



That you may believe... Leaders Guide for Week 15

(Times are approximate) – start time: _____

Welcome

- As people come in you might ask them to be ready to share one new insight they have received from doing this 15 week study.

(+6 min)

Opening prayer

- You might pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal something new and unique to each member of the group as you go through this lesson together.

(+2 min)

Opening Comments

- This chapter of John records the highest earthly manifestation of the glory of Jesus in His resurrection.
- John also records the highest earthly expression of faith in Jesus as the unique Son of God on the part of His disciples.
- Thomas, the doubting disciple, whose faith was the most shaken by the crucifixion of Jesus, now has attained to a statement of faith higher than any yet expressed by any of the other disciples.
- When Thomas finally perceived the full glory of the Lord, he (a strict monotheistic Jew) exclaimed in faith and worship, “*My Lord and my God!*” (20:28).
- In the opening scenes of John’s Gospel the birth of faith was formed.
- It seems fitting that the consummation of faith, expressed by Thomas’ penetrating exclamation, should form the capstone to the revelation of Christ’s person.
- It is an example of the triumph of faith over much unbelief that constitutes the twofold theme of this Gospel.
- We have seen throughout this study the challenging words of **John 20:30-31** and now we have arrived at that chapter.
- Most people have limited knowledge of courtroom proceedings.
- We’ve seen via the news, TV shows, and newspapers, people who have been retained or released on much less proof than there is for Jesus’ resurrection.
- How much proof do people need to believe?
- Jesus’ resurrection was completely unexpected, not a single disciple expected it!
- His enemies didn’t expect it but later thought His disciples might try to take the body.
- So they had guards placed at the tomb, it was set with a seal (a form of wax identified by a signet ring image the authorities approved) that would make it impossible for the disciples to get to the body.
- We have proof by the absence of proof.
- Once Jesus was raised from the dead, Scripture tells us the leaders bribed the soldiers to lie about what happened.
- Not a single proof has been found from all the writings of that day that disproves the resurrection.
- However, here are 14 visible proofs from Scripture of Jesus’ bodily resurrection:

- 1) The report of the guards – soldiers reported: a great earthquake accompanied it; an angel rolled away the stone and sat upon it; the soldiers saw the angel, whose face shone like lightening – (**Mat. 28:2-4, 11**).
- 2) The chief priests bribed the soldiers to falsify the report – (**Matt. 28:12-15**).
- 3) The witness of several women together, not expecting to see Jesus, who met Him in person on the street – (**Matt. 28:8-10**).
- 4) The peculiar folds of cloth in the empty tomb as witnessed by Peter and John – (**John 20:6-8**).
- 5) Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene alone – (**John 20:11-18**).
- 6) Jesus' appearance to Peter alone – (**Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5**).
- 7) Jesus' appearance to two depressed disciples going to Emmaus – (**Luke 24:13-32**).
- 8) Jesus' appearance to ten disciples at one time – (**John 20:19, 24**).
- 9) Jesus' appearance to eleven disciples at one time – (**John 20:26**).
- 10) Jesus deliberately gave His disciples physical proof of His resurrection – (**Luke 24:37-43**)
- He ate bread and fish, insisting that the disciples feel His body to know that it was real, showing them the wounds made at the cross.
- 11) Jesus' breakfast with seven disciples near a lake – (**John 21:12-13**).
- 12) Jesus' appearance to James, His own formerly unbelieving brother – (**1 Cor. 15:7**).
- 13) Jesus' appearance to 500 brothers at once, most of whom lived when Paul published this fact in his letter to the Corinthian church – (**1 Cor. 15:6**).
- 14) Early disciples' suffering for their witness to the Resurrection.
- With this short intro, let's begin our study questions and see what we learn together.
(+12 min)

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~31 min)

This week's title: The Christ, The Son of God - **John 20**

Highlighted verses: *"Jesus did many other miraculous 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 Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."* - **John 20:30-31**

Day 1: Read John 20

1. Read **John 20** at least once, jotting down initial observations.

- Spend some time discussing what people jotted down as they read this chapter.
(+6 min)

Day 2: Read John 20:1-18

1. What do we learn about Jesus' followers from their initial reaction to the empty tomb? Why do you think they reacted the way they did?

- Part 1: personal
- Who were these people:
- **Mary Magdalene** – the text should actually read Mary of Magdalene (actually the city of Magdala, located on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee).
- You wouldn't send mail to Ms. Magdalene ---- she wouldn't get it.
- She is the woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons (**Luke 8:2**).
- After Jesus cast out the demons she became one of His followers.
- She witnessed most of the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and stood near Him trying to comfort Him (**Matt. 27:55,56**).

- The earliest witness to the resurrection of Jesus, He sent her to tell the others (**John 20:11-18**).
- **Simon Peter** is the most prominent of Jesus' twelve followers/disciples.
- He was the first Apostle called plus He and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist (**John 1:35-42**).
- He walked on water (**Matt. 14:29**).
- He was the first Apostle to recognize Jesus as Messiah.
- He is known for denying Christ three times the night prior to Jesus' crucifixion.
- According to Luke (**Luke 24:34**) and Paul (**1 Cor. 15:5**), Peter was the first Apostle to see the risen Lord.
- He was the first Apostle to proclaim salvation to the Gentiles (**Acts 10 – 11**).
- Peter was also the author of two New Testament epistles that bear his name.
- **Other disciple** (was most likely **John**) – brother of James, mother was Salome who is thought to have been the sister of Mary, Jesus' earthly mother.
- If that is so, then James and John were first cousins to Jesus.
- James and John were two of Jesus' three closest disciples, the other was Peter.
- John was called the disciple Jesus loved.
- He was present at the Mount of Transfiguration, he was given the responsibility to care for Jesus' mother when Jesus was on the Cross, and He was with Peter when they went to the tomb.
- John's writings include the Gospel of John, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, and Revelation.

