

# John

## THE LIVING WORD

Focal Verses • JOHN 20:1-10, 19-20

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: DESCRIBE the disciples' response to Jesus' death and resurrection; APPRECIATE the beginning of a new life in Christ; and INVITE someone to learn more about Christ.

### In Focus

Brenda wanted her children to look their best for Sunday Service. Late Saturday night her girls' hair was all done and all of the children's clothes were laid out for church. Brenda fell into bed exhausted. She woke up Sunday morning with the sun shining into her room. It was so late! Would she be able to make it to church on time?

No time for breakfast, she thought, as she hastily rushed the children out of bed. No time for Sunday School either, they would really have to hurry if they were going to make it even to the last half of the church service!

As Brenda and her kids squeezed into the overflow room at church, Brenda was feeling cranky and sweaty—not at all in the mood for worshipping the Lord, who lives within our hearts today.

*Brenda vowed to place more time on preparing for worship next Sunday. Let's worship the Lord with all our hearts. Let's remember that He is alive within us every moment of every day.*



### Keep in Mind

“And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD” (John 20:20, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV** **John 20:1** The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

**2** Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

**3** Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

**4** So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

**5** And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

**6** Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

**7** And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

**8** Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

**9** For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

**10** Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

**20:19** Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

**20** And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Mary Magdalene.** She was first introduced to us by Luke, the physician (Luke 8:2–3), as one of the women from whom Jesus cast demons. Mary had been delivered from seven demons and apparently spent her days joining the other women who devoted themselves to ministering to Jesus.

**Simon Peter.** He served as the head of the band of disciples. The other disciples recognized Peter's authority after the Lord entrusted him with the keys of the kingdom. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mary and John would defer to his leadership upon seeing the empty tomb.

## Background

For three years, Jesus walked the earth teaching His disciples and demonstrating before the Jewish religious authorities that He

was their long-awaited Messiah. Finally, in an ultimate show of rejection and contempt, the religious authorities conspired with the Roman government and the Jewish populace to kill the Lord. The Roman form of capital punishment was chosen, and Jesus was hung on a cross until He died. After all were certain of Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were permitted to take His body down from the cross and lay it in Joseph's unused tomb. On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene was returning to the tomb to tend to the body of the Lord when she discovered that the stone covering the tomb's opening had been rolled away and the body was no longer there.

The wealthy people of this time had tombs carved out of the rocky hills. The tomb was usually prepared in advance of death, because the carving was arduous and time-consuming. Usually a small room with a low ceiling was

carved out with a slab that served as a bed for the body. Tombs that have been discovered in this area and from this period usually had large round flat stones that served as doors, often with a slanted groove in which the stone was rolled. It was easy to roll the stone down the groove to cover the mouth of the tomb, but very difficult to roll it back up the groove to open the tomb.

### At-A-Glance

1. Mary Magdalene at the Tomb (John 20:1–3)
2. Peter and John at the Tomb (vv. 4–10)
3. Jesus Appears to His Disciples (vv. 19–20)

### In Depth

#### 1. Mary Magdalene at the Tomb (John 20:1–3)

After Roman soldiers were certain that Jesus was dead and intervention was made with Pontius Pilate, loving hands were permitted to lower Him from the cross, wrap His body in strips of cloth with spices and ointment, and place it in a borrowed tomb. The tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea's family (Matthew 27:59). On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb only to discover that its stone covering had been rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone. She promptly returned to the city where she informed John and Peter of her discovery.

#### 2. Peter and John at the Tomb (vv. 4–10)

The two disciples began running toward the site where they knew that Jesus had been buried. Because he was younger, John outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first, but out of respect for Peter's position as the leader of the

disciples, he did not enter. Rather, John waited until Peter arrived and then followed him into the grave.

