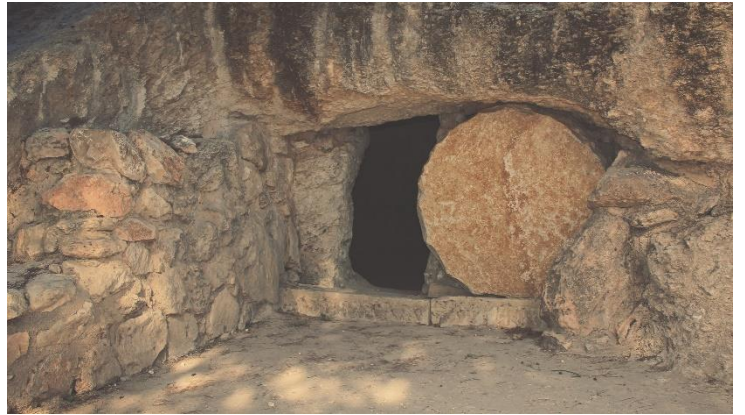


Easter Bible Study 2024



3 studies

Study 1 – Palm Sunday – Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord – Psalm 62:1-12 and John 12:12-19 - [See also: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10 and Luke 19:29-38]

(Sermon on 24-March-24)

Read Psalm 62:1-4

*Note: **Jeduthun** in the title of the Psalm is a Levite of the family of Merari and the chief of one of the 3 choirs of the temple whose descendants also formed one of the perpetual temple choirs; he is named at the beginning of 3 Psalms (39, 62, 77) either as the composer or the recipient of those Psalms but most likely as the leader of the choir by which those Psalms were to be sung. Also mentioned in: 1 Chronicles 9:16, 38, 41, 42; 1 Chronicles 25:1, 3, 6; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 29:14; 35:15 and Nehemiah 11:17.*

Charles Spurgeon wrote regarding Jeduthun: “The sons of Jeduthun were porters or doorkeepers, according to 1 Chronicles 16:42. Those who serve well make the best of singers, and those who occupy the highest posts in the choir must not be ashamed to wait at the posts of the doors of the Lord’s house.”

1. What is David trusting in, in verses 1 & 2? How does David describe God in verses 1 & 2?
*David is **trusting in God**; David’s soul finds rest in God because he knows that His **salvation** (forgiveness of sins and gift of eternal life) comes from God alone!
 The emphasis in verse 1 is of **surrendered silence before God and God alone**. The word **truly** is often translated **alone or only** and has this meaning in verse 1.*

*David describes God as: a **rock**; his **salvation**; his **fortress**. These descriptions all speak of **safety, security and protection**. The description is of a man completely focused upon God for His help, firmly resolved to look nowhere else. Which means that David can conclude at the end of verse 2 that **he will never be shaken**.*

2. Who does David complain about in verses 3 & 4? What is his complaint?
*David complains about his **enemies**; the ones who are against him and out to get him. David describes himself in a vulnerable state, like a leaning wall or a tottering fence; quite easy to push over!
 David describes his enemies’ intentions very clearly in verse 4 – they want to bring down God’s King – and are even delighted to **tell lies** to bring him down. And David says his enemies are **two-faced**; they bless him with their mouths but inwardly in their hearts they curse David!*

Read Psalm 62:5-7

3. Where does David find his confidence and how does he express it in verses 5 & 7
In verse 5, David restates his opening claim from verse 1; that his soul finds rest in God; that’s where his hope comes from.

And again, David says in verse 6, God “truly” (alone, only) is his rock and salvation and his fortress. He’s putting his confidence in God’s **safety, security and protection**. That’s why David can say – “**I will not be shaken**” which is similar to verse 2 “**I will not be moved**”

There is a hymn “I shall not be moved” based on Psalm 62.

Refrain:

*I shall not be, I shall not be moved.
I shall not be, I shall not be moved;
like a tree planted by the water,
I shall not be moved.*

*1 When my cross is heavy, I shall not be moved,
when my cross is heavy, I shall not be moved;
like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved. [Refrain]*

*2 The church of God is marching, I shall not be moved,
the church of God is marching, I shall not be moved;
like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved. [Refrain]*

*3 Jesus is our captain, I shall not be moved,
Jesus is our captain; I shall not be moved;
like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved. [Refrain]*

*4 Fighting sin and Satan, I shall not be moved,
Fighting sin and Satan, I shall not be moved;
like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved. [Refrain]*

David restates his calm confidence in God in verse 7: My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge.

Read Psalm 62:8-12

4. What does David teach the people in verse 8?

*Having said where his confidence lies in verses 5 to 7; David feels what’s good for him will also be good for the people. So, in verse 8 David now tells his readers/people – that they too can have confidence in God. David urges the people to **trust** God “**at all times**” and to “**pour out their hearts to God**” [pour out their sorrows and troubles to God] because “**God is his/their refuge**”.*

5. What does David teach the people NOT to trust in verses 9 & 10?

As the psalm speaks so much of **trusting in God alone**. David explains in verses 9 & 10 why it was important to trust in God alone and NOT in human beings. David understood that whether they are a person of low birth or high birth, they are altogether lighter than breath – which just blows away and disappears because it's so light. David's point is human beings are just like breath/vapour which has no substance that you can grasp hold of. Therefore, human beings have no substance worth trusting in – in comparison to God!

David, in verse 10, also tells the people **not to trust in extortion** (using violence or intimidation to demand money or property from someone) nor to put their hope in **stolen goods**. If we think about it, both actions, extortion and stealing, are the opposite of trusting in God; instead, people are trusting in their own methods to get ahead, rather than relying on God. David had seen people advance through cruel or dishonest ways. He warned the people against this, understanding that the results never justify the evil used to get the results.

Still in verse 10, David also warns about the dangers of putting one's heart in wealth. When someone is wealthy, it's easy to trust in their wealth instead of trusting in God. That's why Jesus said "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21) and that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). It's more important for people to be rich towards God! There are at least three ways in which a person might set their heart on riches.

- To take excessive pleasure in riches, making them the source of joy for life.
- To place one's hope and security in riches.
- To grow proud and arrogant because of riches.

