

# I Have Seen

Jesus is the resurrected Savior.

JOHN 20:1-18



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you,  
aved  
at ye are  
another.  
nim, Lord,  
answered him,  
follow me now;  
afterwards.  
Lord, why cannot  
all "lay down my life  
him, Wilt thou lay down  
ake? Verily, verily, I say unto  
shall not crow, till thou hast  
rice.  
OF MANY MANSIONS  
et 'not your heart be troubled: ye  
believe in God, believe also in me.  
in my Father's house are many man-  
sions: if *it were* not so, I would have told  
you. "I go to prepare a place for you.  
And if I go and prepare a place for you, "I  
will come again, and receive you unto my-  
self; that <sup>o</sup>where I am, *there* ye may be also.  
And whither I go ye know, and the way  
ye know.  
JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND  
THE LIFE  
Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know  
not whither thou goest; and how can we  
know the way?  
Jesus saith unto him, I am <sup>o</sup>the way,  
<sup>o</sup>the truth, and <sup>o</sup>the life: <sup>o</sup>no man cometh  
unto the Father, but by me.  
If ye had known me, ye should have  
known my Father also: and from henceforth  
ye know him, and have seen him.  
Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the

## **How does using first names in a business setting impact interactions between people with different roles?**

When our mother uses our first name, we usually stop in our tracks. We know better than to ignore that call. The same is true when our boss uses our first name, especially if they're doing so to congratulate or recognize our work. Hearing our first name changes the relationship. When Mary heard her name called by the One she thought to be the gardener—it changed everything.

# UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Skeptics who mock divine creation and divine incarnation also discredit the resurrection of Jesus. Their problem lies in the implication of the resurrection. If Jesus died and rose again, He was exactly who He claimed to be—God the Son, the Messiah, the Savior.

Scripture gives solid evidence for Jesus's resurrection. If the first witnesses of Christ's resurrection were trying to prove preconceived ideas, one might legitimately question their accounts. However, Mary, Peter, and John were not expecting to find an empty tomb. Mary went to the tomb early in the morning of the third day after Jesus's crucifixion. Other Gospel accounts relate that she went with several women to anoint Jesus's dead body with spices appropriate for burial (Mark 16:1). They even worried about how they could get past the stone and guards that stood between them and their Lord's body. When Mary found the tomb vacated, she ran to tell the disciples what she had seen. The other women also recounted their experience (Luke 24:1-10).

Most of the disciples remained in hiding for fear of the Jews. They didn't believe the women and discounted their report as idle tales (Luke 24:11). Peter and John ran to the tomb to see what happened. John arrived first but was hesitant to enter. Peter did not wait but immediately went inside. Even when looking into the open grave, they did not fully understand what they saw.

Mary must have followed the two disciples since she remained by the tomb after they went back to Jerusalem. Two angels questioned her about her crying. She thought someone had stolen Jesus's body. Only when Mary encountered the living Christ did she finally realize that He had risen from the dead. Returning to the disciples, she had exciting news. No longer did she merely report seeing an empty tomb; she had met the risen Lord!

# JOHN 20:1-18

**1** On the **first day**<sup>A</sup> of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. **2** So she went running to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, “They’ve taken the Lord out of the tomb, and **we**<sup>B</sup> don’t know where they’ve put him!” **3** At that, Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. **4** The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. **5** Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then, following him, Simon Peter also came. He entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. **7** The wrapping that had been on his head was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a separate place by itself. **8** The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed. **9** For they **did not yet understand**<sup>C</sup> the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying. **11** But Mary stood outside the tomb, **crying**.<sup>D</sup> As she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus’s body had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “Because they’ve taken away my Lord,” she told them, “and I don’t know where they’ve put him.” **14** Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. **15** “Woman,” Jesus said to her, “why are you crying? Who is it that you’re seeking?” Supposing he was **the gardener**,<sup>E</sup> she replied, “Sir, if you’ve carried him away, tell me where you’ve put him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” Turning around, she said to him in Aramaic, **“Rabboni!”**<sup>F</sup> — which means “Teacher.” **17** “Don’t **cling**<sup>G</sup> to me,” Jesus told her, “since I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what he had said to her.

