



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. John

Chapter 20

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Introduction

- St. John opens the first chapter of this Gospel by proclaiming the eternal existence of the Lord Jesus Christ
- This is a completely different beginning in comparison to the opening chapters in the other three Gospels
- However, in the closing chapters of this Gospel, St. John writes about the same events recorded in the other Gospels as they all speak about the Lord's resurrection
- This is because His resurrection represents the focal point of the act of salvation



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- The Empty Tomb 20:1-10
- Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18
- The Apostles Commissioned 20:19-23
- Seeing and Believing 20:24-29
- That You May Believe 20:30-31



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- St. John seems to indicate that Mary Magdala is alone, although "the other Mary" [of Clopas] may have accompanied her or followed soon after her, Matthew 28:1
- The other Gospels list Mary Magdala as one of several women who go to the tomb of Christ on the first day of the week, Sunday
- It may be that Mary, or both Marys, went first before dawn and the others came at first light
- There may have been 2 or 3 groups of women going to the tomb that morning



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- Or, perhaps St. John speaks of only one of the group, who was specially prominent
- But who is missing from this group of women and why?
- St. Mary, the mother of Jesus is missing
- Perhaps because she knows He is no longer in the tomb
- Mary of Magdala, a woman from a fishing village on the shores of the Galilee, is a central figure in the story of the Resurrection
- She is mentioned 12 times in the Gospels



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- She came as soon as the Sabbath of the Old Testament was over
- According to the literal application of the law, it would have been incorrect to visit the tomb until the new Sabbath day - the first Sabbath of the New Testament- when the Lord arose from the dead
- The Gospel here begins with the first day in the new week
- It proclaims a new resurrected life and a new world
- Since that time, Christians have designated Sunday as the day of rest: it is celebrated in memory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is called 'the Lord's day' Revelation 1:10



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- She therefore runs and comes to those who would be most interested, and without any introduction, breathless and anxious, crying out, *They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb*
- Evidently she had no idea that a resurrection had taken place
- we *do not know where they have laid Him*, The plural has frequently been pressed to prove that Mary included the other women with herself in what she says, so that St. John's narrative here implies that of the earlier Gospels
- Some believe that Mary Magdalene ran to Peter and John while the other women ran to report the news to the rest of the disciples



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- The details of the visit of Peter and John, 20:3-10 are peculiar to this Gospel
- St. Luke mentions the visit of Peter only, 24:12
- But here we have the whole scene pictured with all the vividness and accuracy and exactness of one who stated what he himself saw and took part in
- *and the other disciple outran Peter*, This is simply the result of the greater activity of John, who was probably younger than Peter



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- John is restrained by wonder at what he sees, and waits for his friend and companion
- The Arabic version reads it, "he dared not go in"
- Or, perhaps he did not go in because he trusted that the words of Mary Magdalene were true and that the body was no longer in the tomb
- However, as soon Peter stepped inside, John followed him
- Then they saw and believed that the body was no longer in the tomb



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- *Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb, Because St. John has remained standing there in awe and meditation, but St. Peter with his natural impulsiveness goes in at once*
- Both Apostles act typically; and according to their character
- As by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is confirmed, so was this
- Both saw the linen in which the body was wrapped, but the body was gone; and which was a sign that the body was not stolen away, otherwise the linen would not have been left



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- Some scholars contend that this disciple did not suddenly come to believe in the Resurrection but was now convinced that Mary Magdala had spoken the truth when she said that the body was missing
- Ancient scholars have made the suggestion that it is seeing the burial clothes that supported his belief in Jesus' Resurrection because if Jesus' body had been taken by grave robbers they would have taken the body still wrapped in the clothes to avoid drawing attention to themselves



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- St. John Chrysostom supports this argument: *"If anyone had removed the body, he would not have stripped it first; nor would he have taken the trouble to remove and roll up the soudarion and put it in a place by itself."*
- Ancient scholars have also suggested that it was the position or form of the clothes and not just their presence that convinced the "Beloved disciple"
- It is their suggestion that Jesus emerged from His burial clothes in a supernatural manner, which allowed Him to pass through the clothes still leaving them virtually in place, like an empty cocoon