Paul puts it this way in 1 Timothy 6:17: Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

6. What does David teach himself about God's power in verses 11 & 12?

In verse 11, with repeating emphasis "two things I have heard", David reminds himself that **ultimate power belongs to God [not humans] and to no other!** Since power belongs to God, David refused to look for strength anywhere else or in anyone else. Since power belongs to God, David did not long for power for himself. Since power belongs to God, David did not become arrogant as a ruler, knowing any power he held was as God's representative.

David also understood that God's nature was much more than power. God is also **rich in love** – and God's love never fails [unlike human love]!

David's point is – if God has ultimate power and His love never fails – then why would we trust in anything/anyone else – and David concludes that God's power and love work together perfectly to reward everyone according to what they have done.

Read John 12:12-19 [if you have time you might want to read and compare parallel passages in Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10 and Luke 19:29-38]

7. What reasons might there be for such a great crowd in Jerusalem?

Reasons for a great crowd: a) It is the annual Passover festival, so there are visitors from other cities and nations; b) many people have heard of Jesus' miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11) and they have heard he was going to Jerusalem, so they followed Him.

8. What's happened earlier in chapter 12 and the previous chapter 11, that might add to the excitement of the people?

In chapter 11 – Jesus' friend Lazarus had died and had been dead for 4 days (11:17, 49) by the time Jesus got to Lazarus' hometown of Bethany. Jesus miraculously raised Lazarus from the dead. Then in the early part of chapter 12, a dinner was given in Jesus' honour in Bethany where Lazarus and his two sisters Mary and Martha lived. Mary lavishly anoints Jesus' feet with expensive perfume. Judas thinks this is a waste and the perfume could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor! Jesus approves of Mary's lavish action on the grounds that the poor will always be around but they won't always have Jesus around!

Jesus' miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead had sparked such interest that the religious leaders are worried about their status and popularity, in comparison to Jesus; i.e. they are jealous. This prompted the chief priests to make plans to kill Lazarus, to stop people following and believing Jesus!

9. Why would they use palm branches to greet Jesus? (cf. Leviticus 23:40; 2 Kings 9:13)

Leviticus 23:40: In this verse palm branches (and also branches from willow trees and other leafy trees) were used to rejoice before the Lord for 7 days. This was at the Feast of the Tabernacle, not Passover; however, the idea of the people rejoicing in the Lord by waving branches from palm trees, is established.

2 Kings 9:13: In this verse; it is the time of King Jehu who is anointed as King of Israel. When Jehu is anointed King, the people spontaneously take off their cloaks and spread them under Jehu as he parades past. In the Matthew's account of Palm Sunday, the people also spread their cloaks in front of King Jesus, as well as branches from trees. This action is equivalent to us rolling out the red-carpet for a King or Queen to visit.

*The people's action of waving palm branches or laying them before Jesus is basically acknowledging Jesus as a **King**! In fact, they say so at the end of verse 13: "Blessed is the King of Israel"*

*And by saying "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" they are identifying Jesus as the promised Coming One, the **Messiah**!*

From the time of Simon Maccabeus, when he drove Syrian forces out of Jerusalem (1 Maccabees 13:51) in 141-142BC, palm branches and the waving of them had become a nationalistic symbol of Israel. There were even coins struck with palm images, during this period.

10. What does "**hosanna**" mean? How would this apply to Jesus? How would it apply to Psalm 62?

Hosanna means "save (us) now!" or literally "I beg you to save" or "please deliver us"

Hosanna had also come to be used as a general term of praise like “Hallelujah” – Praise God! The people were thinking that as Jesus is a King – he must be like their glorious past King – King David – who was a successful warrior king. If Jesus was anything like King David, He would save the people of Israel from the oppression of Roman rule and kick the Romans out of Israel; so that’s why they’re pleading with Jesus to save them!

In relation to Psalm 62 – King David wrote that Psalm and clearly saw that the only way to be saved (the only way of salvation) was through God alone! In the same way, the people see their only way of salvation is through King Jesus! And the people are correct, King Jesus, is the only way of salvation; it’s just the people have the wrong idea of what this salvation is. It’s not saving them from “physical enemies” like the Romans but saving them from “spiritual enemies” like sinful desires, sinful words and sinful actions which all lead to the spiritual enemy of death which is the punishment of their sin!

Jesus is riding into Jerusalem to remove the spiritual enemies of “sin” and “death” – but no one understands this at the time!

11. Have the **words** that the people use in verse 13 been used before? (cf. Psalm 118:25-26)

These words come from a praise Psalm (Hallel psalm) – Psalm 118, verses 25-26: Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Psalm 118 is a psalm that speaks of God’s steadfast love and encourages us to be unwavering in our faith, even in times of great adversity, reminding us that through God’s love and mercy, we will have victory in the long-run!

12. What **title** do they attribute to Jesus? Has this been used before? (cf. John 1:49)

Jesus is given the title “King of Israel” in verse 13.

We’ve seen this earlier in John Gospel, in 1:49, when the apostle Philip found Nathanael and told Nathanael about Jesus; Nathanael referred to Jesus as “the Son of God” and “the King of Israel”

13. Why a **donkey** in verse 14? (cf. Zechariah 9:9). Is this how you would expect a King to make his entry?

The donkey in verse 14:

Firstly, fulfils Zechariah’s prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 – “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”

Secondly, a donkey is a symbol of Jesus coming in to Jerusalem in peace – and with NO military intentions or purposes. A military or conquering King would have ridden in on a stallion or war horse and perhaps even in a chariot?