## Key Words

- A. The Sabbath would have ended at sundown on Saturday, so Sunday morning would have been the first chance for Mary to come to the tomb.
- B. This implies other women were with Mary, which echoes other Gospel writers (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55-24:10).
- C. Peter and John had not yet grasped the scriptural connection to Jesus’s resurrection. That would come later.
- D. The Greek verb *klaio* refers to wailing or loud mourning. Mary was lamenting not only Jesus’s death but His lack of a proper burial.
- E. Mary may have assumed Jesus to be the gardener because of the time of day. Gardeners usually worked early in the morning to avoid the heat.
- F. Aramaic for “my dear (or beloved) Rabbi.” John’s Greek translation “teacher” does not carry the same intimacy as the Aramaic word.
- G. “Hold on” (NIV); “touch” (KJV)

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## 1. Examine

(John 20:1-10)

Believers can challenge others to examine the truth of the empty tomb.

**How can we help others investigate the truth of the resurrection?**

**What elements of the experiences of Mary, Peter, and Paul give credence to the resurrection of Jesus?**

## 2. Questions

(John 20:11-13)

People can take their questions to God.

**What questions and preconceived beliefs get in the way of believing the resurrection?**

## 3. Witness

(John 20:14-18)

Believers can tell others about Jesus.

**How does Mary's failure to recognize Jesus add to the credibility of her story?**

**How does Jesus reveal Himself today as the resurrected Savior?**

## APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss as a group the elements of the resurrection account that cause the greatest amazement.

**How can the group remind each other in the days and weeks ahead about the wonder of the resurrection?**

**How should the wonder of the resurrection impact how the Bible study group functions?**

### KEY DOCTRINE: God the Son

He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. (See John 20:27-28; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.)

### BIBLE SKILL: Create a compare/contrast chart to study a passage.

Create a two-column chart to compare the experience of Peter and John with that of Mary. Analyze John 20:1-18 and record your ideas about how they approached the empty tomb, noting these elements: motivations, expectations, emotions expressed, and reactions.

# TALK IT OUT

**Focus on John 20:8. Why do people say “seeing is believing?” Do you agree?**

Just before sunrise on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene came to Peter and John with a fantastic story. Someone had taken Jesus’s body from the tomb and no one knew where it was. Peter and John raced to the tomb. John, the writer of the Gospel, couldn’t resist telling us who won. They saw the grave clothes lying in a heap, and the face covering rolled up separately. That was enough to make John believe.

**Would that have been enough for you? John “saw and believed” what?  
What did John believe at this moment?**

The easiest thing for John to believe was that Jesus wasn’t there; that was obvious. Did he believe at that moment that Jesus had been resurrected? It’s hard to say. All verse 8 says is that he believed, but that is immediately followed by, “For as yet they did not understand the Scripture.”

**What about you? How important is it for you to understand before you believe?**

Write “John saw and believed” on a note card and put it in your glasses case or near your contact lens case. If you don’t wear glasses, put it near the first thing you see every day.

## Prayer Requests

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# DAILY EXPLORATION

## Day 1: John 20:1-4

***Reflect on the thoughts and emotions of Mary, John, and Peter when they discovered the stone rolled away.***

Although the other Gospel writers stated that other women also came to the tomb that morning, John focused on Mary Magdalene (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1). Only John states it was still dark when she came to the tomb. Together, these accounts paint a picture of the women leaving Jerusalem together; Mary Magdalene, though, evidently moved faster and arrived first. When Mary arrived, she saw the stone had been rolled away. Her first thought was someone had taken the Lord's body. Tomb robbery was such a problem that Emperor Claudius (ruled AD 41-54) issued a decree of capital punishment for anyone who robbed a tomb or stole a body. Upon hearing about the empty tomb, chief priests instructed the soldiers who guarded the tomb to report that the disciples had stolen the body (Matthew 28:11-15).

Mary ran to find Simon Peter and John, the one Jesus loved. Mary's running was not surprising. John's readers would be amazed, however, by the men running, since men in first-century culture almost never ran. (See Luke 15:20.) Although John outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first, he waited outside.