Peter didn't hesitate before entering the Lord's tomb. The same eagerness and impulsiveness that characterized his life before the Lord's death remained. Once inside, Peter could observe that the burial cloth (napkin), which had been used to cover the Lord's face, was neatly folded together in a place separate from the other grave clothes. John, after following Peter into the cave, was also able to observe the burial cloth. Scripture does not record Peter's response to what he observed. However, John saw, and because of what he saw, he believed.

The physical evidence of the empty grave clothes bolstered John's faith, and he was able to believe what he did not understand. In time, Peter would believe as well. Perhaps his exposure to the empty tomb and John's faith helped him.

#### 3. Jesus Appears to His Disciples (vv. 19–20)

It was now the evening of Resurrection Day. In spite of the appearance of the Risen Lord to Mary and the evidence of the folded cloth, the disciples were very much afraid. If the authorities would kill the Lord, what would they do to His followers? So they gathered together and locked the doors, probably in the same room where they had eaten the Last Supper with the Lord. We can imagine them trying to sort out the strange things that had happened that day.

Then suddenly Jesus appeared—without the doors opening—and was suddenly visible among with them. The appearance may have occurred among 10 of the disciples—Judas had committed suicide, and for some reason, Thomas was not there. (Although others who followed Jesus were considered His disciples, the original 12 apostles had a unique role.) Jesus'

first words to them were “Peace be unto you” (John 20:19). Maybe the men were expecting some sort of reprimand. After all, they had all run away when Jesus was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane. Instead, Jesus offered a lovely greeting, with no recriminations.

We know from Luke 24:37 that the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, but Jesus proved to them that He was their Lord in the flesh, although a resurrected kind of flesh. Jesus showed them His hands and His side to prove that He was indeed the same Jesus who had died on the Cross for them. At this, they believed and were overjoyed.

**Search the Scriptures**

1. When did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb where Jesus was buried (John 20:1)?
2. Where was the napkin that had covered the Lord’s face (v. 7)?
3. What was John’s response upon entering the tomb and seeing the napkin (v. 8)?
4. What were the two responses of the disciples upon seeing their Risen Lord (vv. 19–20)?

**Discuss the Meaning**

1. Why do you think Mary was returning to the tomb before daybreak? Do you think she was alone?
2. Why do you suppose Mary did not enter the tomb with the disciples?
3. What is the significance of the fact that the burial clothes were still present in the tomb?

**Liberating Lesson**

Movies, DVDs, and books have all conspired to condition our response to the notion of death. We see it as a terrible realm inhabited by demons, zombies, and the like. However, when we lose a loved one to death, our response to that realm as Christians should be completely different. If we are sure that they have trusted in Christ, our fear gives way to a hope that they have gone to a

place of light, rest, and peace in the presence of our Lord. How does our relationship with God change the way we view death? Which would you prefer to have: the popularity and wealth of this world or the assurance that when you die, you will go to live with Jesus?

**Application for Activation**

Jesus, by living a life pleasing to God, broke the bonds of death over those who believe in Him. God confirmed this by raising Jesus from the dead. Write a poem or song celebrating the victory of Christ over death.

**Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

---



---



---



---



---



---

**Remember Your Thoughts**

Special insights I have learned:

---



---



---



---



---



---

**Sources:**

Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.  
New Testament Greek Lexicon. Bible Study Tools.com. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek> (accessed January 8, 2011).  
Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon. Bible Study Tools.com. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew> (accessed January 7, 2011).  
Passage Lookup. Bible Gateway.com. <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage> (accessed January 7, 2011).  
*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company. n.d.

**Say It Correctly**

Recriminations. Re-KRIM-i-NA-shuns.  
Sepulchre. SEP-ul-ker.  
Populace. POP-u-lus.

**Daily Bible Readings**

**DAY 239**

Jeremiah 51–52

**DAY 240**

Lamentations 1–3:36

**DAY 241**

Lamentations 3:37–5

**DAY 242**

Ezekiel 1–4

**DAY 243**

Ezekiel 5–8

**DAY 244**

Ezekiel 9–12

**DAY 245**

Ezekiel 13–15

**Notes**

---

---

---

---