*Thirdly, a donkey is a symbol of humility. Jesus, by choosing to ride a donkey, was making a statement about the nature of his kingship—his kingdom was not of this world, and it was founded on **humility, service, and love**. Jesus came as a servant king – “to serve, and not to be served” (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45 and John 13:1-17 [washing the disciples’ feet])*

14. Why do you think the disciples did not understand all that was happening in verse 16?
The disciples' lack of understanding can be attributed to several factors:

Incomplete understanding of Jesus's mission: *Despite spending considerable time with Jesus and witnessing his miracles and teachings, the disciples may not have fully grasped the depth and scope of his mission. They likely had preconceived notions of a political Messiah who would overthrow Roman rule and establish an earthly kingdom. Jesus's actions, such as riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, may not have aligned with their expectations.*

Spiritual blindness: *Like many people at the time, the disciples may have been spiritually blind to the true nature of Jesus's identity and mission. Their understanding may have been clouded by cultural, religious, and personal biases, preventing them from recognizing Jesus as the suffering servant foretold in prophecy.*

Fulfillment of prophecy: *The disciples may not have immediately recognized the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, such as Zechariah 9:9, in Jesus's actions. It was only after Jesus's resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that they began to understand how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies.*

Divine revelation: *Understanding the significance of Jesus's actions required divine revelation. It was not until after Jesus's death, resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that the disciples gained a deeper understanding of who Jesus truly was and the purpose of his mission.*

15. The disciples only understood, according to verse 16, after Jesus was **glorified**. What does John mean by Jesus being "**glorified**"? (cf. John 12:23)

Here, "glorified" refers to the events that would occur immediately following that first Palm Sunday, namely: Jesus's death and resurrection, including his ascension to heaven. After these events occurred, the disciples came to understand the significance of what had happened—how Jesus's actions fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and how his death and resurrection were part of God's plan for salvation.

In essence, "glorified" in this context encompasses the entire process of Jesus's triumph over sin and death on the cross; and His resurrection, and His ascension, which ultimately revealed his divine nature and fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah. And ultimately fulfilled His Father's rescue plan through His Son – which in turn brought glory to God!

16. Who has been following Jesus and spreading the word in verse 17 & 18? What "**sign**" is referred to in verse 18?

In verse 17, the crowd from Bethany who all witnessed Lazarus be raised from the dead, had followed Jesus!

In verse 18, many people who had heard that Jesus had performed this “sign” (miracle) also went out to meet Jesus!

The “sign” is the raising of Lazarus from the dead

17. Jump ahead and **read John 20:30-31**. What’s the two-fold purpose of John’s Gospel?

*John 20:30-31 says: Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written **that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah**, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life** in his name.*

*So, the two-fold purpose of Jesus’ “signs” or “miracles” was to a) help people **believe** and b) to **have life in Jesus** that leads to **eternal life**!*

18. Back to John 12 and verse 19. What’s so ironic about the Pharisees words to each other here? For further insight into their thinking, read John 11:45-57.

In John 12:19, the Pharisees express concern about the growing popularity of Jesus among the people, saying, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

*The irony in this statement lies in the fact that the Pharisees, who were religious leaders highly concerned with maintaining their own authority and influence, inadvertently acknowledge the widespread acceptance of Jesus by the people. They use hyperbolic language to emphasize the extent of Jesus's following, inadvertently highlighting the profound impact he was having on the masses. In fact, Jesus’ mission is ironically for “**the whole world**” to follow Him!*

Also, the Pharisees’ statement contrasts with their own rejection of Jesus and their ongoing efforts to undermine his ministry. Despite their efforts to suppress Jesus's influence, they find themselves unable to stop the momentum of his message and the devotion of his followers. The irony underscores the futility of their opposition and the unstoppable nature of Jesus's mission.

19. How does Psalm 62 relate to John 12:12-19?

When we compare Psalm 62 with John 12:12-19, we can draw parallels in the themes of trust, salvation, and deliverance:

Trust in God: *In Psalm 62, the psalmist declares, "My soul finds rest in God alone" (verse 1). Similarly, in John 12:12-19, Jesus enters Jerusalem amidst the acclaim of the crowds, fulfilling the Messianic hopes of many who placed their trust in God's promises.*

Deliverance and Salvation: *Psalm 62 repeatedly emphasizes God alone (only) as the source of salvation and refuge. Likewise, the people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem in John 12:12-19 do so with shouts of "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (John 12:13),*

expressing their belief that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah who alone (only) would bring deliverance and salvation.

Contrast with Human Power: Psalm 62 contrasts the fleeting nature of human power and wealth with the enduring strength of God. Similarly, in John 12:12-19, Jesus enters Jerusalem humbly, riding on a donkey, in contrast to the worldly expectations of a conquering king. This event highlights the divine irony that the true King of kings comes not in earthly pomp and power but in humility and obedience to God's will.

In both Psalm 62 and John 12:12-19, there is a profound emphasis on trusting in God alone for salvation and deliverance, even in the face of worldly challenges and opposition. Both passages affirm the sovereignty and faithfulness of God, who fulfills His promises and provides refuge for those who put their trust in Him.

20. To finish up read **Revelation 7:9-17** – what do you discover is going on?

In Revelation 7:9-17, John sees a vision of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne and the Lamb [Jesus], praising God with loud voices – and wearing white robes (symbolic of being cleansed of their sins by Jesus' blood) and holding **palm leaves** just like their very first Palm Sunday described in John 12:12-19.

And look what they are shouting in Revelation 7:10: "**Salvation** belongs to our God [alone], who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb [Jesus].

It's like that first Palm Sunday is foreshadowing and pointing to this future Palm Sunday – that will be absolutely amazing!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of John 12:12-19?

Salvation is from the Lord alone!



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. We can **emulate Jesus' humble service** by serving others with humility, putting their needs above our own, and approaching leadership roles with a servant's heart
- b. We can **learn faithfulness in the face of opposition**. Jesus knew what was ahead but He remained faithful to His mission. Likewise, we need to remain steadfast in our faith and commitment to God's purposes, even when faced with challenges and opposition
- c. We can give **recognition of God's work**. The crowd recognized Jesus' arrival of a fulfilment of prophecy and praised His mighty works. We can cultivate a mindset of

recognizing and praising God's work in our lives, acknowledging His faithfulness and sovereignty

- d. We can **cultivate authentic worship** in our lives by honouring God with a heart, mind and actions, rather than merely going through the motions or paying God lip service!
- e. We must **seek God's Kingdom first in our lives** (Matthew 6:33); Jesus is King of our lives – we are NOT kings of our own lives! So, we need to prioritize God first and align our lives to God's will and seek God's kingdom and righteousness in all that we do!
- f. There are also some pitfalls we need to avoid:
 - i. **Temporary enthusiasm for Jesus** – the people in Jerusalem welcomed him on Palm Sunday and some of those same people turned against by Friday!
 - ii. **Misunderstanding Jesus' Kingship** – He is a spiritual King not a genie in a bottle.
 - iii. **Failure to grasp the Spiritual truth** – we can get caught up spiritual excitement and fail to grasp who Jesus really is and what his mission is and what our mission is – and that discipleship comes at a cost
 - iv. **Wavering faith** – like the crowd we can soon become fickle and start doubting Jesus – when trials and tribulations come along!