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- *the handkerchief that had been around His head*, What he saw was significant; the linen wrappings lying, and the napkin which had been on His head not lying with the linen cloths, but separately folded up in a place by itself
- The first circumstance was evidence that the body had not been hastily snatched away for burial elsewhere
- Had the authorities or any one else taken the body, they would have taken it as it was
- The second circumstance gave them even stronger proof that there had been no hurry



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- The *handkerchief* was neatly folded and laid *in a place by itself*, the linens being in another
- In this description and in this verse the detailed and exact knowledge and remembrance of an eye-witness reaches its peak
- The very fact that the napkin was folded did not escape the writer's eye, nor fade from his memory
- They felt in the tomb as if they were in a chamber where one had stripped or separated himself of one set of garments to assume another



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- John had arrived first as he raced towards the tomb
- However, Peter showed more courage as he stepped into the tomb looking for the body
- He wanted to check the matter in all its possibilities
- John's speed encouraged Peter to move more quickly; while Peter's courage led John to step inside the tomb
- Peter saw and marveled, Luke 24:12; John saw and believed, John 20:8
- *and he saw and believed*, Some scholars say that he believed what Mary had said



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- While others say that he believed that Christ is Risen
- Standing and gazing at the folded napkin, John saw the truth
- Jesus has Himself risen, and freed Himself of these wrappings
- He saw there were no signs of haste or confusion, or of a searched tomb
- Verse 9 explains that they did not fully understand those scriptures of the Old Testament and the types of the Old Testament, by which Christ's resurrection was foretold and prefigured



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- Did they really have no understanding that Jesus would rise from the dead? Had Jesus not prepared them for this event?
- They knew but they didn't understand
- St. Matthew tells us in 27:62-66 that even the chief priests and the Pharisees knew of Jesus' claim that in three days He would arise from the dead
- It is the reason they requested that Pilate must place a guard and seal the tomb
- Jesus also prophetically predicted His Resurrection repeatedly in His attempt to prepare His disciples



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- Jesus' Prophecies of His Resurrection: Matthew 12:38-40, 16:21, 17:9,23, 20:18,19, 26:32, 27:63; Mark, 8:31, 9:1,10,31, 10:32-34, 14:28,58; Luke 9:22-27; John, 2:18-22, 12:34, chapters 14-16
- Jesus not only predicted His Resurrection but He also emphasized that His Resurrection from the dead would be the prophetic "sign" to authenticate His claim that He is the Messiah!
- But now, they not only believe, they recall the Scriptures that prophesized these events



The Empty Tomb 20:1-10

- They returned probably because they feared future troubles
- It was hard for them to know what the Jewish leaders would do upon discovering that the Body was no longer in the tomb
- They returned and joined their fellow disciples and waited to hear from God
- St. John Chrysostom believes that the two disciples had gone each to his own home at first as they felt amazed
- There the resurrection began to touch their minds
- Then they returned and met with the other disciples according to the Lord's command

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- The two disciples hurried back to their fellow disciples, Mary Magdalene stayed by the tomb and wept
- It was hard for her to leave the tomb without seeing the Body of the Lord
- She saw two angels sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet
- Matthew and Mark speak only of one, but Luke of two, as here; whom he calls men, because they appeared in a human form, and in shining garments, or white apparel

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- St. Gregory the Great comments that the angel seated at the head proclaims the Lord's divinity: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God', John 1:1
- The other angel, seated at the feet proclaims the Lord's incarnation: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us', John 1:14

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- The Angels marveled at her weeping because they expected her to rejoice that He had risen
- (They raised the question, *why are you weeping?* 'It is as though they were telling her, 'Do not weep'. But she assumed that they asked this as they did not know the cause of her tears.) St. Augustine
- *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him* Mary thought that it was a sufficient reason for her weeping
- Mary does not realize that she is speaking with her Lord who she has mistaken for the gardener

