promised Christ and Son of God and receive life in His name. Genuine faith is personal reliance upon Him, not merely agreement that He is historically interesting.

Questions and study notes:

Reflection

Where do I need the risen Jesus to replace fear with peace?

How does Mary’s truthful witness challenge me to share what Scripture says about Jesus?

Do I follow Jesus as “my Lord and my God,” including when I have hard questions?

Whom can I tell about the life found in Jesus’ name?

A Prayer of Gratitude for the Risen Lord

Holy Father, thank You that the cross was not the end. You raised Your Son, and through Him You offer forgiveness, peace, and everlasting life. Lord Jesus, You knew Mary’s grief and called her by name. You came to frightened disciples and spoke peace. You met Thomas in his weakness and called him to believe. Forgive my unbelief, my fear, and my reluctance to speak about You. Holy Spirit, lead me into the truth of the apostolic witness and make my words faithful to Scripture. Help me confess with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” Let my confidence rest not in imagined details but in the testimony You have given, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing I may have life in His name. Amen.

Pray this in your own words:

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY WITH YOU

The crucified Jesus is truly risen; His witnesses testify so that we may believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name.

Final Notes