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

John 12:13 - They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"

Finish in prayer: Praising God for His Son, Jesus, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2)

Study 2 – Good Friday - “It is Finished”**John 19:16-42****(Sermon on 29-March-24)****Read John 19:16-27**

1. In verse 17, Jesus carried His own cross. How does this connect to Genesis 22:6?

In Genesis 22, Abraham is tested by God; and told to take his son Isaac (his only son) up the mountain in the region of Moriah (where the temple mount in Jerusalem and the temple in Jerusalem used to stand – but now includes the Dome of the Rock – a Muslim shrine built 1300 years ago – and also where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is) – and sacrifice him. As they climb the mountain; Isaac carried the wood for the fire (for the burnt offering sacrifice to be made) on his back just like Jesus carried the Cross for His sacrifice!

Quite a few links to Jesus here:

- a. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his only beloved son. God sacrifices His only beloved Son*
- b. Abraham says “God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering!” Jesus is the Lamb of God!*
- c. Isaac and Jesus carried their means of sacrifice*
- d. Both locations in Jerusalem on a hill/mountain. Mount Moriah later became the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. Both sacrifices in the same area!*
- e. In both cases God provided the sacrifice – the Ram instead of Isaac – Jesus (God’s Son) instead of us!*
- f. In Genesis 22 – God spared Abraham’s Son. In John 19 – God did NOT spare His only Son but allowed Him to die for us!*

2. Who was crucified with Jesus in verse 18?

Jesus was crucified with two others on either side.

Luke tells us the two other men were criminals (Luke 23:32)

Matthew and Mark tell us they were two rebels (Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27)

Luke tells us one of these two criminals hurled insults at Jesus: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong”. Then he said “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”

*Jesus answered him, “**Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise**” (Luke 23:39-43)*

3. What irony is there in the notice Pilate prepared (verse 19)? Are the languages significant (verse 20)?

The notice read “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”. The irony is that Jesus is the forever King, that God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7; when God said that one of David’s descendants would reign on His throne forever. In fact, Jesus is not only the King of Israel (King of the Jews) but He is King of Heaven and Earth.

*The significance of the languages used in v20. The sign was written in **Aramaic, Latin and Greek**. Aramaic was spoken by the local inhabitants; Latin was used by the Roman officials; and Greek was the lingua franca [the common language used for communication between groups who speak different languages] of the Eastern Mediterranean world.*

*Pilate wanted this statement regarding Jesus to be as **public** as possible. This is also an unknowing prophecy of how the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and reigning as King **would be published to every nation and language**, that it was from the beginning intended as a global message. It also signifies Jesus is available to ALL who care to believe in Him.*

4. Why did the chief priests complain about Pilate's wording (verses 20-21)?

The chief priests complained that Pilate's wording should have been that Jesus "claimed" to be King of the Jews. They felt it Pilate's wording was false, because they did not believe that Jesus was the King of the Jews. They also believed it was demeaning, because it showed Rome's power to humiliate and torture even the "King of the Jews."

But Pilate answered "What I have written, I have written".

Pilate finally found the courage to stand up to the Jewish rulers, but on a relatively unimportant matter. One may say that despite himself, Pilate honored the King of Truth (John 18:37) with this true description of who Jesus was, in both His humility and His glory.

It's ironic that Pilate was weak on the important matter of not releasing the innocent Jesus and condemning him to crucifixion and did not stand up to the Jewish rulers; but Pilate was very strong on the less important matter of the wording of the notice!

5. Is there any significance in Jesus' garment being seamless in verse 23? (cf. Exodus 28:31-32)

*Jesus' seamless tunic **reminds us of His role as our great High Priest**, because Exodus 28:31-32 tells us that **the High Priest wore a seamless garment**. There are NO coincidences in God's Word; it is a goldmine of connected divine details!*

6. The custom of the day was for the garments of the victim to become the property of the execution squad, what prophecy is fulfilled in verses 23-24?

The sharing of Jesus' garments fulfils the prophecy from Psalm 22:18: "They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment"

7. Who was near the cross, in verse 25? What's significant about that, if anything?

Near the cross were several women:

Mary, the mother of Jesus.

*Mary's sister (no name given here in John; but from Mark 15:40 and Matthew 27:56 we find out her name is **Salome**), the mother of James and John. This makes her Salome, Jesus' aunt.*

Mary, the wife of Clopas

Mary Magdalene (from whom Jesus cast out seven demons in Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2)

This is significant in that apart from Peter and John; the rest of the male disciples had fled in fear (Matthew 26:56), whereas the women remained to the end, near the cross.

8. Who is the 'disciple that Jesus loved' (verse 26 – cf. John 13:23) and what job (verse 27) does Jesus give that disciple, and why? What does that show about Jesus?

John uses this expression "the disciple that Jesus loved" to imply his especially close friendship with Jesus. In a literary sense, it is also a sign of humility, rather than say "it was me".

When Jesus saw his mother, he had compassion on her. He couldn't commit her to the care of his brothers, for they did not believe in Jesus yet (John 7:5). So, Jesus committed his mother to John, who was Jesus' cousin and also the disciple whom Jesus loved. Jesus committed His mother Mary to John's care and committed John to Mary's care, so that they could comfort each other in their loneliness, when He had gone.

Again, this act, shows Jesus thinking of others, before Himself; even when He faces imminent death!

Read John 19:28-37

9. What scripture is fulfilled in verses 28 & 29?

Jesus was almost dead and called out that He was thirsty.

*Those beside the cross, gave Jesus **wine vinegar**, to fulfil Psalm 69:21.*

*The sponge used to administer the wine vinegar was on the stalk of a **hyssop** plant.*

*This is no coincidence. Back in Exodus 12:22, when the ancient Israelites were told to smear blood of the Passover Lamb over the doorframes; the blood was smeared on the doorframes using a bunch of **hyssop**.*

*This connects the blood of the **Passover lamb** in Exodus used to save the people from death to the blood of Jesus, our **Passover Lamb**, and His blood and His death, saves people from sin and death.*

10. What does Jesus mean by "**It is finished**" in verse 30? (cf. Luke 12:50; John 4:34; 17:4 – see also Psalm 22:31b)?

God the Father has given the task of saving the world from sin.