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Why does John include this exchange between Mary and Jesus?
- Why doesn't she recognize Him?
- Some scholars have suggested Mary's tears and grief have clouded her vision
- Other scholars see the theological symbolism of the "hidden Messiah"
- John the Baptist didn't recognize Jesus until God the Holy Spirit revealed to John at Jesus' baptism His true nature and origin

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- The disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke chapter 24 also do not recognize the risen Lord until the breaking of the bread at supper
- It could be also that His appearance is altered
- He is now the transformed risen Savior and His disciples are seeing Him for the first time in His glorified body

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Jesus repeats the angels' words to Mary
- He also repeats the angel's message when He appears to the women in Matthew 28:9-10
- *Whom are you seeking?* Because she was not only weeping for the loss of Him, but was inquiring after Him
- She thought He is the gardener
- Three times she refers to the Lord simply by the pronoun “Him”
- The omission of the name is understandable
- She is so full of her loss that she assumes that others must know all about it

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Her own mind is so entirely filled with the one subject, that she supposes it to be in the minds of others
- The same passionate eagerness is heard in the words which follow
- So in a spiritual sense, a truly gracious soul is willing to do anything, and to be at any trouble just to enjoy Christ
- The soul that dearly loves Him, as this good woman did; early, and earnestly and with its whole heart seeks after Him, as she did; and His absence or loss of His presence for a while, sharpens the desire after Him
- It is to that devoted love that the first words of the risen Lord are spoken

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- She searched for Him zealously and lovingly
- This qualified her to be the first to hear His joyful voice
- The voice of God is always most quickly heard by the hearts that love Him
- She had heard in the well-known voice her own name, and it has brought back to her all the old associations
- It is the “Master,” or, as the Hebrew word means, “*My Master*” and she falls at His feet to embrace Him
- Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd whose sheep know His voice, John 10:3,14,27

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- This passage has given rise to a variety of interpretations
- Jesus required Thomas to touch him John 20:27, and it has been difficult to ascertain why He forbade this now to Mary
- Some suggest that she had cast herself at His feet and perhaps to be even more sure that it was the Lord's body, and that His words are meant to prevent this
- Or, probably the reason for that was that He knew she would imagine that He had risen and would live with them on earth just as Lazarus had done

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- The Lord wanted her to preach His resurrection and ascension into heaven He did not arise in order to establish an earthly kingdom
- He arose in order to ascend and establish His kingdom in our hearts
- St. John Chrysostom suggests that, having known the human Jesus, He is now asking her to show more respect for His glorified body, hence the reference to "ascending to the Father"
- Other scholars suggest that her desire to cling to Him is to keep Him bound to earth and He is telling her that His place is no longer in Jerusalem but as High Priest offering Himself as the true sacrifice before the throne of God

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Another suggestion is that He is urging her not to waste time clinging to Him but He has given her the mission to run quickly to the Apostles with the news that she has seen Him
- “Touch” represents a Greek word which means to “cling to,” to “fasten on,” to “grasp” an object
- The tense is present, and the prohibition is, therefore, not of an individual act, but of a continuance of the act, “Do not continue clinging to Me”
- The Lord wanted her to stop touching and it is as though He allowed her to touch Him only for a moment

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- *My brethren*, The followers of Jesus have become daughters and sons of God the Father
- In that sense they are all indeed His brothers and sisters, born from the womb of the New Covenant Church
- *I am ascending to My Father and your Father*, The present is used of the future, which He regards as immediately at hand
- He did not ascend right away but stayed for 40 days on earth
- The message to the brethren is an assurance that the going to the Father, of which He had so often spoken to them, was about to be realized

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- The victory over death has been accomplished
- This appearance on earth is an earnest of the return to heaven, “Unto My Father,”
- *I ascend unto My Father*, Because He is My Father, He is also your Father, and you are My brethren
- My victory over death was the victory of man, whose nature has in Me conquered death
- My ascension into heaven will be the ascension of human nature, which in Me goes to the Father

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Jesus had called God habitually His Father, and on one occasion His God
- But both are here united, expressing that full-orbed relationship which embraces in Himself and His redeemed
- Yet, note well, He does not say, Our Father and our God
- All the deepest of the Church fathers emphasized and called attention to this, as expressly designed to distinguish between what God is to Him and to us
- It is vital to avoid thinking that these words indicate a person's equality in honor with the righteous