**How can you help others investigate the truth of the resurrection?**

## Day 2: John 20:5-10

***Identify the evidence of Jesus's resurrection in these verses.***

When John arrived at the tomb, he stooped down and looked inside without entering. Simon Peter, true to his impetuous nature, arrived at the tomb and entered immediately. The fact the grave clothes were still in the tomb indicated there had been no robbery. After Peter arrived and entered the tomb, John also went in. The fact that two men had seen the tomb empty would render their testimony as reliable and legally admissible (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).

Writing decades after the events of that Easter morning, John explained that when he went in the tomb and saw the funeral wrappings, he believed. What, though, did he believe? These burial wrappings convinced John that Jesus had been raised from the dead—He was resurrected. Only later did John and Peter understand the fuller meaning of Old Testament Scripture that spoke of the Messiah's resurrection (maybe Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12). Peter and John returned to the place where they were staying. Luke's Gospel says of Peter, "So he went away, amazed at what had happened" (Luke 24:12).

**What is the most convincing proof of Jesus's resurrection for you?**

### Day 3: John 20:11-13

***Pay attention to why Mary was crying.***

Mary evidently remained outside the tomb as Peter and John entered. Questions had to be swirling through her mind. What had happened before she first arrived at the tomb? Who would have moved the stone? Had someone stolen the body? Would the Jews look for someone to accuse? Where was the body? What should she do next? Overcome with pain, grief, and confusion, Mary wept. Four times these verses state she wept (vv. 11,13,15). The Greek term described wailing because of profound anguish. Perhaps for the first time, she stooped to look into the tomb.

Mary saw two angels in white but apparently was not frightened by the angels' presence. Their appearance in human form may have caused her to mistake them for men. When they asked why Mary was crying, the question was not intended to gain information. They were challenging Mary to consider what she was experiencing. It was likely a gentle rebuke. Mary, though, was still thinking the same thing she had conveyed to the disciples earlier—someone had taken away the body of Jesus and she did not know where the body was. Nothing she had seen or experienced had altered her thinking . . . yet.

**What questions and preconceived beliefs get in the way of people believing in the resurrection? How can you respond to their concerns?**

### Day 4: John 20:14-15

***Highlight the questions in verse 15.***

When Mary turned around, she did not recognize Jesus. Still in the emotional fog of the morning, she looked through tear-filled eyes. Additionally, she was not expecting to see Jesus alive. She had last seen Him as a corpse that had been beaten, bruised, bloodied, and bound in grave linens.

Jesus asked Mary two questions. The first was identical to the angels' (v. 13). The second, though, directed Mary's attention away from herself and onto Him. Mary supposed the One speaking to her was the gardener. Seeing a gardener this early would not be unexpected. Any grave robbers would have already fled, and mourners would come later in the day.

She returned to her earlier concern about the body's location. Mary had come with the intention of properly preparing the body for burial; she was committed to fulfill that task.

**How does Mary's failure to recognize Jesus add to the credibility of her story?**



## Day 5: John 20:16-18

### *Notice the term Jesus used for His disciples.*

Jesus called Mary by name. He spoke one word, “Mary.” In that instant, everything changed. Astonishment replaced anguish, delight replaced despair, and hope replaced heartache. She responded with one word, “Rabboni,” which translates affectionately as “Teacher.”

Jesus had previously referred to His disciples as servants and friends (John 15:15). Here, for the first recorded time, Jesus called them “my brothers.” His death had changed their relationship. Through Christ’s redemptive work, God adopts us as sons and daughters (see Romans 8:14-15; Ephesians 1:5). Jesus further emphasized the inclusiveness of this new intimate relationship by saying He was “ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” The relationship Jesus had with God, His Father, was not restricted to His disciples, His “brothers”—Mary Magdalene was part of the family as well.

Jesus gave Mary two imperatives: go and tell. This woman, out of whom Jesus had exorcised seven demons, was the first to see the risen Christ, the first to hear His voice, the first to touch Him, and the first to be commissioned to share the news of His resurrection. She announced, “I have seen the Lord!” That one sentence changed everything.

### **How does the resurrection of Jesus change everything for you?**

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## APPLY THE TEXT

For many, one of the most effective methods of leading people to Christ is to simply tell about your experience with Him. That was what Mary Magdalene did. Who do you know that might be receptive to hearing about your experience with Jesus? Pray for the Lord to use you to tell others about Him.