In Luke 12:50 – Jesus says He has a baptism (of death) to undergo

In John 4:34 – Jesus says He has done will of His Father who sent Him and to finish the Father's work

In John 17:4 – Jesus says He brought glory to God on Earth, by finishing the work the Father gave Him

Psalm 22 – the Psalm of the Cross – in v31b – says "He has done it"

Jesus has finished His job of salvation.

11. What day of the week is it (verse 31)? What's hypocritical in verse 31?

It is the Day of Preparation. This is the day before the Sabbath; which is Friday.

Their hypocrisy: The Jewish leaders complained when Jesus healed on the Sabbath but they plotted to kill Him on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:14). The Jewish leaders had no problem lying to have Jesus crucified but they can't break Sabbath law and have Jesus' dead body still on the cross on the Sabbath!

12. What connections are there between Exodus 12 and Jesus' crucifixion?

There are several connections between these passages:

The Lamb: *In both passages, a lamb is central to the narrative. In Exodus 12, the Israelites sacrifice a lamb as instructed by God for their deliverance, while in John 19, Jesus, often referred to as the "Lamb of God," is crucified as the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of humanity.*

Blood: *In Exodus 12, the blood of the lamb serves as a sign of protection for the Israelites, marking them as belonging to God. In John 19, Jesus sheds his blood on the cross, which is understood in Christian theology as atoning for the sins of humanity and providing salvation.*

Deliverance and Redemption: *Both passages convey themes of deliverance and redemption. In Exodus, the Israelites are delivered from slavery in Egypt through the Passover event, while in John, Jesus' crucifixion is seen as the means through which humanity is redeemed and delivered from sin and death.*

Fulfillment of Prophecy: *The events in John 19 are often interpreted as fulfilling various Old Testament prophecies, including those regarding the suffering of the Messiah. Jesus' crucifixion is seen as the culmination of God's plan of salvation, which finds its roots in the events of the Old Testament, including the Passover.*

Burial: *Both passages describe the burial of significant figures. In Exodus, there is no specific burial mentioned, but the events lead to the Israelites' departure from Egypt and their journey towards the promised land. In John 19, Jesus is buried in a tomb, but his burial is not the end of the story, as he rises from the dead, signifying victory over sin and death.*

13. What connections are there between Genesis 22 and Jesus' crucifixion?

There are several connections between these passages:

Father-Son Relationship: *In Genesis 22, Abraham is called to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, whom he loves deeply. Similarly, in John 19, there is a profound father-son relationship depicted between God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son. Jesus willingly submits to the Father's will, even unto death on the cross.*

The Sacrificial Lamb: In Genesis 22, God provides a ram as a substitute for Isaac, sparing his life. This ram becomes the sacrifice in place of Isaac. In John 19, Jesus is often symbolically referred to as the "Lamb of God" who takes away the sins of the world. His sacrificial death on the cross serves as the ultimate atonement for humanity's sins.

Obedience and Submission: Both passages emphasize themes of obedience and submission to God's will. Abraham demonstrates unwavering obedience to God's command, even when it seems incomprehensible and deeply challenging. Similarly, Jesus displays perfect obedience to the will of the Father, willingly laying down His life for the redemption of humanity.

Mount Moriah and Golgotha: In Jewish tradition, Mount Moriah is believed to be the location where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice. Golgotha, the site of Jesus' crucifixion in John 19, is traditionally identified with the same general area as Mount Moriah. This parallel geographical connection reinforces the symbolic significance of the two events.

Foreshadowing and Typology: Many Christian theologians see the story of the Binding of Isaac as a foreshadowing or type of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Abraham's willingness to offer his son prefigures God the Father's sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the sins of humanity. This typological connection underscores the theological unity of the Old and New Testaments.

14. Back to John 19 and verses 33 & 34. What do the soldiers find and what's significant about the blood and water?

The soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified with Jesus. They were going to do the same with Jesus, but they found He was already dead; so instead they pierced Jesus' side with a spear to make sure He was dead. This caused a sudden flow of blood and water.

The blood and water were absolute confirmation that Jesus was dead!

*The blood and water were like an on-the-spot autopsy of Jesus, revealing that His actual cause of death was of a ruptured (burst) heart. The thinking is that in such cases, the sack surrounding the heart (normally filled with a watery substance) fills with blood. If that sack is opened and its contents allowed to flow outside the body, it would look like an issue of blood and water (because the two substances do not mix, something like oil and water). The medical term for this is "pleural effusion" or "pericardial effusion". This refers to the accumulation of fluid in the pleural or pericardial cavity, respectively. In the context of the biblical narrative, **the presence of blood and water flowing from Jesus' side after his crucifixion is often interpreted symbolically, representing his death and the sacraments of Eucharist [Lord's Supper] and Baptism.***

15. Who is the man who saw it in verse 35? (cf. John 21:24)

The man who saw was John, the author of this Gospel and an eye-witness to Jesus' ministry.

John 21:24 – says the author (John) wrote the Gospel and testifies his account of Jesus' life is true!

16. What scriptures are being fulfilled in verses 36 to 37?

Jesus' bones were not broken because He was already dead (verse 33). In not breaking His bones, Psalm 34:20 is fulfilled: "He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken". Also, Zechariah 12:10 is fulfilled: They will look on the one they have pierced ""

Read John 19:38-42

17. What's significant about Joseph and Nicodemus' involvement here?

Joseph and Nicodemus were part of the Jewish Council; the Sanhedrin.

During Jesus' life, they only admired and followed Jesus in secret and were scared to go public.

Now, in Jesus' death, they are brave enough to go public and even to go public with man (Pilate) who had Jesus crucified!

18. What scripture is fulfilled by his burial?

This burial fulfilled the Scripture. Isaiah 53:9 says, "And they made His grave with the wicked; so that meant the Messiah would be buried in a grave" — and He was.

His burial was important because burial spices and preparations protected His holy body from decay; as it was said in Psalm 16:10: "You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay"

19. **Ponder:** How would you answer those who say '**Jesus never really died**'?