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- Therefore it is important to make a distinction: the name 'Father' refers to One- that is- 'He is the Father to one Son'
- Concerning His role, it is a multiple one as He 'he calls sons through the adoption of many'
- Because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself knew that, He who is without sin, has said: *'I am ascending to My Father and your Father'*
- He did not say: 'Our Father' for He distinguished between the two

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 20:11-18



- He first said what applies to Him: *'I am ascending to My Father'* which is the natural relation
- And then He added '... and your Father' that is the result of adoption
- Mary directly and immediately ran to the apostles
- She was ready and willing to obey the commands of her Lord, with the utmost cheerfulness; and glad to go to and carry such news to His disciples, even though her private interest and personal affection might have inclined her to desire to stay with Christ

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- On "that day" which became so memorable in the history of the Church
- Consequently, after most astounding and independent revelations had been made to several individuals, *at evening* there occurred that which John now proceeds to describe
- The disciples had been prepared
 - (1) by the reports of the women, that the grave had been opened and was empty, and that angelic appearances had asserted the resurrection of Jesus
 - (2) By the impression made on Peter and John when they found it as Mary and the other women had said

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- (3) By an assertion of the Magdalene that she had seen the Lord, and that He had sent a special message to His brethren
- (4) By the immense excitement of the appearance and disappearance of the Lord at Emmaus. This was evinced by the return of the two disciples to Jerusalem, charged with new ideas of the meaning of the Scriptures
- The apostles were prepared for the wonderful manifestation of a new mode of being; but they needed something more convincing than they had yet received

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- They were still suffering from intellectual blindness and slowness of spirit, and were apparently incapable of accepting mere testimony
- The “fear of the Jews” naturally followed the Crucifixion
- The Shepherd was struck, and the flock was scattered
- They feared they would be accused of having stolen the Body
- They would remember, too, His own words, which foretold persecution for them, John 15:18, and there may have been definite charges against some of them

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- Peter, *e.g.*, had drawn upon himself the hostility of the high priest's household, and John was known to be among the disciples
- *the doors were shut*, This is mentioned both here and John 20:26 to show that the appearance was supernatural
- The body of the risen Lord was indeed the body of His human life, but it was not subject to the ordinary conditions of human life and matter cannot hinder or obstruct it
- The Lord wanted to confirm that He had risen with the same body

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- However, it was a glorified body
- His resurrection did not mean that He had returned to a normal life on earth
- “Truly, the Lord was able to enter through the doors without opening them. He is the One who was born and yet the virginity of His mother remained untouched.” St. Augustine
- The Lord’s words, *Peace be with you* were not mere words uttered as a usual form of greeting exchanged among friends
- Indeed, these words were a form of unusual blessing that carried power
- Peace in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- By entering while the doors were close, the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed to the disciples that His resurrected Body had a new nature
- At the same time, He confirmed that it was the same body since it bore the same wounds of the cross
- Their *joy* arose from the proof of physical identity which He had given them in the wounds
- Their first impression was that they saw a spirit, and they were afraid, but the conviction that it was indeed the Lord
- The fear of the disciples was replaced by joy

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- *Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you,* The repeating of this salutation is more than an ordinary compliment, or form of salutation
- It signifies His reconciliation to them, despite their error in forsaking Him, and fleeing
- It prepared their attention for the great things that He was now about to speak to them
- It also signified, that He was about to preach the gospel of peace to all nations

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- “This is what the Lord had said before His crucifixion, “...I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one can take away from you,” (16:22). These words were now being fulfilled in a practical manner. It led the disciples now to have true faith...these were the Lord’s first words after His resurrection.” St John Chrysostom
- He is the great Apostle, Hebrews 3:1; they are ambassadors for Christ, to whom He commits the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- He declares to them, and they in His name are to declare to the world, the fulness of the Father's love, and the peace between man and God, witnessed to in His life and death
- The world will hate, persecute, and kill them, as it had hated, persecuted, and killed Him
- They are sent as He was sent
- They are to declare forgiveness, mercy, love, peace, as He had declared them, to every heart that does not harden itself against them