(+4 min)

2. What is the connection between **John 20:16** and **John 10:3**?

- The single word "*Mary*", spoken by Jesus, brings understanding to Mary.
- Jesus calls His people by name and they know His voice!

(+2 min)

Day 3: Read **John 20:19-31**

1. In **John 20:21-23** Jesus sends His disciples on a mission. What do you understand that mission to be?

- We need to consider the whole of the Book of John.
- The purpose of John is "*that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God....*"
- Jesus is commissioning His disciples with the mission of sharing this message.
- All believers are sent out on this same mission (**Matt. 28:19-20** – "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*")
- Forgiveness of sins must be part of this message.
- We all need to realize we are sinners in need of a Savior.
- We need to share the good news of how our sins can be forgiven.
- This is our greatest responsibility in serving the Lord.
- This mission can only be accomplished by trusting in the work of the Holy Spirit.

(+3 min)

2. How does Thomas' statement, "*My Lord and My God*" provide a clear conclusion regarding Jesus?

- The Book of John is repeatedly addressing the question, "Who is Jesus?"
- Just in case the disciples (and we) missed the answer earlier, John gives a very clear answer to the question of Jesus' identity through Thomas' words.
- The divinity of Jesus is a paramount belief for all Christians!

(+3 min)

Day 4: Read John 20:31

Consider how all of the Gospel of John relates to John's purpose in writing this Gospel. "...that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

1. What 7 *signs* did John share to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

- Water turned into wine - **2:1-11**
- Healing of the nobleman's son - **4:46-54**
- Healing the man at Bethesda - **5:1-47**
- Feeding the 5000 - **6:1-14**
- Walking on water - **6:16-21**
- Healing the blind man - **9:1-41**
- Raising Lazarus from the dead - **11:1-57**

(+3 min)

2. What 7 *I Am* statements did John share to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

- "I Am the bread..." - **6:35**
- "I Am the light..." - **8:12**
- "I Am the door..." - **10:9**
- "I Am the good shepherd..." - **10:11**
- "I Am the resurrection and the life..." - **11:25**
- "I Am the way, the truth, the life..." - **14:6**
- "I Am the true vine..." - **15:1,5**

(+3 min)

Day 5: Read John 20

1. Why does it matter that Jesus rose from the dead? Could you still believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, if we could visit His tomb and His remains were still there?

- Without the resurrection there would be no victory.
- We would not know if Jesus accomplished our salvation.
- We would not know that Jesus is alive.

(+3 min)

2. John wrote this Gospel so "*that you may believe...*" Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ (your Savior, the only One who died for your sins) and the Son of God (He is God, He is divine)? What you believe about Jesus is of paramount importance regarding your eternity. Write a short paragraph expressing what you believe about Jesus.

Leaders: Pray for each member of your class. Consider meeting with class members individually to talk about what he/she believes. Believing is more than intellectual assent. Believing is: Trusting in Jesus as your eternal Lord and Savior and surrendering your life to Him.

(+4 min)

Closing Comments

- In closing this study we strongly recommend you read John again and include all of John.
- This study has been a very high-level view of the Gospel of John.

- You can't read it too much or too often and if you are open to the Holy Spirit's teaching, you will learn something new just about every time you read it.
- **John 20:30-31** says, "*Jesus did many other miraculous 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 Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*"
- John wrote these things so you may believe and by believing have eternal life.
- But he doesn't stop there!
- When you get a chance, please read the last chapter of John, it is just as awesome as the first 20!
- Just a few points found in **John 21** to close this series.
- Some of the disciples had gone fishing for lack of anything better to do, after all they were fishermen.
- They didn't catch anything.
- **1st point** is this: when you choose your own service from self-will, effort, pride, you catch exactly nothing.
- Remember Jesus said in John 15:5, "*apart from me you can do nothing.*"
- We can do things the world says are good, but in light of eternity, if we don't do it deliberately, specifically, and consciously by the power of Jesus Christ, it all adds up to zero in God's sight.
- **2nd point** is: Jesus knew where the fish were and where the disciples needed to do their work.
- They were obedient to His instruction and were rewarded by a great catch.
- When working *with* Jesus you have success.
- **3rd point** is: Jesus directed them to successful fishing and He met their physical/spiritual needs.
- He asked the disciple to bring their fish to Him so they could become a part of the meal Jesus was preparing.
- Be sure you go where the Lord can feed you too.
- If you are not being fed by Jesus Christ, you will soon run out of food for others!
- **4th point** is: Serving Him will bring you satisfaction and Him glory!
- Choose His service, not your own; Jesus knows where you need to fish (serve); Jesus will meet all your needs for success in service to Him; He will meet your spiritual and physical needs in the process; and your service to Him will be very satisfying.
- How will you serve Him now that this study of John has completed?
- What plans will you make to apply one or more principles you have learned in this study?
- Who might you share the Gospel within the next few days/weeks?
- How will you maintain the discipline of daily Bible study?
- This is a question that is very important to every believer.
- Only by studying Scripture will you develop a faith that is yours.
- Many people don't realize that the faith they have is not theirs, but rather some commentator(s); theologian's; worship leader's; preacher's; teacher's, and the list goes on.
- To have your own faith, you must study the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
- So the final question of this series is: Is your faith your own?
- To God be the glory forever and ever! Amen!

(+8 min)

Closing Prayer