The manner that Jesus died and the way it is described by the Gospel, shows unequivocally that Jesus was dead.

20. **Ponder:** Why did Jesus have to die?

It was the Father's plan that Jesus would die for the sin of the world.

Because God loves the world, so much!

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of John 19:16-42?

Sacrificial Atonement: *Jesus willingly obeyed the Father's will and went to the cross, where He suffered and died as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of humanity.*



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

Here are some ways in which this passage applies to our lives:

Salvation and Redemption: *Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. This passage reminds Christians of the magnitude of God's love and the lengths to which He was willing to go to reconcile humanity to Himself.*

Suffering and Compassion: *Jesus' suffering on the cross demonstrates his identification with human pain and suffering. Christians can find comfort and strength in knowing that Jesus understands their struggles and offers compassion and solidarity in times of difficulty.*

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: *Jesus' words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34), exemplify the extent of God's forgiveness and grace. This passage challenges Christians to embody a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation in their own lives, extending grace to others as they have received from God.*

Love and Sacrifice: *Jesus' sacrificial love on the cross serves as a model for Christian living. Christians are called to love sacrificially, putting the needs of others before their own and imitating Christ's example of selflessness and humility.*

Hope and Resurrection: *While the crucifixion represents a moment of despair and darkness, the subsequent events of Jesus' resurrection offer hope and assurance of eternal life for believers. This passage reminds Christians that death is not the end, but rather a transition to new life in Christ.*

Jesus' sacrifice: *Deserves our heartfelt thanks and praise!*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

John 19:30 - When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Finish in prayer: Thanking Jesus that He came down from Heaven, not to do His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him (John 6:38)

Study 3 – Easter Sunday – By believing you may have eternal life - John 20:1-31

(Sermon on 31-March-24)

Before you begin

Ponder: How would the disciples and the women who had followed and been with Jesus for 3 years, have been feeling after the events of that first Good Friday?

*After the events of the first Good Friday, the disciples and women who followed Jesus would have likely experienced **a wide range of emotions**, including **shock, grief, confusion, fear, and perhaps even a sense of betrayal**.*

Shock and Grief: *Witnessing the crucifixion of their beloved teacher and friend would have been a traumatic experience for the disciples and the women who had been part of Jesus's inner circle. They would have been overwhelmed by a profound sense of loss and sorrow.*

Confusion: *The events of Good Friday likely left many of Jesus's followers feeling confused and disoriented. They had believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the one who would save them, and his sudden arrest, trial, and execution would have challenged their understanding of his identity and purpose.*

Fear: *The disciples, in particular, would have been afraid for their own safety in the aftermath of Jesus's crucifixion. They had seen what had happened to their leader, and they may have feared that they would be targeted next by the authorities.*

Betrayal and Disillusionment: *For some of Jesus' followers, the events of Good Friday may have led to feelings of betrayal and disillusionment. Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus would have been particularly devastating, and it may have caused some of the disciples to question their own loyalty and faith.*

Hopelessness: *In the immediate aftermath of Good Friday, many of Jesus's followers would have felt a profound sense of hopelessness. Their leader had been killed, and it may have seemed like all of their hopes and dreams had been shattered.*

However, these feelings would eventually give way to hope and joy with the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. The disciples and women would come to understand the significance of Jesus's death and resurrection, and their grief would be transformed into joy as they experienced the reality of his victory over sin and death.

Which we will see in John 20...

Read John 20:1-10

1. Why did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb? What did she find?

We know from Matthew 27:62-66 that Jesus' tomb was sealed and guarded.

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb for several reasons:

To Anoint Jesus' Body: *In accordance with Jewish burial customs, Jesus's body had been hastily placed in the tomb before sundown on Friday as the Sabbath was about to start. Mary Magdalene and other women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body with spices and perfumes as a final act of respect and love (see Mark 16:1-2)*

Probably, in view of the lateness of the hour and the nearness of the sabbath, Nicodemus was not able to use all the spices he had brought in the way intended.

To Mourn: *Mary Magdalene had been a devoted follower of Jesus and had likely formed a close bond with him (especially because Jesus had cast 7 demons out of Mary – see Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2). Like the other women who went to the tomb, she went there to mourn his death and perhaps find solace in being near his burial place.*

Out of Love and Devotion: *Mary Magdalene's actions were driven by her deep love and devotion to Jesus. Despite the risks and the darkness of the early morning, she was willing to go to the tomb to honor him and express her love in this final act of service.*

To Verify the Tomb: *There might have also been an element of curiosity or a desire to ensure that Jesus's body was properly cared for. Mary Magdalene and the other women may have wanted to verify the location of the tomb and ensure that it was secure.*

What did Mary find? She saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance of the tomb and that the tomb was empty; Jesus' body was not in the tomb!

When she saw the empty tomb, Mary's first reaction was to think the body of Jesus was stolen. She wasn't wishing for or anticipating the resurrection of Jesus.

Mary's troubled past, did not disqualify her from being the first witness of the resurrected Jesus (Mark 16:9) and His first commissioned messenger of His resurrection (John 20:17)

2. Who were the eye-witnesses to the empty tomb?

*The other eye-witnesses were **Simon Peter** and “the disciple that Jesus loved”, which is **John**, the author of this Gospel!*

3. Why does John describe the grave clothes in such detail? How is this different to Lazarus?

The strips of linen that were wrapped around Jesus in John 19:40, by Joseph and Nicodemus were lying there and the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head was still lying in its place, separate to the linen.

This is different to Lazarus, who came out of the tomb, wearing his grave clothes (strips of linen)

In v6 where it says Peter then saw (the ancient Greek word theorei meaning “to contemplate, observe, scrutinize”) that the cloths were still orderly and neat. It looked as if the body evaporated out of the burial wrappings without disturbing their place.

The description of linen cloths lying there and folded together in a place by itself indicates the orderly arrangement of the burial wrappings. Prepared for burial, those strips of linen cloths were smeared with ointments and aloes and spices, and the linen cloths were applied in several layers. The burial of Jesus on the day of His death was hurried, and the women came early Sunday morning to apply more layers.