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- And they are to find in His presence, as He had ever found in the Father's presence, the support which will ever bring peace to their own hearts, John 14:27
- In Hebrew and in Greek the word for "breath" is the same word as "spirit."
- God first breathed into Adam to give him physical life and now Christ breathes His Spirit into the Apostles to give them spiritual life
- He is sending them forth, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who will make all things "new" again just as He did in the first creation, Genesis 1:2

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- The prophet Ezekiel envisioned this day when he wrote of the Messianic restoration of Israel, Ezekiel 37:9-10
- Man, formally dead to sin has been resurrected in Christ and this faithful remnant of the Old Israel has become the basis of the New Israel, the New Covenant Church that will become an immense army of disciples converting the world through the spread of the Gospel
- The Sacraments of the Church are visible signs instituted by Christ

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19



- *He breathed on them*, Jesus Himself instituted the Sacrament of Priesthood
- In verse 23 Jesus is instituting the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession
- Under the Old Covenant the sinner placed his hands on the animal, confesses his sins before the priest, and the animal died in his place
- In verses 22-23 the priests of the New Covenant carry the Son of God's authority to forgive or retain sins

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- Sins must be confessed to an ordained priest who is a successor of the first ministerial priesthood in Christ, to whom we confess as though we are confessing to Christ Himself
- Now Christ is the Lamb of sacrifice but we still must have confession and repentance before sins can be forgiven and communion with God restored
- “The task of the priest is to grant the Holy Spirit, to exercise his right to forgive - through the Holy Spirit- and to retain sins.”
St Ambrose

The Apostles Commissioned

20:19-23



- God has promised forgiveness wherever there is repentance
- He has not promised repentance wherever there is sin
- Jesus is the physician of our souls and our bodies
- He both healed the sick and forgave their sins and He has willed His Church, in the power of God the Holy Spirit, to continue His work of healing
- In this sacrament the sinner places himself before the merciful judgment of God who heals and purifies hearts and souls

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- The person here spoken of, is described by his Hebrew name Thomas, and his Greek one Didymus, which both signify a twin; and perhaps he was one
- It was common with the Jews to have two names, a Jewish and a Gentile one
- They often went by one name in Judea, and by another in Galilee
- He was not with the rest of the disciples, when they were assembled together, and Jesus appeared among them
- We do not know why he was not with them
- But he did not believe them

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- Nothing would satisfy him but the testimony of his own senses
- He had witnessed the crucifixion and that the death and its circumstances had deeply impressed him
- To him resurrection seemed difficult to believe
- The determination is expressed in its strongest form by the double Greek negative, “I will by no means believe”
- This anxious skepticism became a blessing for those who have not seen and yet have believed
- St. Thomas is always remembered for this remark

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- It is also important to remember him too for his courageous statement in John 11:16 when he declared he was prepared to die with Jesus, and he would die for Jesus
- According to the history of the Church, St. Thomas was martyred at the altar of his Church in India
- He had faithfully carried the Gospel to what was then the end of the earth!

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- The words 'after eight days' would convey to us the eighth day, or after the seventh day...which would be the first Sunday after the Lord's resurrection
- There had been therefore no appearance given during the intervening days
- The place is obviously the same as that of the first appearance, and the doors are shut for the same reason
- *and Thomas with them*, Which shows their harmony and agreement, their frequency and constancy in meeting together, and their Christian compassion with Thomas, despite his unbelief

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- They looked upon him as a good man, and retained in their company, hoping by one means or other he would be convinced
- It also shows Thomas's regard to them, and affection for them, by meeting with them, though he had not the same faith in the resurrection of Christ
- *Peace to you*, Which He had said before, and now, saluting Thomas in like manner as He did the rest, despite his unbelief
- *Do not be unbelieving, but believing*, The words do not apply to the fact of the Resurrection only, but to the general spiritual condition of the Apostle