The mixture of ointments and aloes and spices would dry and harden the linen cloths, making something of a mummy or a cocoon. The normal removal of these burial wrappings would require some tearing or cutting; Peter saw that it was no normal removal of the burial wrappings. “The whole point of the description is that the grave-clothes did not look as if they had been pulled off or taken off; they were lying there in their regular folds as if the body of Jesus had simply evaporated out of them.” (Barclay)

The neat, orderly arrangement of the linen cloths showed that a human hand, at least not in any way that was immediately apparent, did not remove the burial wrappings of Jesus. All this demonstrated that something absolutely unique had happened in that now-empty tomb.

The linen cloths were there — the body had not been removed with them.

The linen cloths were orderly — not removed in any normal way by the person wrapped in them.

The linen cloths were orderly — not removed by grave robbers or vandals.

4. What is the result of seeing the empty tomb scene? (verse 8)

When John (the other disciple – the disciple whom Jesus loved – John doesn’t use his name here out of humility) saw (means to understand or to perceive the significance of) the empty tomb and the linen lying there; John believed!

Generally, the very first Christians did not believe in the resurrection only because the tomb was empty, but because they saw and met the resurrected Jesus. John was something of an exception; he believed simply by seeing the empty tomb, before meeting the resurrected Jesus. “Some of the best books on the Resurrection have been written by lawyers, some of whom originally set out to disprove it. People like Frank Morrison, Gilbert West, J.N.D. Anderson, and others. Sir Edward Clark, another English jurist, once wrote: ‘As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the first Easter day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling... As a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of men to facts that they were able to substantiate.’”

*The resurrection proves that though it looked like Jesus died on the cross as a common criminal He actually died as a **sinless man**, out of love and self-sacrifice to bear the guilt of our sin. The death of Jesus on the cross was the payment, but the resurrection was the receipt, showing that the payment was perfect in the sight of God the Father.*

5. What is it they still haven't figured out (cf. Psalm 16:9-11)

They hadn't yet made the connection between Jesus' resurrection and the scripture that foretold. For example, Psalm 16:9-11; although written by King David is actually a reference to Jesus; where it says:

⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;*

my body also will rest secure

¹⁰ *because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead*

nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹ *You make known to me the path of life;*

you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Read John 20:11-18

6. Why is Mary crying (v11, 13)?

Mary is crying because the tomb is empty and she does not know where Jesus' body is (v11). She even cries to the two angels who were seated where Jesus' body had been – one where His head would have been and one where His feet would have been; she cries because she thinks Jesus' body has been taken away and she doesn't know where his body has been taken!

Note: another spiritual connection: In Leviticus 16 on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people; the blood of bull was sprinkled on top of the cover of the ark of the covenant; that cover is known as the atonement cover or mercy seat. On that cover are two cherubim facing each other – just like the angels facing each other in the tomb. So it's like Jesus is the mercy seat and makes atonement for sin!

The place of Jesus' death was between two criminals but the place of His burial between two angels!

7. Why didn't Mary recognize Jesus initially? And how does she recognize him? (cf. John 10:27)

Mary thought Jesus was the gardener and asked him where Jesus' body had been taken!

Mary may not have recognized Jesus through her tears.

The most likely reason why Mary didn't recognize Jesus is because His resurrected appearance was somehow different (see Mark 16:12 where it says Jesus' appearance was different and Luke 24:16 where the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were kept from recognizing Him; and John 21:4 where the disciples didn't recognize the risen

Jesus on the shore)

Jesus simply said "Mary" and she recognized his voice. As John 10:27 says: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me"

“Never was a one-word utterance more charged with emotion than this.” (Tasker) “Jesus can preach a perfect sermon in one word.” (Spurgeon)

“In the Garden of Eden, immediately after the Fall, the sentence of sorrow, and of sorrow multiplied, fell upon the woman. In the garden where Jesus had been buried, after his resurrection, the news of comfort — comfort rich and divine, — came to a woman through the woman’s promised Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. If the sentence must fall heavily upon the woman, so must the comfort come most sweetly to her.” (Spurgeon)

8. **Ponder:** What does Jesus mean in verse 17? And what words of comfort are there here? Some confusion has come regarding what Jesus meant, mostly owing to the phrasing of this in the older King James Version: *Touch me not*. Some think Jesus told Mary not to touch Him in any way, as if her contact would somehow defile Him. Yet the sense is that Mary immediately held on to Jesus and did not want to let Him go.

Don Carson paraphrases it this way: *Stop touching me Mary (or stop holding on to me) for (gar) I have not yet ascended to my Father — i.e. I am not yet in the ascended state, so you do not need to hang on to me as if I was about to disappear permanently. This is a time for joy and sharing the good news — not for clutching me as if I was some jealously guarded dream come true. Stop clinging to me, but instead go and tell my disciples that I am in the process of ascending to my Father and your Father.*

The comfort of these words is: a) Heaven is real; Jesus will ascend to His Father in Heaven; b) Mary will see Jesus again!

9. How is Mary’s response to Jesus’ resurrection, our response?

*Jesus made **a woman** the **first witness of His resurrection**. The law courts of that day would not recognize the testimony of a woman, but Jesus did.*

This also argues for the historic truth of this account. If someone fabricated this story, they would not make the first witnesses to the resurrection women, who were commonly (if unfairly) regarded as unreliable witnesses.

“Celsus, the anti-Christian polemicist of the later second century, dismisses the resurrection narrative as based on the hallucinations of a ‘hysterical woman’.” (Bruce) However, that doesn’t account for all the other people who saw the risen Jesus!

Mary’s response is to go and tell the disciples that she has seen the Lord! In other words, she is telling the disciples “Jesus is alive!”

That’s our response too — Jesus is not dead — He is alive — and because He is alive and in Heaven — we too can have eternal life in Heaven!

10. **Ponder:** What did Jesus accomplish on that 1st Easter Sunday? (cf. John 1:29; 3:16-17 and John 11:25-26)

*John 1:29 — Jesus is “the Lamb of God, who **takes away the sins of the world!**”*

*John 3:16-17 – Who ever believes in Him (Jesus) – that is believes in Jesus’ death and resurrection – “will not perish but have **eternal life**” – “God didn’t send Jesus into the world to condemn the world but to save the world...”*

*John 11:25-26 – Jesus is “the resurrection and the **life**” – “the one who believes in Jesus will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me **will never die**”*

Read John 20:19-29

11. What proof of Jesus’ resurrection do the disciples receive in verses 19 to 20?

Jesus appeared to the disciples and He showed them His hand and side where His wounds were! They were overjoyed!

12. What does Jesus give the disciples in verses 21 to 23? Why?

Jesus greets them in peace [there is no cause for alarm or fear that the disciples might have had] and then sends them out with the Holy Spirit; which is administered to them, by breathing on them.

*Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit, bringing new life and the ability to carry out their mission. It seems John wanted us to see a deliberate connection between this breathing on the disciples and when at creation God breathed life into man. This was a work of re-creation, even as God breathed life into the first man. **This is where the disciples were born again.** By receiving the Holy Spirit; Jesus gave His disciples authority to announce forgiveness and to warn of guilt, as authorized by the Holy Spirit. We can say that Peter’s preaching on Pentecost (Acts 2:38) was an exercise of this promised power to announce forgiveness of sins.*

i. The connection with the reception of the Holy Spirit is important. “The words of Jesus emphasize that the Holy Spirit is not bestowed on the church as an ornament but to empower an effective application of the work of Christ to all men.” (Tenney)

ii. This lays down the duty of the church to proclaim forgiveness to the repentant believer, and the duty of the church to warn the unbeliever that they are in danger of forfeiting the mercy of God. We don’t create the forgiveness or deny it; we announce it according to God’s word and the wisdom of the Spirit.

iii. “The Church collectively declares the conditions on which sins are remitted, and with the full powers of an ambassador pronounces their remission or their retention.” (Trench)

iv. “Jesus is saying that the Spirit-filled church has the authority to declare which are the sins that are forgiven and which are the sins that are retained” (Morris)

13. What does Thomas need, to believe Jesus has rose from the dead?

*Jesus needs to see the nail-marks in Jesus hands and put his finger where the nails were; and to put his hand into Jesus' side. Thomas wants to see Jesus with his own eyes!
For Thomas; seeing is believing!*

14. What evidence does Jesus give Thomas a week later?

The following week, Jesus does appear when Thomas is present; and he does get to see Jesus' wounds. Thomas is sometimes called "doubting" Thomas but his doubting was very strong; really, he strongly refused to believe! Thomas refused to believe the testimony of many eye-witnesses and reliable ones at that. Thomas made an extreme divide for evidence and unless he got that evidence; he said he said he would not believe.

15. What incredible statement does Thomas make in verse 28? Why is that significant?

*Thomas made an immediate transition from declared unbelief (John 20:25) to radical belief. He addressed Jesus with titles of **deity**, calling Him Lord and God. It is also significant that Jesus accepted these titles, and did not tell Thomas, "Don't call Me that."*

*Note: Thomas calls Jesus **my** Lord, **my** God. It's personal. It must be so, for us!*

*"For a Jew to call another human associate 'my Lord and my God' would be almost incredible....Thomas, in the light of the Resurrection, applied to Jesus the titles of Lord (kyrios) and God (theos), both of which were titles of **deity**." (Tenney)*

16. What comfort do you get from verse 29?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed: There is a special promise blessing given to those who believe without seeing. Thomas demanded to see and touch before he would believe in the resurrected Jesus. Jesus understood that the testimony of reliable witnesses [that we have in the Bible] was evidence enough, and there was a blessing for those who accepted that as sufficient evidence.

As believers, we are in that category and are blessed for believing with actually seeing Jesus!

Read John 20:30-31

17. What does John say is his purpose for writing his Gospel?

*The purpose for writing his Gospel is twofold: a) that we may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and b) by believing we **have life** in Jesus' name!*

18. **Ponder:** How would you answer those who say Jesus never rose from the dead?

How many eye-witnesses are enough?

The risen Jesus appeared for 40 days (Acts 1:3)

Jesus appeared to the disciples and Mary and others in John 20; plus Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15: Jesus appeared to Peter; the 12 apostles; and more than 500 people; then to James, and all the Apostles and lastly to Paul.

19. **Ponder:** What if Jesus hadn't rose from the dead? What then?

Then our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14).

If Jesus has not been victorious over the punishment for sin – which is death; it means will not have a resurrected life and eternal life in Heaven either. If Jesus is still dead; then we will remain dead when we die! And we have NO HOPE!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of John 20:1-31?

Jesus is alive

or

Jesus brings life



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. **The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith.** Believing in the resurrection not only affirms Jesus' victory over sin and death but also assures believers of their own hope for eternal life. The passage encourages us to anchor our faith in the reality of the resurrection and to find hope and assurance in Christ's triumph over the grave.
- b. **We can encounter the Risen Jesus:** Just as Mary Magdalene and the disciples encountered the risen Christ; we are invited to experience a personal encounter with Jesus in our lives. Through prayer, meditation on Scripture, and fellowship with other believers, we can cultivate a deeper relationship with the living Christ and experience his presence, peace, and guidance.
- c. **Doubts can be transformed into faith:** The story of Thomas demonstrates how doubt can be transformed into faith through encountering the risen Christ. Like Thomas, we may have doubts or questions about our faith, but when we encounter Jesus personally, our doubts can be replaced with a firm belief in his divinity and lordship. This encourages us to bring our doubts to Jesus honestly and to seek him for the assurance we need.
- d. **We are commissioned for Mission:** Jesus' commission to his disciples to go and share the good news of his resurrection with others applies to us as well. As followers of Christ, we are called to bear witness to the reality of the resurrection and to share the hope and joy of new life in Christ with those around us. This challenges us to actively engage in evangelism and discipleship, making disciples of all nations.
- e. **We can Live with Purpose:** The purpose of John's Gospel, in John 20:30-31, reminds us of the overarching goal of the Gospel: to lead people to **believe** in Jesus Christ so that they can have **life in Him, leading to eternal life**. As we reflect on this purpose, we are encouraged to live our lives with intentionality, seeking to glorify God and fulfill his purposes for us. This involves sharing the message of salvation, loving others sacrificially, and living in obedience to God's Word.

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' (John 20:28)

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31)

Finish in prayer: Thanking Jesus that He has conquered the punishment of sin, which is death, through His resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15:54-57).