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- He was in danger of passing from the state of a believer in Christ to that of an unbeliever
- His demand for the evidence of the senses was a step backward
- His Master would have him retrace that step, and become one who rests upon the intuition of the Spirit
- “Note the Lord’s compassion! For the sake of one soul, He revealed Himself carrying His wounds. He came to save each one personally.” St. John Chrysostom

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- As soon as St. Thomas saw the Lord Jesus Christ standing before him and as soon as he heard His voice, he no longer felt the need to touch the wounds of His Master
- He immediately proclaimed Him and cried out, *My Lord and my God*
- Probably, just the sight of His Lord made him withdraw what he had told the disciples – that unless he touched the Lord's wounds, he would not believe- and now he declared to the whole world what he felt in his heart

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- Opinions differ, and some scholars believe that St. Thomas declared his faith without touching the Lord's wounds
- Others believe that he actually declared his faith but obeyed the Lord and touched His wounds, even though he no longer needed to do so in order to believe
- "He saw the Lord's Body and touched Him; and he comprehended His Divinity that can neither be seen nor touched." St. Augustine
- In Hebrews 11:1 it is written that *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen..."*

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- St. Thomas' faith would have had more merit if he had accepted the testimony of the other Apostles instead of the exceptional proof he received through seeing and touching Jesus' wounds
- St. Paul wrote to the Church in Rome: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* Romans 10:17
- It is that preaching of Christ that is passed from the Apostles down to us in the Church today
- When we accept that testimony we must not only believe but we must practice what we believe

Seeing and Believing 20:24-29



- Jesus' statement "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe*" is a benediction our Lord has pronounced on all the future generations of believers!
- *Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed,* It carries in it a unspoken and gentle reproof for his unbelief

That You May Believe 20:30-31



- The Evangelist reveals the aim of writing this Gospel
- It is not intended to present a full documentation of the life, work, and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ
- His narrative is drawing to a close, and he explains the fact that he has recorded so little of a life which contained so much
- There were, indeed, many other signs which he, as an eye-witness, remembered, but which it was not within his purpose to relate



That You May Believe 20:30-31

- Controversy has prevailed from the days of St. John Chrysostom to our own time, as to whether these verses are the summary and conclusion of the Gospel as a whole, or have special reference to the record only of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection
- The use of "signs" has been a major theme of this Gospel
- Jesus performed supernatural acts that had greater significance beyond the miracle
- Each miracle was a sign that pointed to a theological truth and John has built this Gospel around 7 theologically significant public signs that point to Jesus' divinity and His claim that He is the Messiah



That You May Believe 20:30-31

- His goal is that those for whom he writes may become believers, and read in these signs the spiritual truths which lay behind them
- He has traced step by step the developments of faith in the Apostles themselves, and this has reached its highest stage in the confession of St. Thomas
- He has recorded the blessedness of those who shall believe without sight, uttered in his Master's words
- In the confession of St. Thomas, and in the comment of our Lord, the object of the author finds its full expression, and with their words the Gospel finds its fitting close



That You May Believe 20:30-31

- *Do not be unbelieving, but believing*
- *My Lord and my God*
- *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*
- These are the words the author heard and records
- *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*
- This is the object he had in recording them
- On the special meaning of these words as connected with the Gnostic heresies of the time



Discussion

- Why does John draw our attention to the time of day in verse 1 and 19?
- What are some clues that the disciples discover in the tomb that tell them that Jesus' body was likely not stolen?
- Mary was overcome with grief, the disciples with fear, and Thomas with doubt. What is one thing they all had in common before seeing Jesus?



Discussion

- What was the atmosphere of the room before Jesus entered the room? How about after? Why?
- Why did the apostles fear the Jews?
- Why did the disciples need to hear Jesus' words and why were they repeated? verses 19, 21
- In verse 22 it is written that Jesus breathed on them to receive the Holy Spirit. What does this remind you of?



Discussion

- How is this spiritual authority exercised by Christ's church?
- According to verses 29-31, why was the Gospel according to St. John written? What is the fundamental question of this Gospel?
- What does the resurrection of Jesus prove about what Jesus said about Himself throughout the entire Gospel according to St. John?